

Fear vs Faith

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Date: 10 March 2024

Preacher: Pastor Wolski

[0 : 0 0] that. Yeah, please. Thank you. All right. If you have your Bibles, please find Mark chapter four, and we're going to take a look at another. Maybe this will be our final contrast in this little bit of a study we're doing about addressing some things that may or may not be in your heart and in your life, and perfecting that which is lacking was kind of the theme or thought from the beginning, and this is one that I think you will agree, and you'll find out that is present very quickly in your life, no matter who you are, maybe some more than others, but it's one that can absolutely get in and stay in and be a problem. So let's take a look at Mark chapter four, and we're going to read a little short passage here, a familiar story to you, and it really helps to draw out the point. We're going to start in verse 35. Mark 4, 35.

So the Lord Jesus Christ is here with his disciples, and the same day when the even was come, he saith unto them, let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship, and there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow. And they awake him and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish. And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly and said one to another, what manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? Now, while you're there, you saw the passage, you saw the contrast already, I'm sure, in verse 40 in his question, why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? If you had faith, you wouldn't be fearful? Because you don't have faith, you're full of fear.

Now, look over at chapter 5. I'll show you just one more verse, and very close by. Chapter 5 and verse 36. And as soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, be not afraid, only believe. One replaces the other, or one takes the place of the other. One can force out another, and there's fear and there's faith. And we're going to contrast those two, faith versus fear, because I believe that it's a common battle for Christians, probably for some daily, for some weekly, but nevertheless, whatever, it's bigger than people want to acknowledge, because it can creep in in little ways. And it's something you deal with a lot. It has, I want to say, a variety of manifestations.

And people talk about overcoming fear, or facing your fears, and things of that nature. But what we're going to look at, really, my thought, is just controlling fear as your primary reaction, and replacing that with faith. Or maybe having strong faith, so that the temptation to fear as it comes daily in small or big ways can just be put down. It can come up and get hit into the shield of faith, and be quenched right away, rather than ever finding a place on the inside. So let's talk about fear versus faith this morning. Let's pray. Father, please take this time and take these passages of the word of God, and make them real to us. Please make them alive to us, and let them speak to us on the inside. And Lord, do a work in us, and in our hearts. And Lord, may our faith be strong, and in your might, and in your words, and in your person. And give us some grace this morning for our failures, and for our fears, and just help us, be merciful to us. But Lord, show us something, reveal some truth to us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. All right, and this is an interesting scene, going back to the boat, and Jesus Christ and his disciples, whereas there, the ship is now full. That's got to be something. And Jesus Christ is still asleep. And so he doesn't have a care in the world, has in literally not a care in the world, when the worst possible scenario is upon him. He's just not into it. It's not bothering him at all. It's not even arresting his attention, much less awakening him from sleep.

And the disciples, on the other hand, are filled with fear. And I think you and I would be too, if we were on a boat. We'd be like, I'm never ever getting on a boat again in my life, because this, I knew this would happen. And that's where they're at. They are scared to death, and they're accusing him of not caring for them. They believe they're perishing or dying today, going down with the boat. And his words to them are, why are you so fearful? Now, I'm just, it's hard for me to read the passage and just think he stood up and said, peace, be still.

[5 : 51] If there's a dog barking really loudly at you, you don't just say, be quiet, buddy. You like, you yell at him. You tell him and you kick him, whatever. You react in a way that meets the noise.

You know, you bring it up a notch. And if the winds are that battering of the ship, this is a great storm. If the waves are crashing that hard, if it's that chaotic, then I imagine he raised his voice, not that he had to. I just, that's my imagination of the scene. When the chaos is up, you kind of rise to that level and you put it down. And so I can hear him in a loud voice yelling, peace, and just saying, be still. And it all just calms right down. And I'm not saying he was angry, but with that same energy, I can just see it in my mind, turn to his disciples and look them in the eye and say, why are you so fearful?

Like, can't a man get us any rest around here? Why are you so fearful? Well, because of the wind, because of the waves. Well, I'm not going to fault him too much.

But that's the question that he asks is, why are you so fearful? And the second question that follows it up, that's really pointed is, how is it?

How is it? I've been spending this time with you. You've seen what I can do. You should know by now. How is it that you have no faith? And so let's take that thought today and let's bring it to our homes and lives where we live.

[7 : 35] Because if you're a born again Christian and you have the words of God and you've known them and have read them and have eternal life and the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to your account, you're eternally secure in Christ Jesus.

These things you know. These things are settled already, if that's you. Then something rises up in the sea of life and starts smacking on your life and starts pushing you around a little.

