

Haunting Fear

John 20:1-10

Hello friend, and thank you for joining us. This program is produced by Heralds of Hope; we are a gospel media ministry whose main focus is the Bible. We are committed to teaching the Bible and distributing the Bible. Each week this teaching is broadcast around the world via radio, and for this year, we are on track to distribute 100,000 copies of the Bible. Psalm 19 says God's words are to be desired more than gold. This shows us God's Word is one of the most valuable possessions someone could ever have. Here at Heralds of Hope, we are thrilled to partner with many of God's people around the world as we teach and distribute the Bible.

The title of today's lesson is Haunting Fear, and it is taken from the first ten verses of John 20. Before we go there, let's think about fear. You know there are many things people fear. Children usually are scared of the dark and fearful of storms. Adults generally fear death or cancer, and public speaking. However, it varies; some people have many fears; others seem to have no fears.

The one thing our fears have in common is a small view of God. When our God is a big God who controls disease and death, and when our God is bigger than our enemies and bigger than the storm we are currently in, then our fears decrease. As God becomes bigger, our fears grow smaller.

The disciples experienced this firsthand when Jesus came to them walking on the water. They saw Him and were terrified because they thought they saw a ghost. He immediately said to them, "Take Courage! It is I, don't be afraid." He climbed in the boat with them, and the storm became still.

This is a great example of what Jesus can and wants to do with our fears. Allow Him in, and He will bring His peace. He is our refuge. The things we were afraid of don't disappear. They are still there, but since Jesus is with us, we are not afraid. We know that if He allows disease or persecution, or if our fears actually happen, He is big and will help us. So instead of fear, we choose to trust Him.

The next time you are afraid, remember the words of Jesus, "It is I, don't be afraid." Allow Jesus in and watch your fears shrink as Jesus becomes bigger and closer.

Thanks again for being here; we're glad you joined us on Hope for Today. Now, let's go with Pastor J Mark to John 20 for a look at the disciples and their struggle with fear.

All of us have certain fears that keep nagging us. In letters we get, some people write like this: "Please pray for me so I will have a prosperous life." Others say, "Please pray for me so that I may pass

my exam.” Still others ask us to pray, “So that I might find a good wife.” You see, all of us have certain fears that keep nagging at us.

And fears can be very distressing. They sap our vitality. They make us tired and misdirect our lives. Why do fears come? Are fears normal? Is it possible to overcome fear? The disciples in Jesus’ day also had fears. They had what I call **HAUNTING FEAR**, the kind that kept nagging at them.

In the sorrow and disappointment of the death of Jesus, fear was the normal response of those who loved Him. This is recorded in John 20:1-10.

1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

In this experience, we discern the **REALITIES** which caused the haunting fear.

The first Reality is: **The Conclusion.**

When Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, it was the first day of the week and very early. While it was still dark, she came. What does that tell you about Mary Magdalene? It tells me she had a deep love for the Lord Jesus, which moved her to action so that nothing was too much for her to do.

She came just as soon as it was proper for her to come—on that first day of the week, very early in the morning. As she approached, she saw “the stone taken away from the tomb.” Matthew’s gospel reports to us that an angel rolled it away. When Mary arrived at the tomb, she saw that the stone had been rolled away from the mouth of the tomb.

Her immediate conclusion was that somebody had stolen the body. By inference, she drew the conclusion that the body of Jesus had been stolen. There were grave robbers in the community, and they had stolen the body of Jesus and carried it away. She did not stop to look. She did not stop to consider. Fear seized her, and her conclusion drove her to do something about it. Her conclusion was based on insufficient evidence, for all she had seen was the stone rolled away from the tomb.

We sometimes draw our conclusions from insufficient evidence, and they may, indeed, give rise to some of our haunting fears. It is good that fear leads to action.

The second Reality is: **The Consultation.**

She ran quickly to Simon Peter and told him what her conclusion was. She said, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.” The body is stolen, she said to Peter.

Now you can imagine, can’t you, how quickly Peter and John looked at each other and simply nodded. There wasn’t a long consultation, a very brief one. They started out for the tomb, racing to arrive there. They ran to the tomb. They agreed to investigate. It seemed like it was second nature to them. They knew this needed some looking into, some verification. But Peter was outrun. The other disciple arrived there first, and he surveyed the tomb. He saw that the stone was rolled away. By stooping down, he could look into the tomb. He saw the linen clothes lying there, but he did not go in.

That consultation was very brief before they started out for the tomb. And John (we believe it was John), arriving there first, simply surveyed the situation without drawing any other conclusion than that which Mary had reported.

Well, it is a good idea to consult with someone else and to exercise some restraint. It didn’t help their fear, however, their haunting fear that somebody had stolen the body of Jesus.

The third Reality is: **The Confirmation.**

Peter came and went in to examine the facts that were available. He saw the linen clothes lying there. The napkin or handkerchief that was around His head was not with the linen clothes but was wrapped together in a place by itself. The body of Jesus was not there. That was absolutely true.

We do not know exactly how the clothes were arranged. Were they unwound and lying in a heap? Or were they lying in the form of His body? The body was not there. He understood that the body of Jesus had disappeared.

Then the other disciple went in, too, and saw the same thing that Peter saw. The Bible says he saw and believed. Believed what? I think he believed what Mary told them: somebody had stolen the body of Jesus. Because verse 9 tells us, "For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." So, they must have believed what Mary reported. They had no understanding about the Lord's resurrection.

Here then, was the confirmation of Mary's conclusion. There was no body there. Consequently, there was no hope there. As a result, there was no future for them. All the evidence pointed to the conclusion Mary had come to.

So much had happened that the disciples were unable to take it all in. It was His death three days before, His burial in the tomb, the great stone rolled before the mouth of the tomb, and now His disappearance. All this resulted in a haunting fear that all was lost. But Jesus had told them He would rise. Their hope was overshadowed with fear.

I want to brighten your hope. Your haunting fear can be relieved if you'll trust in Him. The tomb is empty. He arose.

Thank you, J Mark, for this teaching from God's Word, and thank you for joining us. It is a privilege for us to study God's Word and learn from it. Now take what we've heard and put it into practice. The teaching and instruction in the Bible is for us, and it is meant to be lived.

Don't be like the man in James 1 who sees himself in a mirror, then goes away and forgets what he looks like. Instead, be like the man in v 25 who looks intently into the Word and is a doer of the work. God says, "that man will be Blessed in what he does."

And we bless you as you follow Jesus and share Him with those around you. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching, just contact us and ask for it by title or tell us the passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each lesson; it is called the Hope Herald. Please let us know if you are interested, and we would be happy to give you one.

Here are a few ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to Hope for Today,

Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Another way you can contact us is through our website. Our website is HeraldsOfHope.org. Please look on our website for this teaching and other similar teaching. There you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again, the website is heraldsofhope.org

We thank you again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as Pastor J. Mark continues teaching from the Gospel of John. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with this blessing from Number 6. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.