



# Jesus Appears to His Disciples

John 20:19-31



After Jesus was raised from the dead, He appeared to His disciples. He wanted them to believe that He was alive, that He had conquered death. Jesus said that those of us who believe without seeing would be greatly blessed.

## Day #1: Jesus Steps In

Have you ever had a story to tell that was so amazing that you were afraid people wouldn't believe you? The two men that Jesus spoke to on the road to Emmaus had the most amazing story ever! They had seen Jesus after He was raised from the dead! He taught them how He fulfilled all the ancient prophecies. Now they understood that Jesus' death was not bad news at all; it was part of God's plan to redeem mankind. These men even sat and ate with the risen Savior!

After Jesus left them, the two men ran back to Jerusalem. They ran as fast as their trembling legs could carry them. They couldn't wait to tell the disciples their story.

Most of Jesus' original disciples were gathered together. One of the disciples, named Thomas, was not with them, and of course Judas was not there. The disciples had locked themselves in a room to hide out for a while. Surely they were afraid of the religious leaders who had put Jesus to death. They must have thought the leaders would come after them next. Then there was all this talk about Jesus' body disappearing. Peter and John had seen the empty tomb, and so had Mary and a few other women. The disciples may have been afraid that they would be falsely accused of stealing the body. These anxious friends huddled together behind a locked door to discuss what had happened and to plan their next move. Suddenly, something happened that no one was expecting.

**+** *Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, "May peace be with you!" Then He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples were very happy when they saw the Lord.* - John 20:19b-20

Wow! Jesus walked in - right through a locked door. Because His friends were afraid, His very first words were words of comfort. Jesus stepped in among His friends and followers. He came, bringing them exactly what they needed most: peace.

**\*** Jesus wants to step into your every situation. He comes, bringing exactly what you need, every time. Whatever is going on in your life, more of Jesus is the always answer.

## Day #2: Marching Orders

When Jesus stepped in among the disciples, they probably rubbed their eyes to make sure they were seeing clearly.

Surely the two men that Jesus had met on the road had explained everything to the disciples by the time Jesus arrived. Maybe they said something like, "Jesus made all so clear to us. God gave hundreds of prophecies about the Savior that He was going to send, and Jesus fulfilled every single one. Remember, Scripture said He would be born in Bethlehem, and He would be in the line of David, and He would grow up in Nazareth." On and on the two men explained, until they came to the crucifixion. "And the Scripture said that the Savior's friends would desert Him, and He would take on our sin, and He would be pierced." One by one, the disciples were able to piece it all together. Finally they understood the full impact of what Jesus had done for them, and for all people.

By the time Jesus arrived, they were ready. They were able to hear what Jesus wanted them to do next.

**+** *Again He said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I am sending you."* - John 20:21-23 NLT

What does this mean? *How* did God send Jesus?

- God sent Jesus to be with sinful **people**.
- God sent Jesus with **authority**.
- **Prayer** was always available to Jesus.
- God told Jesus **what to say**.
- God was **always with Jesus**.

In the same way, Jesus was now sending His disciples into the world to tell people the good news about Him.

**\*** This command applies to us today. Let's look at how Jesus sends us.

- Jesus sends us to tell all **people** about Him (Acts 1:8).
- We go in Jesus' **authority** (Mark 3:14-15).
- God wants us to **pray** to Him at all times (1 Thess. 5:17).
- The Holy Spirit tells us **what to say** (1 Corinthians 2:13).
- Jesus is **always with us** (Matthew 28:18-20).

## Day #3: Empowered

**+** The book of Matthew tells us that Jesus said: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."* (Matthew 28:18b-20)

Jesus told these men that He was going to send them to teach men and women how to be saved from their sins. It is quite amazing that Jesus would send these men. These were the very men who deserted Him, who ran in fear, and

### Day #3 continued:

who were now hiding behind a locked door. On their own, they had no strength and no courage. But Jesus was not going to send them out on their own.

He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22)

Jesus breathed on them as a *symbol* that He was going to send the **Holy Spirit** to them very soon (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit would be poured out on them, and it would fill their souls, just like breath fills our lungs. Only the power of the Holy Spirit would give them the strength to go OUT into the world that they were now hiding from.