And then the question is for you. Why does that intimidate you? Why does that make you anxious? Why does that get your mind all in a fray and you can't focus on what's right and what you ought to be doing and you skip your Bible reading and you skip prayer and you'll even let it keep you out of church because you're so tore up or in knots about something?

Why is it that you're so fearful like that? How is it that after all this time you have no faith? Have you not learned to trust God? Have you not learned to lay your problems at his feet? And that would be the question. Now let's contrast these two words quickly.

[8 : 54] Fear can be manifest in ways I'm even suggesting. In smaller ways. It doesn't have to be the big nightmare that's some scary, scary thing. But it can just be simple worry and concern.

Things like dread or stress or panic. Anxiety. Apprehension. A Bible word. Fret. That can be fear.

It can be in smaller ways than we want to maybe acknowledge. Faith, though, on the other hand, is simple trust. Faith is dependence. Faith is reliance and belief.

And faith is even expectation. And with it, assurance. When you have faith, why the trials of the problems of life arise, but there's an assurance in your shield of faith that says, it doesn't matter that much.

Or even if it hurts, it's not going to take away what I have in Jesus Christ. And faith blocks a lot of stuff if you have it.

[10 : 01] Now fear. Let's focus on fear for a little bit. Fear is a normal response for the old man. For the sinner. That you are in your flesh. That's just a normal response.

Something comes up. Get worried about it. Let it consume your mind. Let it take over. And now you feel like I have to pray about this all day, every day, when probably you don't.

You're just afraid. You're just living and consumed and controlled by fear. Well, you're in the flesh. Because he's weak. And the flesh allows things to disturb the peace that God offers and promises to his child.

Does he not promise the peace of God? Does he not say that if you'll take it to him, the peace of God will keep your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus? That's a promise from Philippians.

But fear, fear of whatever the situation will disturb that peace. It's a product of living our lives in these sinful bodies of flesh.

[11 : 07] Where we understand we are not strong enough. We are not smart enough. We are not wealthy enough. We are not wise enough to just subdue and overcome every situation this world will throw at us.

That is true. You and I are not. Especially in our flesh, we cannot navigate and don't have the wisdom. We're surrounded by the wages of sin.

We're surrounded by the wages of sin.

We're surrounded by the wages of sin. You can't cure cancer. You can't cure cancer. You can't control the weather. You don't have the wisdom. You don't have the ability to govern the direction of the society that you live in.

The world. The world stage. You can't fix that or change that. So you know what you can do? You can worry about it. You can fear it.

[12 : 11] You can let it consume your heart and your mind and your thoughts. You're surrounded by things. Jesus Christ said in this world, ye shall have tribulations.

And they're here. And they're here to stay. And you're surrounded with it. And fear, fear will steal the peace of God out of your heart.

Your flesh will fear the outcomes of things. It'll fear the potential effects of things. It'll stress about the future because you can't control it. Now, turn over to Matthew 6.

I want to revisit a passage we were at just recently in our Sunday school studies. Matthew 6. Matthew 6.

And we're going to look at this passage closing the chapter out in verse 25 through 34. And as we do, I want you to notice the repetitive occurrences of this thought or these words, take no thought.

- [13 : 26] And it's in connection to them worrying or allowing something that's out of their control to consume them. So he says, take no thought.

Take no thought for this. Notice this in verse 25. Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body which ye shall put on.

Is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment? Are that in raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? Why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, how they toil not, neither do they spin.

And I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God, God, God, there's the point, there's the perspective we're to have.

- [14 : 23] If God so clothed the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast in the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore, take no thought, saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed?

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. And again, the point is they don't know God. For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Therefore, or he says, take therefore no thought for the morrow.

For the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, sufficient unto the days of the evil thereof. So you see this repetitive thought here. I think it's six times it references it in some way about taking thought.

For, as he says in verse 32, for the need of all these things, or the things that ye have need of. And the teaching is pretty plain that God is able to be trusted for all of your needs and all the provisions.

- [15 : 34] And it's in verse 30 where he says, The person who is taking thought and taking thought and worried and consumed is somebody who has little faith.

That's why they're worried. That's why they're filled with panic and stress and anxiety and apprehension about what's coming tomorrow and how am I going to be prepared.

And all of these things where he says, The Lord is capable and able to care for your needs. You have enough to focus on today than to be worried about tomorrow.

Verse 34. Now, in the Bible, God, he gives us an account of human history. And he does it in such a way that he gives us everything.

