

How God intervenes in our lives: The Living Lord

For three years the disciples walked with Jesus and beheld His glory. They witnessed all manner of miracles, signs and wonders. Jesus answered their questions, told them the wonders of God's wisdom and spoke of things that would come. In His presence they became transformed.

The death of Jesus had a devastating effect on them.

They became fearful and demoralized when Jesus was taken in the garden and was led away to be crucified. Although Christ had warned them about these events, they became discouraged, disappointed, and disillusioned. Their future held no promise and their dreams had been dashed. Some of the women had been to the tomb of Jesus and came back with unsettling reports. Their group was gathered together trying to find strength and make sense of what was happening in common fellowship. The scene behind locked doors was one of despair and fear. Everything they had believed and expected was challenged by the death of their Lord.

John 20:19-20 NIV On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After He said this, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Jesus came and stood among them.

John 20:21-23 NIV Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

When they saw the Lord, several things began to change in their lives.

The appearance of the risen Lord brought a wonderful change. They were not to continue in uncertainty and fear. Everything Jesus had taught them began to come alive.

- Jesus came to minister to their troubled lives. Their whole reason for existence changed.
- He came into the room and declared His power over death. He presented them with undeniable evidence that He had truly conquered death.
- He came to move them to a higher level. The events of the past three days had wreaked havoc on their faith and courage. They had become weak and troubled. Jesus came to change them.
- He came to mobilize them for a mission. They were to become a mighty church filled with resurrection power by the Spirit. They would transform their world.

What the risen Lord did with them is being done in His church today.

Matthew 18:20 NIV For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them.

In Revelation 2-3, when Jesus appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos, He was walking in the midst of the Church.

The impact of this first visit on Sunday night is still felt when the church gathers in His name.

He is here right now. His presence still brings peace and joy to believers. We rejoice in the beauty of the incarnation, the importance of the cross, and the certainty of the resurrection. Jesus Christ came in the flesh. He died on the cross. He bodily arose from the grave. He is alive. When Jesus comes, He still richly blesses His people.

The appearance of the living Lord brings the impact of His presence on believers. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. His presence gave them joy and happiness. The reality of His promises became real and alive when they saw the Lord.

This is resurrection Sunday.

Since Jesus has promised to be in our midst, we can have full assurance today. (Matthew 18:20) Jesus is alive. He promised that He would be with us always, even until the end of the age, (Matthew 28:20). In Hebrews 13:5, the Holy Spirit renewed this promise: “I will never leave you or forsake you”. This is the message of resurrection Sunday.

Jesus is alive and He is here.

The appearance of the living Lord brings His peace.

Twice Jesus said “**Peace be with you!**” What does it mean when Jesus brings His peace into our lives? He deals with our fears and builds our faith. He banishes the turmoil, discouragement and despair and gives His peace.

The peace that Jesus gives is based upon the fact that He died for us and arose in victory and triumph. He showed them His hands and side. Jesus was illustrating the price that He paid so we could have peace.

His death revealed the depth of His love and sacrifice for their salvation.

- **Max Lucado said:** “Jesus is crazy about you.”
- **Charles Wesley sang:** “Amazing love! How can it be that thou, my God, should die for me?”
- The New Testament tells us about the marvelous peace that Jesus Christ gives.

The appearance of the living Lord brings purpose. The disciples thought everything was over. They did not know what to do or where to go. When Jesus came to them, He gave them a purpose for their lives.

Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” Think about this. Just like the Father sent Jesus, believers are being sent. Jesus is calling us to join Him to minister life to this world. Every believer is “sent” by Jesus as His ambassador. We are Christ’s Ambassadors.

The appearance of the living Lord brings power. The task is too much for any of us. Most of us are like those first disciples. They had become timid and afraid until Jesus came. He did something for them to banish their fears.

First, He gave them His peace.

Second, He gave them a great commission. They were to go into all of the world and make disciples. How did Jesus expect them to accomplish this mission? He breathed on them and said, “Receive you the Holy Spirit.” This was a prophetic act.

Third, on the day of Pentecost He gave them Holy Spirit power. His church would be empowered with Holy Spirit power. The Lord told Zechariah: “Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit”. **Acts 1:8 NIV** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” We can accomplish His mission by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The appearance of the living Lord changes lives. He brings His presence, peace, purpose and power.

The change began by the appearance of the risen Lord to defeated, fearful, and hopeless disciples. They were totally changed by Jesus’ visit resurrection Sunday. They would never be the same. It changed their lives.

Jesus is alive.

When Jesus appeared, their fears were removed. When He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" they would wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. After the Holy Spirit came in power, they turned the Roman and Jewish world upside down. The appearance of the risen Lord had a dramatic impact on everyone who believes.

The living Lord still changes lives. He still makes visits on Sundays, He is present anytime His people meet together. He still comes where we are and moves us up to another level. He knows our fear, defeat, and hopelessness. He wants to give peace for perplexity. He will give gladness for gloom. He will give purpose in our confusion. He wants to do something dramatic with your life. God has a plan for your life. He will give power for our weakness. He is still sending the Holy Spirit to give us power. We serve a risen Savior and He is present today in the midst of His people.

Whatever your need, Jesus Christ is present to minister to you and change your life. When Jesus met with them that Sunday, He wanted to certify to them that He had truly died and rose again.

In fact, several times Jesus showed them the scars in His hands, feet and side. He wanted every believer to know that He had truly paid the price for our salvation. Just before Jesus had been crucified, He met with them in the upper room and shared His last Passover meal with them. In that meeting, Jesus spoke about His body and blood that would be offered for them.