

# Face your Fears

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[0:00] Just yesterday, just yesterday, Julie and I were driving along and I saw this shadow on the! windscreen and I wondered what it was and then I realised it was a spider.

! But it was on Julie's side so I wasn't so worried but then when I suddenly saw it moving I said, is it on the inside? Is it on the inside? And we realised it was on the inside, this huntsman spider just hovering above Julie's lap and so I quickly pulled over and I don't know who was more afraid, Julie or me? I think it was me actually. I can get pretty fearful, can't you? Who gets fearful?

Afraid? Face your fears is my message today. Face your fears. It's almost like on one side of the thermostat you've got fear and the other side faith. They kind of work as opposites, don't they? When we see our Lord says, fear not. He's also saying have faith, doesn't he? Fear not, trust me. We see Peter as he stepped out of that boat onto the water, he faced his fear as it were as the voice of Jesus said, come unto me. He stepped out of the boat, out of the comfort zone. And then we know he actually reverted back into fear because he saw the storm, the waves, the choppy sea and he started to sink. Fear and faith, they're kind of opposites if you like.

[1:49] They contrasted through the word. It's almost like a thermostat. You've got the cold and the hot. On the one side you've got fear, on the other side you've got faith. And it's a range that we have of sorts. And fear is a problem. It holds many people back from doing something for the Lord.

We can have fear that can stifle our faith. You know, when the pastor asks you to do something and you've never done it before. Or when you know that's something I could do for the Lord, but I've never done it before. Whether it's going witnessing, for example. Some people have never knocked on a door and face to face had a witness with someone to tell them of their faith. And it's stepping out of that fear, isn't it? And having faith, trusting God, that God will see you through. God will enable you to have the words to speak when you're witnessing. And I know of late, I've had some time going down, doing some open air preaching, and you've almost got to just put fear to one side and just have faith, don't you? You don't let the fear override your faith. Your faith overrides the fear.

But fear can stifle our faith. It can hold us back. And we can stay in that cold zone, that lukewarm zone, when God wants us to be in the fervent zone, in fervent faith.

So easy to settle on mediocrity, just sort of staying in the fear zone, as it were, not stepping out and just staying where it's comfortable and where we know where everything is.

[3:19] But that can be a danger of half-heartedness. Half-heartedness can be a problem. We see, as the word tells us, that partial obedience is really disobedience, isn't it? As we know, the case where the Lord told the people to destroy all of the Amalekites' goods and chattels, but they kept some and they heard the sheep bawling that they had not destroyed utterly what God had said to destroy utterly. It was partial obedience, but really it was disobedience.

We see that in 2 Chronicles 20, 33, 2 Chronicles 20, verse 33, where we see Jehoshaphat, he began to reign over Judah. And of him it says, of the time of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chronicles 20, 33, good was done, howbeit the high places were not taken away. There was some obedience to God's call and his command to destroy and to commit to him, but the high places were not taken away, the places of worship of the pagan idols. For as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto God, the God of their fathers. There was a partial obedience, but the high places were not taken away.

Why? Because the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers. They were held back at that heart level. They still had, as the Bible elsewhere speaks, of idols in the heart. There's a sense of idols in the heart. They were not breaking free from the idols that they worshiped. And maybe it was fear, as that was what they were always accustomed to doing. They were always accustomed to having it two ways, sitting on the fence, maybe having a bit of bail and a bit of the Lord, as if you could mish-mash and mix the two.

[5:20] And that making a break from the crowd, from the false worship, it was something maybe the people were fearful of. In 2 Chronicles 25.2, of another king, of King Amaziah. This is 2 Chronicles 25.2.

It says, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart. 2 Chronicles 25.2. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, which is tick, but not with a perfect heart. His heart was not wholly given to it. He did not want that full-on commitment.