He doesn't focus on things that just repetitive, repetitive, repetitive, always the same story, always the same scenario.

- [16 : 34] But what I'm trying to get out is that everything that could go wrong in your life and in your world has gone wrong in somebody's life, in somebody's world already.

Let me give you a few examples of this. There's characters in the Bible that have experienced sicknesses, diseases. Some it's been their spouse and they're very concerned.

Some it's been their children, as is the case right here in some of the Gospels. Some it's their own selves. A woman that's got this disease for 12 years.

An issue of blood. There's sickness that are ongoing year after year. There's people that we read about in this Bible that know what it's like to be sick and to even have an incurable disease, leprosy, and others.

So they exist, God reveals to us. That's been around a long time. People, God's people, with diseases. All right? Beyond disease, there's death.

[17 : 41] There's death. There's death. People losing their children. People losing their parents. People losing their spouse. That happens in the Bible. It happens in the world every day, but I'm showing you the Word of God addresses these things.

So there's death all over the Bible as well. It's just part of human experience. There's poverty in the Bible. Poverty.

Real poverty. People that were poor. Dead on poor. Had nothing. There's one case where a woman has nothing but two sons, and the creditors are coming because she owes them money.

Does that sound familiar to your life? You owe money, and they want it now. And she doesn't know what to do. She had that feeling, that stress in her day after day.

They're going to take my sons. Because I have nothing to pay. You don't think she lived with stress? With fear? So that's in the Bible.

[18 : 48] Oh, there's evil governments in the Bible. Meaning there's people that lived under the rule of evil kings and rulers and governments. So is that something that we need to get all up in arms about and fear today?

It's been going on all through human history, and God just winks at it. Is that something that we need to fear? It's been going on a long time.

There's been enemy invasions. Enemy invasions. Invading the land. And taking over the land. And actually, I mean, all the horrors of war are described happening to a people.

And God knows we don't want to fear that. We don't want to go through that. People did. And people do. There's false arrests.

There's imprisonments. There's beatings. Cruel treatment of mankind in the Bible. There's natural disasters. Earthquakes and floods in the Bible.

[19 : 53] There's thieves and robbers. There's wild and ferocious animal attacks. It's all here. It's all here. Everything you could be afraid of or could happen to you, it's here.

There's spiders in the Bible. Anything you could fear. And the Bible says, There hath no temptation taken us, but such as is common to man.

Do you understand that? Do you get what I'm saying here? That anything that you could fear and stress over, any anxiety you could have in your flesh, it's not you.

It's not the first time. It's been forever in existence. It's been since the world began with sin introduced, we've been surrounded with it.

All right. Now that you know that, and I hope that's set in, look over to 2 Timothy chapter number one. Let's talk about fear. 2 Timothy chapter one.

[21 : 13] All right. 2 Timothy chapter one and verse number seven. For God hath not given to us the spirit of fear.

I'm going to get a few thoughts from this. Let me back up a little bit in the passage. And verse number five. He says, When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, Timothy, there's faith in you, Timothy, which first dwelt in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice.

And I am persuaded that in thee also. What does Timothy have in him? He has faith in him. Unfeigned faith. That's authentic and real. Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of hands for God hath not given us the spirit of fear.

What Timothy has in him is faith. What he does not and never will receive from God is a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Boy, that's a good one there. Despite everything that exists in this life, in this world, everything that could go wrong, everything that could command our fears and anxiety, God has not given us that spirit to fear it.

[22 : 44] Any of it. God has not given us that spirit. It does not exist in the new man. Understand that.

So, first of all, from here, fear does not come from God. It is not from your relationship with him. You do not get on your knees and pray and get up afraid.

Peace comes from God. Fear comes from your flesh. Now, know this. Get this. This is important. And this is, it sounds maybe simple, but if, if you're full of anxiety and worry about things, this is something you need to get a hold of.

Fear does not come from God. It is outside of that relationship. You're to walk in the spirit. And if you do, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

One of those works of the flesh is your fears. It's evidence that you're not walking with God or in the spirit, but rather walking in the old man.

[23 : 48] And I think this is helpful for us to recognize this and to understand it, because when situations arise real quickly in life, and you react to them in fear, you need to know immediately that is not from God.

That response is not the new man. I am quickly slipping into my old nature, and he is coming out, and he is taking control.

This is my flesh. Tell yourself that. And I'm supposed to mortify the old man with his deeds. This is not right for me to fear this.

This is not right for me to worry about this. If I'm supposed to do anything, I should get on my knees and lay it at the throne of grace. That's where it should go. So fear doesn't come from God.

