

Hiding in Fear

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a living faith in Jesus, who gives us the power to overcome fear and anxiety and live a life of boldness and faith.

Duration: 36:28

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 20:17, John 20:19, Romans 8:28, Romans 8:37, 1 Peter 1:8-9, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Fear"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the message that God has a plan for our lives, regardless of our past failures. He highlights the significance of Jesus' words to the disciples, 'As the Father has sent me, so send I you,' showing that God still chooses to use imperfect individuals for His purposes. The preacher encourages the audience to trust in God's plan and not be discouraged by present difficulties or fears about the future. He concludes by reminding the listeners that everything changes when we recognize Jesus' presence in our lives and choose to focus on Him rather than our circumstances.

Transcript

I'd like to talk to you today about hiding in fear. Our text is found in John 20. Mary Magdalene in verse 18 of chapter 20, St. John, went to the disciples with the news.

I have seen the Lord. And she told them that he had said these things to her. 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 his side. And the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again, Jesus said, Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. What's interesting at Easter time is that you read through the Gospels and you realize that over and over again, in fact, it's the teaching of the entire rest of the New Testament, Jesus died for our sins, was crucified on a cross, and buried in a tomb. And on the third day, he was raised from the dead.

But what's interesting is they never speak of the moment that he was raised from the dead. They tell us that he was born in a manger in Bethlehem. We don't know the exact moment, but there's a lot of detail there.

And shepherds hadn't announced to them. But when it comes to the moment of how he got out of that tomb and how he came to life and how the grave clothes were unwrapped off of him and put neatly on the place where they had laid him, the Bible is silent. That he died, that he was buried, that he rose again is there, but there's not much about how it actually happened.

Then what's interesting is only some of his appearances over the next 40 or 50 days, only some of his appearances to disciples were mentioned, and some we know nothing about. Some are mentioned in detail. Others, there's just a reference.

He appeared to Peter, who had failed the most. Privately, we know nothing about it except that it happened. He appeared to his own half-brother, James.

Again, James had not believed in Jesus while Jesus was ministering, it seems. But now, Jesus is risen, and he has a one-on-one with James, and we know nothing about it. James later becomes a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

Paul tells us in Galatians, out of nowhere, that after Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared at one time to 500 people on the road. 500 people saw him. The Bible tells us that many of those people were still alive.

Some had died at the time of Paul's writing. But again, what road, why, did he say anything to them? We know nothing. But this appearance is very interesting because the Holy Spirit selected it to tell us that Jesus appeared to the 11 disciples, and maybe some other folks, in a locked room, bolted from the inside, because they were hiding in fear.

What's strange also about it is they had already been told by Mary Magdalene that Jesus was alive. Mary Magdalene came and said, I went to the tomb. I just wanted to mourn for him or find out what had happened and the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty.

And then out of nowhere, he appeared to me. And listen what he said. Go tell my brothers that I'm alive and that I'm gonna meet them later on.

That's so interesting to me that he would call those disciples his brothers. After how they had failed him, you would think, tell those rascals that I am alive. Tell those sorry disciples of mine who lived three years with me and I taught them everything I was supposed to tell them.

And then when I was arrested, where were they when I needed them? But he doesn't say that. He says, tell my brothers. He could have said, tell the guys, hey, how come you boasted that you'd be loyal to me? And then when the crunch time came, you failed me.

No, he didn't say that. He's so full of mercy, so full of love that he says, Mary, don't mention where they failed. Just tell my brothers.

That I'm alive and I'm gonna meet with them. How many are happy that the Lord calls us brothers and sisters? Even though we have so messed up in so many ways in so many different times. That's his grace and his mercy.

You know, when you love someone, you don't point out their faults. When you love someone, you build them up and you try to encourage them. You can always tell when someone loves you or when someone loves another person, they're always looking to build them up, always looking to encourage them.

Then when you don't love someone so much, you're always looking to critique and find fault in them. The problem is not your mind, it's your heart. We lack love.

But even though Mary Magdalene had told them that, my point is this, they're locked in a room. Intellectually, they know. She said she saw him, he's alive.

But it's not real to them. And I want to address this to Christians today. I figure you're here because you're either a born-again Christian or you at the very least believe in Jesus intellectually.

You believe that he lived and that he died. Possibly you believe that he rose again from the dead. Unless that becomes real, you could end up so easily like the disciples, locked up in a room, hiding because of fear.

