

MEETING JESUS BEHIND YOUR LOCKED DOORS

June 21, 2026 | Pastor Jason Smotherman

JOHN 20:19-22 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."

²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."²² And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus doesn't wait for us to open every door before He comes near. **He enters the places we've locked away and brings peace, presence, and purpose.**

1. EVERYBODY HAS LOCKED DOORS

"Then, the same day at evening... the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear..." (JOHN 20:19 KJV)

Even the disciples had them. These weren't strangers to Jesus. These were men who had walked with Him for three plus years, watched miracles, and heard His teaching, yet they still found themselves hiding behind locked doors.

Sometimes we think locked doors are evidence of weak faith, but John 20 reminds us that faithful people can still struggle with fear.

The question is not, "Do I have locked doors?" The question is, "What am I hiding behind that is a barrier to what God has for me?"

Something else I've noticed: we often gather with people who have the same locked doors we do.

Fear attracts fear. Offense attracts offense. Doubt attracts doubt.

Sometimes entire communities are built around protecting one another's locked doors instead of helping one another open them. The disciples were assembled together because they all shared the same fear.

2. JESUS ENTERS BEFORE ANYTHING CHANGES

Jesus did not stand outside waiting for permission. He came and stood in the middle of their fear. The Roman government was still there. The uncertainty was still there. Tomorrow's questions were still there. But Jesus was there too.

Sometimes we think Jesus is waiting until life is fixed before He shows up. No.

He enters rooms that are still messy. He enters rooms that are still uncertain. He enters rooms that are still locked. His presence precedes our breakthrough.

3. PEACE ENTERS BEFORE PURPOSE

*"Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you."
(JOHN 20:19 NKJV)*

The first thing He brought was not instruction. The first thing He brought was not correction. **The first thing He brought was peace.**

Because encounter happens after peace enters the situation. You cannot receive God's assignment when your soul is consumed with anxiety.

Peace creates space for encounter. This is where most churches and movements get the moving of the Holy Spirit wrong, they create places of spectacle when they should be creating places of peace.

Jesus did not begin by telling them what to do. He first reminded them who was with them.

4. PEACE PRODUCED JOY

"And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." (JOHN 20:20 KJV)

Peace turned into joy. Notice what brought them joy.

It was not what Jesus was going to do for them. **It was Jesus Himself.** They rejoiced because they saw the Lord.

Sometimes we've become so consumed with asking, "What is God going to do?" that we've forgotten the greatest gift is His presence.

Before He changes your circumstances, He reveals Himself. Because seeing Jesus changes everything.

5. PEACE IS FOLLOWED BY PURPOSE

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (JOHN 20:21 KJV)

Only after peace came did purpose come. Jesus never sends anxious people without first ministering to their hearts.

Peace. Then purpose. Presence. Then assignment. Healing. Then sending.

God doesn't just deliver us from locked rooms. He commissions us from them.

6. THEN THEY EXPERIENCED THE HOLY SPIRIT

"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (JOHN 20:22 KJV)

This was a foretaste of what was coming at Pentecost. The sequence matters:

Jesus entered. Jesus brought peace. Peace produced joy. Joy prepared them for purpose. Purpose prepared them for the Spirit.

You don't receive the fullness of what God wants to do while staying hidden behind locked doors.

You must allow Jesus into the room.

SOME OF OUR MODERN LOCKED DOORS

- **MISCONCEPTIONS** – wrong beliefs about God, ourselves, or others.

Many of us have misconceptions about how and why the Holy Spirit moves in and on us. The tragic part is that many will accept an alternative encounter because of a lie they believed or saw.

Here is the truth about God's presence. He is a perfect gentleman who will meet you at the point of your hunger.

LUKE 11:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

The promise is for you.

ACTS 2:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

- **SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS** – being consumed with what people think.

There is a real fear of being put on the "spot" in a corporate church setting. Some personality types struggle more than others. Make sure you don't make the main thing in the room your personality traits and not the person of the Holy Spirit.

- **OVERTHINKING** – paralysis from endless analysis.

Many of us are standing behind locked doors saying, 'Lord, if You'll explain everything, I'll trust You.' But Jesus is saying, 'Trust Me first, and understanding will follow. There are truths that cannot be learned in a classroom. They cannot be discovered in analysis. They cannot be gained through observation. They can only be understood after you've had an encounter with the living Christ.

Some revelations are not received before the encounter; they're unlocked because of the encounter.

- **PASSIVITY** – waiting instead of obeying.

Holy Spirit Encounters are not a one way relationship. Something must be poured out (our job) so something can fill up (his job).

- **UNWORTHINESS** – believing we're too broken to be used.

Only Jesus is worthy. Despite this, he still chose to have relationship with us.

- **RELIGIOUS CAUTION** – protecting tradition more than pursuing Jesus.

Wanting to be respectful and reverent has kept many people from experiencing

Jesus the way He intended. There is a difference between reverence and restraint. Reverence honors Jesus, but restraint can keep us at a distance. Sometimes we're so concerned with being proper, careful, and preserving appearances that we unintentionally lock the door to the very encounter we're praying for. The woman with the issue of blood pressed through the crowd. The friends of the paralyzed man tore open a roof. Zacchaeus climbed a tree. None of them were being disrespectful; they were being desperate. They understood that an encounter with Jesus was worth more than protecting their dignity. Sometimes our locked door is religious caution. We tell ourselves, "I don't want to make a scene. I don't want to draw attention to myself." Meanwhile, Jesus is inviting us closer. The people who encountered Jesus weren't the ones who stayed safely in the background; they were the ones who pushed past barriers because they believed His presence was worth the risk. Sometimes the greatest obstacle to experiencing Jesus isn't rebellion, it's hesitation.

- **DISTRACTIONS** – allowing lesser things to consume our attention.

Focusing on physical responses such as shaking, falling down, or jumping as proof of an encounter with God can be dangerous. Physical expressions may accompany an encounter, but they were never meant to become the evidence of one. Jumping high should never replace walking straight. The true measure of an encounter is not what happened in a moment, but what is transformed over a lifetime. An encounter with Jesus is not proven by how you responded in the room, but by how you live when you leave the room.

- **UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS** – believing God must work according to our timeline and preferences.

Seeking Him is our responsibility. We seek Him faithfully, not forcefully. We pursue Him with healthy anticipation, trusting that He will meet us at the proper time. Our job is not to manufacture an encounter; our job is to make ourselves available for one. We cannot control when or how Jesus enters the room, but we can position ourselves so that when He does, we are ready to receive Him.

The miracle of John 20 is not that the disciples opened the door.

The miracle is that locked doors could not keep Jesus out.

The same Jesus who walked into that room still walks into rooms today.

He still speaks peace. He still brings joy. He still gives purpose.

And He still breathes life into people who have been hiding too long.

Vulnerability and access to your locked door allow the movement of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Get ready for encounter!