**God’s Presence Dispels Fear**

**Summary**

This sermon focuses on dealing with fear, stress, and anxiety through the lens of the story of doubting Thomas and Jesus appearing to the disciples in the upper room. The pastor emphasizes that like the disciples who were afraid after Jesus' crucifixion, we too experience fear and anxiety in our lives. The sermon outlines two key lessons from the disciples: the importance of gathering with other believers and being in places where we feel a strong connection to God.

The message culminates in explaining how Jesus' presence brings peace that transcends understanding, illustrated through a personal story about the pastor's daughter at a water park. The sermon concludes with a challenge to see Christ's presence in others and to combat fear through community, sacred spaces, and prayer.

**Intro Prayer**

Heavenly Father, as we gather to discuss Your Word, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to receive Your truth. Just as You appeared to the disciples in their time of fear, appear to us now in our discussion. Help us to be honest about our own fears and anxious thoughts, and guide us to find Your peace that surpasses all understanding. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Ice Breaker**

What's a place where you feel most at peace and why?

**Key Verses**

John 20:19

Philippians 4:4-7

**Questions**

What are some common fears or anxieties that you struggle with in your daily life?

How does being in community with other believers help you deal with fear and anxiety?

The sermon mentions 'sacred pathways' to God. What activities or places help you feel most connected to God?

How do you typically respond when you're feeling fearful or anxious? Do you tend to isolate or seek community?

The pastor shared a story about his daughter at the water park. How does this story illustrate our relationship with God?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in bringing peace to our lives according to the sermon?

How can we better recognize God's presence in our daily lives, especially during difficult times?

The sermon ends with a challenge to see Christ in others. How might this perspective change how we treat people who are different from us?

**Life Application**

This week, when you experience fear or anxiety, commit to following the three-step approach discussed in the sermon: 1) Seek out community with other believers, 2) Go to a place where you feel God's presence strongly, and 3) Intentionally pray for God's presence in your situation. Keep a journal of how this practice impacts your peace levels.

**Key Takeaways**

Being together with other believers is crucial when dealing with fear and anxiety

We should seek places and activities where we feel a strong connection to God

Jesus appears to us in ways that bring peace, not additional fear

The Holy Spirit is our comforter and brings peace that transcends understanding

Seeing Christ's presence in others helps combat division and fear of 'the other'

**Ending Prayer**

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your promise to be with us always. Help us to remember that just as You appeared to the disciples in their fear, You are present with us today. Give us the courage to seek community when we're afraid, the wisdom to recognize Your presence in our lives, and the grace to see You in others. May Your peace that surpasses all understanding guard our hearts and minds. In Your name we pray, Amen.