And I want to bring you to this application. All of us are sitting in this building today, but some of us are locked up in our little room, bolted, hiding because of fear, anxiety, nervousness, discouragement. Let's see what we can learn from this.

The first question is, why were they hiding if Mary had told them he's alive? Wouldn't you be high-fiving and celebrating and just saying, well, he's alive. Oh yeah, we remember he said the Son of Man must suffer and die, but then he'll be raised up again. Oh yeah, it happened.

No, they weren't like that at all. It's like us sometimes. We know intellectually what the Bible says, but we live so low, so down, so discouraged, so small.

Well, why were they like that? Well, first of all, they had a past filled with failure. What squeezes our life and makes us small, and what makes us hide from the challenges of life because of fear, is oftentimes the discouragement and the downward emotions that come because we look at our past and we see it riddled with failure. They had to be thinking, wow, we lived with him for three years, we never heard anyone talk like that.

We boasted how we were loyal, and then when the time came that he really needed us, we fell asleep in the garden and couldn't even pray with him. Then when the soldiers came to arrest him and Judas kissed him, we all fled instead of saying, you'll have to arrest us too. Jesus is our master.

No, we fled. Peter has to be thinking. I was the one who boasted the most and said these other guys might fail you.

I'll never fail you. Isn't it funny, ladies and gentlemen, how we think we're strong sometimes and we end up being so weak? We make promises to God, I'll never do that again. I'll never say that again.

I'll never go there again, only to break it. And then the devil uses that to bring in condemnation. Our conscience gets violated and starts sounding an alarm inside of us.

And that makes life very shaky and you wanna hide in a room somewhere, you feel miserable. Haven't you ever had that happen to you? Or am I the only one here that ever failed the Lord? Anybody here ever fail the Lord? I mean, since you know him. And you end up many times in a locked room.

I think of that promise that Jesus made in John 10, 10. The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come that you might have life and have it, what, more abundantly. Now, what life is he talking about there? He's not talking about biological life.

He's not talking about breathing. We all have that. He's talking about another kind of life.

I want you to have eternal life, yes, to live forever with me. But right here on earth, I want you to have that full life of God's blessing filled with peace and joy, yes, and boldness and faith. That's the life I wanna give you.

And we end up oftentimes, even as believers, locked in a room because of fear. Living in a little eight by four cell. I think the one that I was in last time, I actually sat and laid down on the cot that was in there, the cot.

This hard little bed with a toilet and sink, one unit. I think it was 10 feet long by five feet wide. And I met a man who had lived in that cell 23 hours a day for 31 years.

Never got out. But there are some of us who are free, but we're in our own five by 10. We haven't moved out of it.

We find it a hiding place. We don't do what God wants us to do. We don't live that free, bold life that Jesus called us to, because we're hiding because of fear.

And one of the reasons fear comes is because we're so conscious of how we messed up and we sinned and we've broken God's commandment. And not just once, we've done it repeatedly and we've repented, but then we promised we wouldn't and then we went back and did it. And man, that'll work on you.

The devil will work on that. He's called the accuser of the believers, the brothers and sisters. Then your conscience is sounding an alarm and you end up paralyzed.

But not only the past was filled with failure for them, they had a present filled with trouble. Why they were locked in that room was partially because what are you gonna do in their situation? They were known as the disciples of Jesus. People recognized them.

Those are the guys that go with the Nazarene. We saw them when they were handing out the food when he did that thing with the loaves and the fishes. Those are his followers.

How'd you like to be a follower of Jesus in Jerusalem a couple days after they just crucified him? They remember the crowd yelling, crucify him, release Barabbas. We have no king but Caesar. Get rid of this imposter, this charlatan.

And now they're supposed to carry on the cause of Christ surrounded by that hostility? They saw the cruel things done to Christ. Is that the way you wanna end your life? They saw the Roman soldiers brutalize him. They saw Pontius Pilate try to wash his hands of the whole matter and say, no, look, look, whatever you do with him, I don't want any part to do with it because I know the guy's innocent.

So I wash my hands. But then he had him beat half to death and crucified. So the religious establishment is against them.

The Roman soldiers could care less about this Jesus. What are you gonna do? When your whole life is linked to one person and that person was just killed and people hate the very name of Jesus, you think you have problems today? You think you're facing difficulty? That's why those guys were locked away. Like, what are you gonna do? I've had some difficult days.

You've had some difficult days. Maybe you're here today and you're facing problems and disappointments and things aren't working out the way you thought. Maybe your heart is broken.