It's like he stayed in the fear zone, in the half-hearted zone, rather than make a full-on commitment. And we see that half-heartedness as a real issue. We see that another example of that half-heartedness is when Elisha talked to King Joash. And Elisha prophesied to King Joash that there would be a victory over the Syrians. And he asked King Joash to take hold of some arrows and to act out some actions with those arrows. And these arrows would demonstrate the victory of Israel over Syria. This is 2 Kings 13 from verse 18. And Elisha says, verse 18, take the arrows. And he took them. King Joash took the arrows. And he said unto the king of Israel, smite upon the ground. So King Joash took those arrows and he smote upon the ground three times. And the man of God was wroth with him and said, thou shouldst have smitten five or six times.

Then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it. Whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice. King Joash just kind of half-heartedly hit the ground with those arrows just three times.

[7:26] Rather than what Elisha was really wanting to see of that commitment that he would thrash those arrows until they were well and truly smashing the ground and perhaps breaking up, that there would be a real demonstration and a demonstration of a zeal, of a fullness. But yet there was a half-heartedness.

There was, in effect, a picture of the lack of zeal. Instead of having strong action, there was a sign of perhaps half-heartedness, of a restrained zeal. And friends, tonight I urge each one, as believers, we can stay in the fear zone, as it were. We can stay in the half-hearted zone when God wants us to take action, strong action, to be full on, to crank up the heat, as it were, to shift the dial, as it were, from the fear zone into the faith zone, to leave fear behind and to go forward in faith, to pull out all the stops and to check that thermostat, if you like, to leave that zone of fear and move into the zone of faith so that we see a zeal, a wholeheartedness for God's work and our great God. It's about where we set the dial, if you like. And in 1 John 5 verse 4, in part, it talks about this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. This is the victory that overcomes the world our faith. Our victory is in proportion to that setting, if you like. The victory is corresponding with the faith. And maybe when we find times where we lack victory, perhaps it's the faith that is lacking. We need to shift the dial. We need to turn up the heat. One of the biggest enemies for us of putting our faith into action is when we put things off. We can say sometimes of spiritual things, it can wait. We can get to it. You know, the old get around to it.

We put things on the back burner. We have the mind. We'll get to that. We'll get to putting our faith into action. But first, we'll pursue some other things first. And it's like other loves get in the way. So you've got half-heartedness and then you've got putting things off. That can also be a trap and hinder your faith activating. I read a story headline in a political newspaper and it went like this, our own apathy is our enemy. Our own apathy is our enemy. Sometimes the greatest enemy can be apathy in the sense that we just coast and get comfortable and we're not willing to step out of that zone of the comfort, the comfort zone. And I put to you, sometimes our Christianity can get paralysed. You hear of people that die of frostbite in these expeditions to the poles. It creeps up on them. Frostbite creeps up on them until they're slowly paralysed and they die as their life gradually ebbs away. It creeps up on them.

And that can happen with, I think, at times our faith can get paralysed. It can get weakened. And it can be that it's not put into action and it's like a creeping kind of frostbite that our faith can lack and fade. But God's plan for us is rather that we step forward in faith, that we not hold back, that we step out of the shadows and we step forward believing God, trusting in him, shaking off those shackles

that would hold us back and keep us in the comfort zone.

Yet it seems many powerless Christians stay there and they don't realise the power that God has for them. And consequently we have a powerless church. The question for all of us I put is, will we camp out with the fearful and the faint-hearted? Rather than camping out at that place called fear, rather than settle for that half-heartedness or putting things off or half measures, let's, as it were, reset the dial and move from fear to faith.

[12:13] A man prayed to the Lord. He said, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. There's that sense of fear, of unbelief, of doubt. And we need to pray, Lord, help me to believe.

Help me to be stronger in my faith. Help me to press forward, to press beyond that doubt and that uncertainty, that fearfulness. Will we be ready as soldiers?

Now when you contrast fear and faith, it makes me think of Joshua and Caleb. They stood out from the crowd. Joshua and Caleb were different.

Twelve had gone out to spy the land, to spy out the promised land that lay ahead for the children of Israel. Then they came back and brought back their various reports. Ten brought back a negative report of fear and doubt.

You know the story. Only two. Joshua and Caleb brought back the good report, the report of faith. And as a result, they received the reward. What was it that made a difference?

