



COVENANT CHURCH

Fear Fighting

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Main Idea – You have the choice to put your faith either in fear or in hope. Christians should put their faith in hope because they know God is in charge even in troubling circumstances. Give your best energy to the things you can control, and let God handle the rest.

A new normal

- Almost from the beginning of time, life on earth has been filled with a long line of tragic events; things that cause uncertainty and fear in the general population.
- Each new trial causes adjustments in our behavior. For example, personal hygiene practices such as hand-washing and social distancing are now emphasized.
- In times of public crises, it is important for Christians to generously support their churches so that people in need can be helped. **Malachi 3: 10 – “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” (NIV)**
- As a Christian, you should be a source of hope to those with whom you interact.

The error of placing one’s faith in fear

- The gospel writer Matthew described an event where the disciples were overwhelmed by fear. **Matthew 8: 23-24 – Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. (NIV)**
- In that story, even though Jesus appeared to be disconnected, he was actually in full control of the environment.
- At first, the disciples did not acknowledge Jesus’ omnipotence (unlimited power), but were instead consumed by fear. **Matthew 8:25 – The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” (NIV)**
- Jesus seemed to admonish the disciples for choosing fear when He was right there with them. **Matthew 8: 26-27 – He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!” (NIV)**

- It is interesting that Jesus addressed their fear before He actually rebuked the bad circumstances.

Examples of common fears

- Some experts hypothesize that babies are born with just two fears – the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises – and that every other fear in life is a learned response.
- Most of the fears we have are fears of the unknown. We imagine what could happen next. We feel we are not in control, and won't be able to deal with some bad thing we think could happen.
- Those fears come from a lack of faith in God's presence in our lives.
- Oftentimes, those fears come from ideas we have allowed into our minds from such things as news feeds and social conversations.
- Too often, we then pass those fears on to others.

Put your faith in hope

- Hope is faith in a positive future rather than a negative outcome.
- Your best days are still in front of you. Put your faith in that truth. If you are still alive, God has a good purpose for your life.
- God is in your life's boat; do not fear the circumstances around you.
- God will use your experience gained to make you stronger. Sometimes, the best strategy for dealing with current fears is remembering how you no longer have old fears.
- Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.

Embrace God's presence and renew your hope

- Life's trials enable you to better know Jesus.
- Enjoy each moment for all the blessings it contains.
- **Romans 15:13 – May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (NIV)**
- You do not have control over most things that happen around you. However, you do have control over how you respond to those circumstances and the decisions you make.
- Give your best energy to the things you can control in life, and let God handle everything else.

Reflective Questions for Fear Fighting

1. Do you believe that Jesus is “in your boat”? If so, generally, how good are you in placing your faith in hope rather than fear?
2. In this message Ryan Leak emphasized the importance of feeding your soul with godly wisdom, rather than social conversation. How well have you personally balanced the fear contained in social networks and news reports with the hope contained in God’s Word?
3. If you are not satisfied you have provided yourself with a good balance between social news and God’s Word, what changes are you going to make this week to correct that imbalance?
4. In addition to participating in your church’s outreach efforts, what are other ways you can distribute hope to those in need?