

Digging Deeper: A Word for the Hunkered Church

northlandchurch.net | Digging Deeper Series

THE MAIN THEME

Fear, uncertainty, and pressure often cause believers to “hunker down”—to retreat, isolate, or disengage from the world around them. Yet Jesus never intended His followers to live behind locked doors. In moments of fear, Jesus enters our spaces with peace, reveals who He truly is, and releases us back into the world with purpose. The church is not called to fortify, accommodate, or dominate culture, but to live sent—confident in Christ’s presence and empowered by His peace.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

John 20:21

“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

WHAT NOT TO MISS

1. Fear Causes Us to Hunker Down

Like the disciples hiding behind locked doors, fear often pushes us into spiritual retreat rather than faithful engagement.

2. Jesus Enters Locked Spaces

Jesus meets us right where we are—fearful, uncertain, and guarded—and speaks peace into our anxiety.

3. Jesus Is the Reliever

He reassures us of His nearness and relieves us of fear, shame, and confusion with His presence and peace.

4. Jesus Is the Revealer

By showing His wounds, Jesus reveals His character, reminding us that peace flows from who He is and what He has done.

5. Jesus Is the Releaser

Jesus does not leave us huddled in safety. He sends us out to serve, love, and continue His work in the world.

LIFE APPLICATION

Ask yourself this week:

Where has fear or uncertainty caused me to retreat rather than trust?

Jesus does not shame us for our fear—He steps into it. But He also refuses to let fear define us. The same Jesus who brings peace also sends us with purpose. Following Him means receiving His peace and then living sent into the world He loves.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY — Fear Behind Locked Doors

Read: John 20:19

Reflect: Fear can cause us to isolate and hide.

Pray: “Jesus, meet me in the places where fear has taken hold.”

TUESDAY — Peace in the Middle of Fear

Read: John 20:19–20

Reflect: Jesus speaks peace before giving instruction.

Pray: “Lord, help me receive Your peace today.”

WEDNESDAY — Jesus the Reliever

Read: John 20:19

Reflect: Jesus brings relief from fear, shame, and confusion.

Pray: “Relieve my heart of what I was never meant to carry.”

THURSDAY — Jesus the Revealer

Read: John 20:20

Reflect: Jesus reveals His character through His wounds.

Pray: “Help me trust who You are, even when I don’t understand.”

FRIDAY — Sent with Purpose

Read: John 20:21 & John 14:12

Reflect: Peace leads to mission, not retreat.

Pray: “Send me, Lord, to live out Your purpose.”

FACILITATOR TIPS

- Ask: “*What causes believers to ‘hunker down’ today?*”
- Encourage honest conversation about fear and uncertainty.
- Emphasize that peace is received before a mission is given.
- Create space to pray for courage and renewed trust.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Identify one way you can step out of “hunkering down” and live sent this week:

- Initiate a faith-filled conversation
- Serve someone intentionally
- Pray boldly for a situation you fear
- Choose trust over retreat

Then follow through.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What fears most commonly cause Christians to retreat today?
2. How does Jesus’ greeting of peace change the tone of this moment?
3. Why is it important that Jesus reveals His wounds to the disciples?
4. What does it mean to be sent rather than sheltered?
5. How have you personally “hunkered down” in your faith?
6. What would it look like to live more boldly sent by Jesus?
7. How can our group help one another move from fear to faith?

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT

Thank Jesus for meeting us with peace in fearful moments.

CARE

Pray for those feeling anxious, isolated, or overwhelmed.

CULTIVATE

Ask God to replace fear with trust and courage.

COMMISSION

Pray that God would send us out to reflect His peace and love.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for entering our fear-filled spaces with peace. Relieve our hearts, reveal Your truth, and release us to live sent into the world. Help us move from hiding to trusting, from fear to faith, and from retreat to mission. Amen.