[13:26] It was that they looked with faith instead of fear. And there's a truth there for all of us, I put to us tonight, that we can stay with the doubters who would see the giants in the land, would see all the difficulties and troubles that lie ahead and stay in that zone of fear and of really doubt, of distrust of our Lord and his promises.

Or we can stand with the two who stood with God's promises, who stood out from the pack, the two, Joshua and Caleb, who stood by faith and saw by faith.

That's what made the difference, their faith. They weren't half-hearted. They weren't in half measures. They were full on. We see that in Numbers 32 verse 12. Numbers 32 verse 12, where it contrasts the two with the ten.

It says, Numbers 32 verse 12, Caleb and Joshua, they have wholly followed the Lord. They have wholly followed the Lord.

Wholly, wholeheartedly. They have put their whole into it. Their W-H-O-L-E, their whole of themselves. They followed the Lord with their whole hearts.

[14:44] Friends, tonight, when we face trouble, when we face challenge, when we face a contest, when we face a battle, let's be like Joshua and Caleb, who looked with faith.

Let's hold our ground and firmly trust him and let go of apathy and not stay with the murmurers and the fearful and the faint-hearted.

Really, it's a sign of childishness, isn't it? In Ephesians 4.14, of the context, it contrasts the understanding. In understanding, be men.

And it says we should be men, be mature, rather than being like children. And Ephesians 4.14, it tells of children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

It talks of children who flip-flop. They're tossed to and fro. There's an instability. They're just blown by every wind, by every fad and fancy.

[15:52] Jump on every bandwagon. Just follow the pied pipers. Children tend to do that. Whatever's catchy and glitzy and whoever's playing the tune when the piper plays, the children are attracted to that and drawn to that.

But the mature are the opposite of that. They stand firm. In understanding, be men. Paul's telling the Ephesians, act like men. Children will often hold back in fear.

You know, we hear of, mind you, I can get fearful, like I got fearful of that spider. And we can get fearful. I know when we lived in Queensland, we had some, there was big cockroaches there.

And I used to get pretty fearful of them. I used to go around with my footwear, my thongs, and I'd go and try to attack these cockroaches. And suddenly they would fly at you.

And that was even more scary. But so adults can get fearful too. But think of children, they can get fearful, can't they? When you have, some of you youngsters might have scary thoughts or dreams. [17:01] But really we know that none of us, young or old, need to be fearful because our God is with us. And yet we see of children, they can often hold back in fear.

They won't try something new when the teacher asks for a volunteer or when there's some school project or some challenge to do. Often children can be feeling it's too hard to speak up, to stand up. And they'd rather sit back in embarrassment or shyness. They want to hide and shrink back. And friends, we can be like that.

But Ephesians 4.14, it says, don't be like children. Rather be mature. Be men. Be brave. Be bold. And that's contrasting, yeah, in the fear and the faith.

What about witnessing? It's one example, isn't it? When we go witnessing, it can be quite a fearful thing. Even for a mature Christian, when we go witnessing, when we face people, there's one man, Shane, we met.

[18:02] Barry, wasn't it? Shane, a very convinced, sceptic man. Shane, very well versed in his disbelief and his attacking of the Bible. We pray for Shane.

He was willing for us to pray for him before we left his doorstep. He's still, I believe, he's searching for answers. He's looking in the wrong direction, though, at this stage. And another man, David, a former psychologist who has got some Hindu leanings, but a very learned man.

Yet, if we had not stepped forward and spoken to these men, these women that we have witnessing opportunities to, perhaps they would have missed something that was important.

At least the challenge, the leaving a thought with them, sowing the seed. And going witnessing, it's scary. Even for me, as an older Christian, as someone very assured of my faith and confident in my Lord, it's still something you've got to almost shake yourself out of fear and go forward.

Trusting God. Not letting the fear hold you stuck, but to break through and to press forward. And we know that when we go witnessing, you often get the response, not interested or keep it to yourself.

[19:21] It's like people want to do as they please. They don't care if people have got different beliefs of various kinds, but they don't want you to tell them. But we must tell them.

We actually have to tell them. And as much as they might reject, we must nevertheless be that delivery man, that delivery woman of that message.