Maybe you're battling with fear. Whatever you're battling with, imagine those disciples. My goodness.

A past filled with failure and now a present filled with who knows what. Just trouble everywhere you look. No money, no buildings, no New Testament.

Don't even know what's happening. That's a problem. Lastly, they had an uncertain future.

Their past was filled with failure. Their present was troublesome and filled with all kinds of problems. But their future, what future? How long are they gonna live? What's gonna happen? Jesus said all these things.

I'm gonna send you into the world and you're gonna be my disciples and you're gonna bear much fruit. I want you to abide in me and abide in what? He just got killed. I mean, how are you gonna live? We know Peter was married.

He had a mother-in-law who Jesus had healed in the Gospels. Did they have children? What were gonna happen to their children? What's gonna happen to their wives? What's gonna happen to their families? Because you are followers of the most despised name right then in society, Jesus of Nazareth. What kind of future are you gonna have? Is it gonna be on a cross? You're gonna end up like that? Where's the guarantee? There's no social security.

There's no safety net. There's no welfare. There's no social services.

There's nothing. There's nada. Man.

So you can understand how they locked the door and said, you know what? Just time out. What are we gonna do? We feel miserable about ourselves. We see trouble all around us.

And the future, who knows what in the world is gonna be in the future? Future, it's a toss-up. But doesn't look good. So they locked themselves in their little room.

And then out of nowhere, with the doors closed, Jesus appears. It's interesting. The Bible tells us that this resurrection body that Jesus had, and the Bible promises that every believer will have a body one day to spend eternity with, to be a clothing in some way for our spirit, that that body is gonna be just like the body of Jesus Christ.

And that body, it was strange. He would eat food, but he would go through a wall. He would just appear.

But then he would say, anybody have anything to eat? And they say, yeah, we have some fish. He'd say, broil it for me. I wanna sit down and have a meal.

He would go through walls, but then he would say, touch me, feel me. I'm not a ghost. Don't be afraid.

Does a ghost have flesh and bones? It's a mystical part of the Bible. And there he appears to them. And the Bible says he quickly shows them the nail prints in his hands.

Even in this glorified body, the nail prints are still there. When we see him in heaven, can you imagine? When we see him in heaven, he'll still have the nail print, the marks in his feet. Imagine around the throne,

and he'll maybe lift up a hand, but it won't be just like a hand.

It'll be that, and when we just see it, we'll start praising him for another billion years. So he shows them all of that. And then the most amazing things happen.

The Bible tells us that from depression and fear, there's a 180 degree turnaround, and now they're filled with joy, and everything is different, and yet they're still in the room. And the door is still bolted, but Jesus is there. When you and I know that Jesus is alive, when God the Holy Spirit makes that real to our heart, it changes everything about your life.

Lot of people go to church and are talking Jesus and singing Jesus, but Jesus is no more alive than this carpet to them. To have a living Jesus and know that he's there with you, and to see the nail prints in his hand changes everything, because now their past, which was filled with failure, everything had changed, because when they saw the nail prints, they understood. That's why he died, to get rid of the failures of our past.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you're here today and you've messed up 200 times, the same mess up, or 200 times times 2,000 times, and it was 20 hours ago, or 20 days ago, or 20 months ago, it doesn't matter what you and I have done. Jesus died so that our sins would be forgiven, and you and I would be clean, and there'd be no record of wrongs against us. That's why he was nailed to the cross, for us to live in condemnation.

It's an insult to everything he did on the cross. He showed them the hands and said, guys, don't feel bad now about what you did. You can't live in that guilt.

I love you still, and I washed all your sins away. Come on, let's put our hands together and say amen. So now, instead of condemnation and a failed past, they realize it's under the blood.

Oh, that's an old song that I heard growing up. Any of you ever hear that song? Under the blood, the precious blood, under the cleansing, healing blood. Keep me, Savior, day by day, under the cleansing blood.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Listen, you can be here, but you could still be living in a little room filled with condemnation and shame from your past, things you said and did that you know, you and God know about and I and God know about, but God doesn't want you to live that way. He doesn't wanna bring up your sin.

He wants to wash away your sin. You meet people in life, isn't it true? You meet people in life, they love to bring up everything you've ever done wrong. Ever meet anyone like that? They're fault finders.

There's a saying in Argentina, in Spanish, when people are super critical, I can't say it properly in Spanish, but literally it comes across in English, that that person is looking for the hair on the egg because an egg has microscopic little hairs on it. And in Spanish, they say, oh no, he's looking for the hair on the egg. I'm so glad Jesus isn't looking for the hair on the egg.