Secondly, from this passage, fear is a spiritual foe. It's called the spirit of fear. It's a spiritual adversary, meaning fear can't be touched, right?

[24 : 51] You can't wrestle fear and twist its arm and say, all right, now you're out of here. We can't round up fear and kick it out of the building, because it's a spiritual foe.

It exists in our heart. It exists in our mind, in our spirit. It's a spiritual enemy of faith.

God hath not given us the spirit of fear. Now, take your Bible and head back to the left and stop at Galatians 5, and then we're going to keep going back a little bit more to 2 Corinthians, just before Galatians.

But on your way to 2 Corinthians 4, get Galatians 5. Fear is a spiritual foe.

And in Galatians 5, we get this little 9-point list of the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit, verse 22.

[26 : 00] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, fear. Well, no. That's not going to make the list, is it? Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.

What's the next one? Faith. Absolutely not fear. Faith. Faith. Faith. So when you're walking in the new man, a fruit that emerges in your life is faith.

Faith. Faith. And you lay down the fears and say, I'll trust you, God, because I'm walking in the Spirit. And He will not cause you to fear things in this life.

He will cause you to trust Him, to believe on Him. He will give you assurance. And there's, I said earlier, an expectation that comes with faith. You expect your Father to take care of it, to trust, to provide, or to lead, or to enable you, or to make a way.

There's faith. So fear is a spiritual foe. But a fruit of the Spirit is faith. Now, it's in your mind.

[27 : 15] It controls your thoughts. Fear does. And when it controls your thoughts, it controls your actions. And when it controls your actions, it's controlling your life. When you give in to fear and to the work of the flesh.

Fear, if it grows big enough, it'll paralyze the new man. And you say, oh no, I can do all things through. Well, not if you're living in the flesh. You're not going to do anything for Christ or through Christ because you're not in the new man.

You've got to be in the new man. When the old man takes over and fears come alive and take over, he will bind the new man and put him down.

For instance, the new man will want to witness. The new man in you will have a conviction for a family member, a friend, a co-worker, and know that they're lost and believe they need Jesus Christ.

And inside, you want to tell them. You want them to be saved. And that fear comes up and says, you don't say a word. You don't know how to say a word.

[28 : 21] You don't know the Bible well enough. You're not a pastor. You never went to Bible school. You're not clergy. So you just keep shut and you're going to look like a fool.

And they're going to laugh at you. And there's another fear. They're going to make fun of you. And they're not going to accept you anymore. They're going to nickname you. And they're going to have things that they're... Oh, okay. Speak all manner of evil against you falsely.

And fears will give you plenty of excuses why to keep your mouth shut. The new man wants to witness. Fear won't let him. The new man inside of you wants to sing and praise Jesus Christ for delivering your soul from hell.

And the old man says, keep your mouth shut. Don't you open your mouth. They're going to hear you. Somebody's going to be looking at you. Somebody will make fun of you. Somebody will laugh at you. You don't even know what you're doing.

Keep it shut. The new man inside of you that's born again has desires to please Jesus Christ. Wants to crack open that Bible and grow.

[29 : 20] And there's always an excuse. Wants to serve God. Wants to stand for Christ. Wants to live unashamed. Wants to serve Jesus Christ and glorify him.

And the old man is afraid. And the old man binds him and never permits him to glorify God and walk in the spirit. So what I'm showing you is a spiritual thing.

And understanding that can be probably the first step to conquering it and to getting to victory. Now look at 2 Corinthians 4. That's where we were going to. 2 Corinthians 4.

So fear doesn't come from God. God has not given us that spirit. He will not. And it's not from him. Recognize that. It is a spiritual foe.

And then thirdly, you fight fear with faith. And in verse 13, Paul says, We having the same spirit of faith.

[30 : 26] God has not given us the spirit of fear, but we do have something from God. It's the spirit of faith. According as it is written, I believed and therefore have I spoken.

We also believe and therefore speak. And Paul's faith is just the same as the one that's writing the Old Testament passages and saying that we have trusted God and therefore we this and that.

And he's like, we're the same way. We believe too. And therefore, we're going to live that same way by faith and trusting God and watching him work. And verse 14, knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus and shall present us with you for all things are for your sakes that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God for which cause we faint not.

But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. The inward man, because he's been given the spirit of faith.

When things arise against us, the spirit of faith rises within us and combats it. The spirit of faith causes us to trust in our good and our all-knowing heavenly father.

[31 : 40] That faith, I said earlier, is our shield. It's the shield of faith which is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. So we fight fear.