It's easier to stay in the fear zone, to join the ranks of the fearful.

But I urge you tonight to prayerfully seek after God, to leave that zone of fear and step over into faith. To join the ranks of the unashamed.

It tells us that our Lord wants us to not be ashamed of his name. To not be ashamed of his name. And that name of Jesus, it's a fearful name, isn't it?

[20:20] In the ears of the unbeliever, they would hear any religion or philosophy or belief of men. But the moment you mention the name of Jesus, it makes the demons tremble, doesn't it?

The name of Jesus. And we should not be afraid. Not afraid to be politically incorrect. Not afraid. And not remain silent.

But to step over in faith. Now the devil would like us to stay in fear. God wants us to move into faith. And even if that be to be considered offensive.

Because we must communicate the message. We must. And people would say, oh, as we know the arguments I'm put, oh, you're being unloving to talking about sin.

Not for me that I particularly name or label a sin as more sinful than another sin. Because all have sinned. It's the point is that all have sinned and all must be saved.

[21:24] Or they will go to hell. That's the point. There are no ifs or buts about it. And consider this. If you're still in that zone where you're feeling like, well, I am a bit of a fearful Christian.

Consider the truth that he who has all power in heaven and in earth, he says to you, fear not.

He commands you, fear not. How can we doubt him? Consider that. Of him, he has all power, all authority in heaven, in earth.

He's in command of everything. He has all power and strength at his command. And he says to you, fear not. We see of John, the apostle, in Revelation 1 verse 9, he was exiled for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

He was sent to Patmos where he was held in this confinement of sorts. He was put aside in this desolate place called Patmos.

[22:31] Why? For the testimony of Jesus Christ. That could happen to you. You could get sent to Siberia. You could be distanced by your family and friends.

You know, that happened to me as a young Christian when I first started to witness to some of my schoolmates. They just suddenly didn't want to know me anymore. You know, because this guy's gone crack.

He's a crackpot. You know, sometimes you can end up exiled for the testimony of Jesus Christ. But what did the Lord say to John in 1.19 of Revelation?

Fear not. Fear not. We have a testimony too, don't we? You have a testimony and it's individually, uniquely yours. Your testimony.

What must we do? Testify. Testify. Fear not and testify. It can be that stepping out in faith is akin to stepping into a war zone.

[23:39] Joining the ranks of the unashamed. But for victory to come, it takes a challenge. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

And so it's by faith, by faith, by faith. When you look through the word of God, we see it was by faith that God moved. By the faith of his own children.

As Daniel tossed in the lion's den. Faith saw him through that. The three Hebrew children. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, they're pagan given names. They were thrown into the fiery furnace. God held them safe there. And he was with them. And he was with them, the fourth man. Faith.

As Jeremiah, he was dropped down into an empty, muddy cistern. Faith takes us beyond. As we leave the fear zone and enter into faith.

[24:41] We press forward into faith. We enter the promised land by faith. As James the Apostle, he was killed by King Herod. Faith held him there. Faith took him to death and beyond.

To glory. As a martyr. As Peter, he was thrown into prison. And the leaders told him to shut up about this Jesus. But what did they do? The moment they were released, they could not but go and speak again in the name of Jesus.

But he couldn't be shut up about his name. Consider the Apostle Paul. He stepped out of the fear zone. And he was well and truly out of the comfort zone.

As we read, for example, some verses of him in passing in 2 Corinthians 11. From verse 23, it tells of him. In labours more abundant.

In stripes above measure. In prisons more often. In deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods.

[25:42] Once I was stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep. Paul didn't stay in fear.

He went forward in faith. It says of him. In journeyings often. In perils of waters. In perils of robbers. In perils by my own countrymen. In perils by the heathen.

In perils in the city. In perils in the wilderness. In perils among false brethren. In weariness. In painfulness. In watchings often. So he had sleepless nights.

In hunger and thirst. In fastings often. In cold and nakedness. In the care of all the churches. Paul is a testimony. For us of.

Leaving the fear zone. And going forward in faith. Caring not for the privations. And difficulties that that might mean. God can disturb us from our comfort zones.