He's looking to forgive and pardon us. Come on, one more time, let's just thank him. By being with them, it also changed their present situation because no matter what problems you have, if you know Jesus is with you, come on, let's do this thing.

Yeah, but what? No, he's here with me. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. He's not dead, he's not a concept, he's not a Sunday Jesus.

He's an everyday, alive, risen from the dead Jesus. Come on, can we say amen to that? Without a sense of a risen savior, what do we end up with? We end up locked in a room, locked in a room. How many people I've met, hey listen, I don't have to meet anyone, I know my own life.

But how many people I've counseled and here's where they live. Their whole life, now the world, they have the whole world to live in and all kinds of things God wants them to do. But you know where they're living? They're living just right here.

They can't go past here and they can't go past there. Why, I'm afraid, it might not work out. I got so many troubles, Pastor Simba, you don't know the problems I have.

Oh, I can walk over here, here I feel safe, I can do that, I've been doing that for 30 years. I can even go over here, but no, out there, I don't know how will that work out. I'm so weak, I make mistakes.

Ah, but when Jesus is alive to you, when you know that Jesus is with you, then there's a boldness, there's a faith, there's the ability to say, come on, I can face the challenges of life. I'm not looking for trouble. You don't ever look for trouble.

Trouble will find you, you don't have to look for it. How many have found that in life? You don't have to look for it. It has your name already, it's coming.

But as I just read earlier today in a devotional book, Jesus never promised us a life with no storms. He just said he would get us safely ashore. He'd bring us to port.

But you gotta know that he's with you today. You can't live in a locked room, you can't live afraid. I don't care what you're facing.

Do you think God can't figure out what you and I are facing? One day, I was overwhelmed by problems about, oh, 10, 12 years ago. I don't know what it was I was facing. But it was so complicated, I didn't know what to do and be a proper leader, and it had to do, I think, with finances or getting in this building maybe it was, it was so complicated.

And the Lord made so real to me, what's complicated and hard for you is nothing for me. My ways are not your ways, my thoughts are not your thoughts. You are so small and limited.

If you'll just trust me and know that I'm with you, I will figure this out in no time for you. So no matter what you're facing today, you gotta trust in the risen Jesus, that he's not only with you, but no matter what your future is, and no matter what anxiety you might have, you gotta realize this Jesus that is alive has made a promise, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Wherever you go in life, I'm gonna be with you.

And the most beautiful thing about this is that he says to these men locked in a room full of failure, troubled by the present, full of anxiety, fear, what's gonna happen to them? And he says, as the Father has sent me, so send I you. Think of who the you is there. As the Father, that's God, has sent me, the Son, so send I you.

You who have flopped and failed, I still have a plan for your life. I'm still gonna use you. Don't tell me how you failed in the past.

If you trust me, I'm gonna use you. Don't tell me how difficult it is right now. I am gonna use you.

I have a plan for your life. And you don't have to worry about the future because I'm gonna be with you right to the end. I'll never leave you nor forsake you.

I gotta make you understand this, ladies and gentlemen, God has a plan for your life. You don't have to be a preacher, a pastor, not a missionary to the Philippines. You're a housewife, you're raising your children, you're a single mom, you're a man working on a job, a senior citizen, you're 10 years old, 13 years old.

Whoever you are, Jesus has a plan for your life. He didn't die on the cross so that you and I would hang out for the rest of our lives. He has a plan and he has tremendous confidence in us.

Oh my goodness. I can see the disciples say, as the Father sent you, you're sending us, and they're looking at each other saying he's sending us. Oh praise God.

What mercy, what grace, send us. You would think he'd find a new 12th and work with them, but no, no matter how we stumble, oh praise God, he keeps picking us up, amen, and he keeps speaking words of faith and love to us. Locked away, hiding because of fear.

I wanna say to everyone here, I really wanna, by the grace of God, I wanna get into your heart and mind right now. Maybe you're here today and you're living in a five by 10 cell. Oh, it didn't look like that.

You ride the subways, you travel, you fly out of Kennedy and you visit other countries, but your life is so constricted because of regret over the past. I once counseled a woman who had had four or five abortions, and she found Christ. When she found Christ, she got sensitive to sin and to the value of life, and the enemy just used it to try to just bury her.

So then one day when I was counseling and talking to her, she just looked up, sitting in my office, looked up and burst out screaming and crying. But Pastor Simley, you don't know what I did. I said, I know what you did.

