

September 15, 2024
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Faith Over Fear

Matthew 8:23-27

In this powerful message, we're invited to confront our fears and deepen our faith through the lens of Jesus calming the storm in Matthew 8:23-27. This familiar story takes on new meaning as we explore the disciples' journey from fear to faith. We're challenged to examine our own 'little faith' and how it impacts our response to life's storms. The key lesson? Jesus is with us in the boat, capable of calming any tempest we face. But more than that, His presence itself is our true victory, not just the absence of storms.

This teaching encourages us to shift our focus from our circumstances to Christ, reminding us that fear is ultimately a sin - a lack of trust in God's sovereignty. As we navigate our own storms of anxiety, worry, and societal pressures, we're called to abide in Christ's perfect love, which casts out all fear. This message isn't just about weathering storms; it's an invitation to experience the transformative power of fully trusting in Jesus, even when our faith feels small.

5-Day Devotion

Day 1: Overcoming Fear with Faith

Reading: Matthew 8:23-27, Psalm 56:3-4

Devotional: Jesus' disciples faced a terrifying storm, yet He was peacefully asleep. When they woke Him in panic, Jesus noted their "little faith" before calming the stormy sea threatening them. Identify areas in your life where fear, worry, and anxiety can overwhelm you and then consider each of these fears in light of God's promises and faithfulness. Remember that faith, even as small as a mustard seed, can move mountains. Pray for God to increase your faith and help you trust Him in the midst of life's storms.

Additional Considerations/Questions for Reflection: Consider writing a list of each item that triggers fear, worry, and/or anxiety in your life. For each trigger, write a Godly response. Use these things to pray and ask for God to see you through your trials.

Day 2: God's Perfect Love Casts Out Fear

Reading: 1 John 4:16-19, Isaiah 41:10, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

Devotional: Fear is a powerful force employed by the enemy, but God's love is stronger. The sermon reminds us that fear is sin because it blinds us to the Good News while

demonstrating a lack of trust in God. Today, after reading and praying over the Scriptures noted above, meditate on God's perfect love for you.

Additional Considerations/Questions for Reflection: How might fully embracing this love change your perspective on your current challenges? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you experience God's love more deeply, allowing it to cast out fear from your heart.

Day 3: Finding Peace in God's Presence

Reading: Philippians 4:6-7, John 14:27

Devotional: Just as Jesus brought calm to the stormy sea, He offers peace to our troubled hearts. The world bombards us with reasons to be anxious, yet it is only Christ that offers us victory through all of these trials. Christ offers a peace that surpasses understanding. Today, practice being still in God's presence. When worries arise, consciously hand them over to the Lord. Remember, true peace isn't the absence of storms, but the presence of Christ in the midst of them.

Additional Considerations/Questions for Reflection: Write down who God is. His majesty, goodness, righteousness, personal care, and all the rest of His character traits and attributes you can think of. Then, with this fresh in your mind and starting with your biggest one, examine each fear in light of just who God is. Finally, pray and meditate for Him to give you the faith to trust Him more fully.

Day 4: Trusting God's Sovereignty

Reading: Romans 8:28, Proverbs 3:5-6

Devotional: The sermon emphasized that everything passes through God's fingers, even our trials. This truth can be challenging to accept, especially in difficult times. Today, consider a situation in your life that feels out of control. How might viewing it through the lens of God's sovereignty change your perspective? Pray for the strength to trust God's plan, even when you don't understand it.

Additional Considerations/Questions for Reflection: Write down when your fears have derailed or even driven you to make bad choices. Pray and consider what hedges of protection you can employ to encourage you to press into the Lord. Also, read some of the Psalms speaking of God's care and sovereignty – maybe Psalm 23 and several beginning in Psalm 90.

Day 5: Living as More Than Conquerors

Reading: Romans 8:31-39, 2 Timothy 1:7

Devotional: In Christ, we are more than conquerors. This doesn't mean life will be easy, but it does mean we have the ultimate victory through Him. The very practical teaching

reminds us that true victory isn't found in our comfort nor our perfect circumstances, but in an abiding relationship with Jesus. Today, reflect on and take a moment to write down what it means to be a conqueror in Christ. Ask Him to bring you to this place of victory and then offer Him praise and worship for what He has done and what He will do.

Additional Considerations/Questions for Reflection: How can you live out the identity of a Conqueror in Christ in your daily life? Answer this with specifics and a plan you will pursue. Ask God to help you walk in the confidence and power He provides, facing life's challenges with courage and faith.

For Further Reflection

Questions for Consideration and Prayer

- (1) How might our lives change if we truly believed and lived as though 'fear is a liar'? What practical steps can we take to combat fear with faith?
- (2) The sermon mentions the disciples having 'little faith'. How can we cultivate a stronger faith that withstands life's storms?
- (3) How does the image of Jesus sleeping during the storm challenge or comfort your view of God's presence in difficult times?
- (4) The sermon suggests that fear is a sin because it demonstrates a lack of trust in God. Do you agree or disagree with this perspective, and why? Importantly, support your views with Scripture.
- (5) In what areas of your life do you need to metaphorically 'get in the boat' with Jesus, trusting Him despite uncertainty or danger?
- (6) How can we, as believers, offer hope and peace to a world increasingly dominated by fear, anxiety, and worry?
- (7) How does the concept of Jesus as both the 'Lamb of God' and the 'Lion of Judah' impact our understanding of His character and our relationship with Him?

Quotes

“You don't need to have a lot of faith. We just need to have a little bit of faith. And Jesus will work with us with that little bit of faith to manifest himself in our hearts.”

“Perfect love casts out fear. Abide in Jesus, and he will abide in you.”

“Jesus is victory. Not sinning is not victory. That's not victory, because any of you can not sin for five minutes, or 10 minutes, or 15. Victory is abiding in Jesus, and He in you, and He gives you a new heart, and you begin to walk out the beatitudes.”

“Fear is a sin. It's that simple. Fear is a sin because it demonstrates...it reflects a lack of trust that Christ is on the throne of your life.”

“You can't bring yourself peace, but Jesus can.”

“If you're halfway in, you're not in. If you're 99% in, you're not in. He calls us to make that choice to be all in in following him or not.”

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