We resist fear with faith. Now, a quick few things about faith. I don't have much time for this, but faith requires something, or maybe I should say faith accompanies, or something accompanies faith, and that is patience.

Patience and faith go together. When God gives you faith, you trust him. Fear says, I've got to do something, and something needs to be done, and here's the situation.

And faith says, God, I'll trust you, and I'll wait on you. I'll believe you, and I'll just let you do it. I'll wait for you to work it out.

But it has to happen now, but I'm going to keep trusting you, and if I don't see God doing something now, then I guess I need to just trust that he'll do it when it's time.

[32 : 46] And so patience, Christian, patience accompanies faith. The victory you need and expect may not be realized overnight.

You're going to need patience. You have need of patience. Over the course of years, it may not happen then either. And so you continue to trust and say, well, God, I believe you, and I guess you didn't see fit to work it out the way I had hoped or wanted or was praying, but I still trust you, and I know that you'll work all things together for good.

I know that you're in control of this, and you've got a better idea of it than I do anyway. Flip back to Lamentations. Jeremiah and then Lamentations, sandwiched right between Jeremiah and Ezekiel, is a short little five-chapter Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah. When your faith is coupled with patience, you can trust and continue to trust Jesus Christ, that he knows what's going on, he cares about it, he's fully aware, and he's going to work it out.

Now, in Lamentations 3, there's affliction in verse 1. There's fear. And darkness in verse 2.

[34 : 21] And just some horrible situations throughout the passage. There's misery in verse 19.

And so this is ugly. And surely, the prophet and the people would like to be relieved, would like to be delivered.

But what can they do? Well, look at later, let's see, verse 24. Verse 24. Verse 24.

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. That's what he's doing in verse 24.

[35 : 27] He's hoping. And in verse 25, he's waiting. And it's good. It's good for you to learn how to hope and to quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

That is not a reference to him saving your soul from hell. The word salvation is a deliverance. And that's what they're crying out for, for the deliverance from this affliction and from this misery and from the persecution and the captivity that they're in.

And until God brings it about, they're going to hope in God that's expecting that he's the answer for them. He is their portion. And they're going to quietly wait for it.

Not filled with fears. Not filled with anxiety. Not stressing. Not fretting. But waiting.

And so faith needs patience. It accompanies it quite well. Flip back to Psalm 123. Psalm 123.

[36 : 43] Psalm 123. The Psalms are filled with men in bad situations like tough affliction.

And the focus is on the Lord and on expecting him to help and trusting in his care and trusting in his oversight through the whole thing. Verse number one.

There's four short verses here. Unto thee, lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until that he have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord. Have mercy upon us for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease and with the contempt of the proud.

So he's not in a good place at all. But what is he going to do about it? He's going to turn his eyes toward heaven. He's going to lift his eyes toward God and wait.

[38 : 09] And wait for God to have mercy. Not going to worry about it. Not going to live in fear. Not going to let fear consume him or control him. But just trust.

And what the Lord promises is that he will give you peace to keep your heart and mind, to keep you sane. You know, he hath given us a sound mind.

And he promises to give you grace that you can endure it. That you can handle and live through whatever this is that's so bad that's got you all worked up and worried.

He promises, I'll give you grace. I'll give you peace. And the other thing he's praying for is, Lord, have mercy on us. He wants to get out of it. I know we all want to get out of it. We don't want to deal with the problems.

The wages of sins, whether they're our own or others. But the study here is about faith and fear. And I want you to learn and be able to identify when your flesh is trying to get in front of the work of God inside of you and trying to block God's peace in your life and interfere with it.

[39 : 20] I want you to recognize this, the old man. This isn't from God. And there's going to be something that's just driving you nuts right now. Whatever it is, there's a list of things and I could probably hit some of them if I went down the list that are bothering you.

And I'm trying to teach you to walk by faith. To turn it over to the Lord. To not fear it, not let it consume you, not let it fill your mind and heart with anxiety and stress and strain because it will affect your relationship with Him, your relationship with others.

And God gave us peace. We're supposed to live at peace one with another and the new man is the only one that can do that. So, faith and fear, you understand which one's from God and which one's not.

So, let's walk by faith. Let's pray. Our Father, please take these thoughts and these truths from the Word of God and help us to apply them in our everyday life.

From the little things to the big things, give us faith. Identify in our minds this fear. Show us when we're not trusting you. Show us when we're slipping into the old man.

[40 : 32] Help us to fight it with the shield of faith. Give us victory, I pray, Lord, that we could trust you more, that we could grow in our faith and that we could display to others how to walk by faith.

I thank you for these truths.