You just told me. He knows what you did. But the blood of Jesus has such power, it washes away every sin.

Because if you live in the past with your failures, you're doomed. You can't, the just shall live by faith. And to live in guilt and disappointment and regret, no, you can't live that way.

That's why a lot of older people, they get bitter. If they don't get sweeter, they get bitter. You know why they get bitter? Because they look back on their past, and secretly, they just regret so many things, disappointed with themselves.

They take it out on other people. But most people who see everyone has done them wrong, secretly, they know they've done themselves wrong. I learned that a long time ago.

We transfer it to other people, but really, we're sick with ourselves. If you're facing trouble today that's constricting you because you don't know what to do, you feel paralyzed, like, what am I gonna do? I just wanna quit, I wanna give up. I'm telling you, he's alive.

He not only died for your past sins, he's alive with you today. Don't you get it? He's alive. And for me to live in discouragement and fear is a terrible, terrible disavowal of everything that he came to Earth to do.

He wants us to have life and have it more abundantly, and you don't have to worry about your future. I don't care about the government. I don't care about Cyprus.

I don't care about North Korea. I don't care about the European Union. I don't care about Obamacare.

I don't care about taxes. I don't care about anything. I don't care about social services, social security.

I know that I have Jehovah Jireh, our provider, is our God. He's not gonna fail us. If you go by that other stuff, you're gonna be wringing your hands the rest of your life.

Oh, what's gonna happen in the future? How am I gonna make it? Imagine now, they're taking in Cyprus. By the way, isn't it interesting that Cyprus, which was the first island Paul visited on his first missionary journey, Acts chapter 13, and Palestine, where Jesus walked, what we call Israel now, isn't it interesting that those two are in the news right now? Well, Israel's always in the news, but now Cyprus. Do you realize they're so bankrupt that they have just gone unilaterally in, and if you have a certain amount of money over, they are just taking 40 or 60% of all of your money that you had in savings, and why can they do it? Because they're doing it.

Imagine if they do that in Brooklyn. No, in the Bronx, can you imagine what would happen? You're not touching my bank account. So what's gonna happen with all this? Because they say Cyprus might tip the scales now with Greece and Italy and Spain, who are really muscle mental, they're very shaky.

And then if the European Union gets affected, it's a world economy, we'll get affected, and the guy in North Korea is saying he's gonna blow up Los Angeles and Hawaii, right? But more probable or possible, God forbid, he could attack South Korea, they're just miles apart there, they have the DMZ line, and he attacks that, he has nuclear capabilities, what's gonna happen? I don't know what's gonna happen, but I know one thing, he said, I'll never leave you nor forsake you. Come on, how many can say that with assurance? He'll never leave us nor forsake us. Close your eyes with me.

Hiding in fear because of a failed past. Hiding in discouragement and fear because I don't know what to do with my present situation. Pastor Cymbala, it's a mess.

And I have no, I can't sleep at night because I don't know what's gonna happen in the future. I'm telling you, it all changes when Jesus becomes alive to your spirit and your heart and your mind. When faith says, I don't care what I feel, he's alive, I'm gonna stand on his promises.

Devil, my sins have been washed away, don't you bring that junk to me. No, no, I'm not gonna be anxious. I don't care what the situation is, he's alive and he's with me.

Would he die on a cross and not take care of me today? Would he give his life and be beat to death just about and nails put in his hands and now he won't take care of me? That is impossible. Would he love me with an everlasting love and not watch out for my future? Would you take care of your children that way? If you love someone, would you not care about their future? Well, of course he's gonna care about you and I. But what you have to do is draw a line in the sand and you have to say no mas, no more living this constricted, hiding from fear, hiding in fear in some locked-in little room, afraid to do anything, afraid to get this, I'm afraid of that, I'm afraid to go on the subway, afraid to fly, afraid to do that, this, that. This is the life more abundantly that God promised us? I don't think so, no, I don't think so.

And that's why I'm talking to Christians now because they were believers. But you can be a believer in a sense and be still locked in a room. Come out of that room today.

This message was for all of us, starting with the speaker. But if you feel like this message was especially for you this morning, I'd like to say a Easter Sunday prayer over you. If you're here in the balcony or downstairs and you say, Pastor Cimbala, God talk to me from his word today.

I want to draw that line in the sand. I'm opening up that door, I'm stepping out of that little locked place. Because my life, I'm not living it the way God wants me to live it.

