

Children's Message  
3.30.08  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

Have you ever watched the show Fear Factor? Me too. They do all kinds of scary stuff on that show. And I know, for sure, what makes me the most afraid from that show- all that gross stuff that those people eat! Yikes- what are they thinking? But really, have you ever been afraid? What makes you afraid? (*the dark, being alone, getting lost*)

Being afraid often causes us to do different things, don't you think? When I was little, I was afraid of falling asleep in my dark bedroom, alone- so I used to take all of my stuffed animals and make a wall around myself in my bed. Or how about an ostrich? When they're afraid they stick their heads below the sand?! How crazy is that? Something is after them and they hide their heads- but their gigantic body is still sticking out! (But I guess that's just a myth- they don't stick their heads under the sand- they lie down and stretch their heads out along the ground and appear to be a huge dirt mound-that's how they hide from their enemies.) I really don't know for sure- since I've never seen a scared ostrich.

Did you know that we can read about being afraid and hiding in the bible? After Jesus died on the cross, Jesus' disciples were very afraid. I'm sure they were scared that they too might be punished for being a follower of Jesus. They were hiding together in a room. They had the door locked so no one else could get in. They were so afraid.

Fear can be like that. We can be so afraid of things that we lock ourselves up- or lock other people away from us. Are you wondering what I mean by that? Do you know someone who is just maybe not too smart or kind of ugly looking, or doesn't take good care of himself and is kind of dirty or smelly, or someone who talks sort of weird, or does funny stuff that other people make fun of them? Yeah- I'm sure you know at least one of those people. And my guess is that we can be so afraid that our friends will think the same thing about us- that we lock that person, those people, away from us. We sort of bury our heads in the sand and pretend that they don't exist. We're afraid of them.

Do you see? It was the same for Jesus' disciples. They were so afraid that they locked themselves away because everyone knew that they were friends with Jesus. And did you know that even though the door was locked, Jesus was able to get into that room and they were no longer afraid. Their faith in Jesus took away their fear.

I don't know- is that something we can do, too? Use the example that Jesus sets for us and our faith in Jesus to unlock our doors, unlock our hearts, and not be afraid. Not be afraid of helping people who truly need our help. Not be afraid of standing with someone who has no one to stand with them. Not be afraid of making friends with people who have no friends.

Reverend Wiley, will you lead us in a prayer?