Before this time, God's Holy Spirit filled certain people at certain times for certain tasks (Mark 12:36, Luke 1:35). But this was about to change. Soon, ALL believers would be filled with the Holy Spirit, and He would NEVER leave them. We'll learn more about the Holy Spirit tomorrow.

 Take a deep breath. Fill your lungs to their fullest. You cannot see the air that goes into your lungs, but you know that it's there. Similarly, we cannot see the Holy Spirit, but we know that He lives inside of all believers. If your faith is in Jesus, you, too, have the Holy Spirit of God living within you. The Bible calls your body "a temple of the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 6:19) Since our body is His temple, we should not use our hands and feet to sin. What are ways you can honor God with your body? (Examples: Use your mouth to tell people about Him, use your hands to clap in worship, use your feet to walk over to a lonely neighbor's house)

## Day #4: Holy Spirit

At school, you have a teacher and textbooks to help you learn. Reading and studying are all part of learning. If a student struggled with a subject, he or she might go to a tutor. A tutor is a person who is specially trained to help the student understand a subject, such as math or science. Tutors are wonderful helpers for students.

But how do we learn about the things of God? How do we learn about salvation, forgiveness, and witnessing to others? Certainly, it is wonderful to read your Bible and hear Bible teaching. But God's wisdom is so far above our wisdom that we need God's help to fully understand these things. God actually sends us a Helper to be like a spiritual tutor to us.

Several days before Jesus went to the cross, He explained who God's Helper is.

 *The Father will send the Friend in my name to help you. The Friend is the **Holy Spirit**. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you.* - John 14:26

First, the Holy Spirit helps us understand everything we need to know about God. Now, this doesn't happen all at once. That would overwhelm us! But over time, He will reveal God's truth to us.

He also reminds us of what we have learned - like Bible verses you have memorized.

And Jesus told His disciples not to worry about what to say

### Day #4 continued:

when they were telling others about Him, because at the just right time, the Holy Spirit would give them the words they should speak (Mark 13:10-11). Jesus also said that the Holy Spirit would help each person to see his or her own sin, and their need for a Savior (John 16:8-11).

 Jesus called the Holy Spirit our helper and friend. He is better than the best tutor you could ever have! He knows all things (1 Corinthians 2:10), He is never wrong, He lives inside of each believer and He will never leave you.

Remember that it is God's Spirit that leads people to Himself. Your job is not to talk someone into believing in Jesus. You simply tell the truth that the Holy Spirit gives you, and the Spirit does the rest!

## Day #5: "Seeing" by Faith

There is a phrase that says, "Seeing is believing." This means that many times we don't believe something until we have seen it with our own eyes. When we see something, we know it is real. The Bible talks about another way to believe. It is FAITH. The Bible defines faith this way:

 *Faith is being **sure** of what we hope for. It is being **certain** of what we do not see.* - Hebrews 11:1

Way back before the Israelites were a people, God called out to Abram (later known as Abraham). God made amazing promises to Abram. Though Abram did not come from a family that trusted in God (Joshua 24:), Abram believed that **God was willing and able** to keep His incredible promises. Abram had faith in God.

*Abram believed the Lord. The Lord accepted Abram because he believed. So his faith made him right with the Lord.* - Genesis 15:6

Abram did not do anything to earn his right relationship with the Lord. He simply had faith in the power and goodness of God. Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples in the locked room, Thomas was not with the others. Later, when the men told Thomas that they had seen Jesus, he doubted them. Then Jesus appeared to Thomas also. Thomas finally believed that Jesus was resurrected because he saw Jesus with his own eyes. But Jesus had this to say:

*Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen Me but still have believed."* - John 20:29

Jesus was talking about all the people who would hear about Jesus after He had gone back to heaven. He announced blessings over everyone who has faith even before they can see Him with their eyes.

 Can you name some people who have faith in Jesus without seeing Him? (friends, family members, yourself?) These people are **absolutely certain** that He exists, and that He died and was raised again to make them right with God. One day we will see Jesus face to face! Until then, God gives you the faith to believe without sight (Ephesians 2:8).