It's not broad enough, big enough, bold enough, strong enough. Just get up out of your seat and come here. Doesn't matter how few or how many, just come.

Come out of your seat, stand here in the front and say, pray over me, Pastor. I want the church to pray for me. You come right out of your seat and stand here.

Come on, don't anyone else move. Come down from the balcony, across the street, just stand. But Pastor, that word was for me.

I don't want to live anymore locked in a room. I don't want to live troubled by a failed past, overwhelmed by present day problems, worried about a future that seems uncertain. No, I don't want to live that way.

That hurts God, that hurts Jesus. Come on, down from the balcony, I'm waiting for you. Come on, those of you who are living in condemnation and guilt from the past, now's your chance to say, no, I believe.

I believe that the blood that was shed was for me and I'm gonna appropriate it. I'm not gonna live in guilt. I'm not gonna be locked away as a failure.

I am more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ. Those of you overwhelmed by what you're facing today, financially, physically, emotionally, someone's broken your heart in eight different places, you can't live there, you can't wallow in pity. You gotta get up, get out.

Please, listen to me. And don't worry about the future, he'll be there. He'll be there, he's walking with you.

Anybody else? Come on, you got a chance. Thank you. It's gonna get better now.

It's gonna get better now in your life. Everything changes when you just recognize Jesus. The circumstances might not change overnight, but everything changes, right this instant when you say, Jesus, I know you're alive, I know you love me, I know you died for me, and I know you're gonna walk with me and I'm counting on that.

My eyes are gonna be on you, not on the junk around me. Everything changes. He's not dead, he's alive.

Now, Father God, I thank you for my brothers and sisters. God, they must love you, they have to believe in you. Why would they be in church on Easter Sunday at nine o'clock? But Lord, they identified with the disciples locked in a room, with a bolt shut tight.

Fear, discouragement, sick of themselves, worried about the future, restricted by the present circumstances. Trouble, it seems, everywhere, held back by themselves. But today is a day that just like you came out of the tomb, my brothers and sisters are coming out of that room today, Lord.

And they're gonna walk in fullness of life, they're gonna walk in victory, they're gonna walk in joy, they're gonna walk in peace. They're gonna do your will, Lord, because you have a plan for their lives. Their heads will not be down, their heads will be up.

They will not be depressed, they will have joy unspeakable and full of glory, that's what you promised. And they will have peace that passes all understanding. So God, forgive us of our sins.

Anything we haven't repented of, we repent of it now. God, we confess it, we turn away from it in Jesus' name. And we reach out our hands by faith and we take your nail-scarred hands.

And we just ask you walk with us, Lord. And teach us to trust you. And teach us to be confident in you, not in ourselves, but in you.

Why did you do all of this if we're gonna live defeated? Why did you come out of the grave unless you wanted to share that resurrection life with us right now? So let my brothers and sisters look to this day, Easter Sunday, 2013, March 31st. That's the day God caught me and loved me and hugged me and sent me on my way rejoicing. And then keep us close to you every single day, Lord.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. And everyone said, I love you. I really love you, God knows that I love you.

Now we're gonna go to some good places now, aren't we, in your life? Is it gonna go good now? Nod at me, please. Can't be depressed, right? My goodness, we have Jesus. If we're gonna be depressed with Jesus, what's gonna happen here? So here's what I want you to do.

I don't want you to fill out anything. I want you to come on Tuesday night to the prayer meeting. Meet me, I'll be here.

Come at 12 noon if you wanna pray for an hour. Come to the prayer meeting, come next Sunday. Come up and give me a hug, all of you that live in the tri-state area.

Now what you gotta do, start walking with the Lord and coming to church is a good, strong thing. Am I right, congregation? It keeps you strong because you hang out with the right people. You hang out with the right people.

Some of you gotta lose some friends real quick because you got negative friends. No, this is serio, I'm serious. You gotta lose some friends.

You got friends who are pulling you down, talking just crazy stuff, won't help you. Now, when we dismiss now, I'm gonna say a blessing. I wanna hug a bunch of you down here.

Father God, let your face shine upon your people and give us peace. Help us to love one another now, hug one another, rejoice with one another, and the rest of the day, let us keep saying to ourselves, he's alive, he's alive. He loves me, he's with me, he's alive, he's not dead.

I don't have the Brooklyn Tabernacle, I have Jesus living inside of me. Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness and mercy. We pray in Jesus' name.

And everyone said, amen. Okay, all the ladies, hug a bunch of ladies. All the men, hug a bunch of men.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24849.mp3>
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