[26:40] We look at Hebrews 11. What made the difference with these men and women of faith? Hebrews 11. You might want to just. Have a look at that. To notice what mattered.

What was the defining factor. For these men and women. What was it that set them apart? And there's this recurring theme. Of course you would know this. I'm sure. By faith.

Hebrews 11 verse 4. By faith. Abel. Offered a more excellent sacrifice. By faith. Enoch. It was translated.

God took him. To glory. Translated him. He had this testimony. That he pleased God. Verse 6. But without faith. It is impossible to please him.

For he that cometh to God. Must believe that he is. And that he is a rewarder of them. That diligently seek him. Without faith. We can do nothing. Without him.

[27:38] We can do nothing. Verse 7. By faith. Noah. Being warned of God. Of things not seen as yet. Moved with fear. Prepared an ark. By faith.

Noah put his faith into action. We see verse 8. By faith Abraham. Verse 10. He looked for a city. Which hath foundations. Whose builder and maker is God.

By faith Abraham saw a city. He looked for a city. And he found that city. Whose builder and maker is God. Verse 11. Of Hebrews. It says. Of Sarah herself.

She received strength. Though she was past age. Verse 23. Moses. By faith. He was hid by his parents. He was not afraid.

They were not afraid. Of the king's commandment. Verse 24. By faith. Moses. He refused to be called the son. Of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction. With the people of God.

[28:38] And to enjoy the pleasures of sin. For a season. He esteemed the. Reproach of Christ. Greater riches. Than the treasures in Egypt.

We see Moses. Through the Passover. Through the passing. Through the Red Sea. We see verse 30. In effect of Joshua. By faith. The walls of Jericho fell down.

Faith. Made the walls fall down. Amen. Faith. That's what brought the victory. By faith. The harlot Rahab. She gets a mention. Verse 31. She.

Received the spies. She. Gave shelter to God's people. And God. Blessed her. We see verse 32. Of Gideon. Of Samson.

Of Barak. Of David. Of Samuel. And it goes on and on. Through Hebrews 11. The defining factor is by faith. They left the fear. They didn't stay in fear.

[29:36] And unbelief. And doubt. They trusted the word of God. They trusted his promises. It tells how they. Verse 33. They subdued kingdoms. They wrought righteousness.

They obtained promises. They stopped the mouths of lions. Out of weakness were made strong. Waxed valiant in flight. Fight rather. And so we see.

And there was cruel mockings. And scourgings. And bonds. And imprisonment. Verse 37. They were stoned. They were sawn asunder. So they were literally cut in pieces. They were tempted. They were slain with a sword. They wandered in sheepskins and goatskins. Destitute. Afflicted. Tormented. Look. It may not be your best life now.

As someone would paint the Christian life. It might mean being cut in two. It might mean wandering in sheepskins and goatskins. Being destitute. Penniless. Afflicted.

[30:31] Tormented. But we know that by faith we can face whatever is beyond. Whatever as we go forward. We leave the zone of fear and doubt.

And we enter the zone of faith. Trusting him to supply. To care for us. By faith we stand up for Jesus. We must do that brothers and sisters.

In these days. In this time and hour. And you will be hated for that testimony. The Bible says that men will hate you. You'll be taken before courts and councils.

And you'll have to give a count. And you have a testimony that is uniquely yours. Declare it. I urge you today. You might face hostility.

Genuine hostility. Even physical harm. As you proclaim the gospel. That can be the case. As we see in Hebrews 11. Should we shy away from such a test?

[31:32] Or should we be amongst the number of the men and women of Hebrews 11? You might say, look, I don't think I'm ready for that. God will help you.

By faith. Trust him. You can expect hostility. We're not promised a comfortable, easy ride.

We're not promised to have everything comfortable. But rather it can be the opposite. We see of Stephen in Acts 7.54.

It tells of the crowd as he proclaimed the truth in such a beautiful sermon that he gave. A beautiful presentation of the gospel and of God's history through the scriptures and the leading of God, of his

people.

And the crowd who heard him. It says in Acts 7.54, they were cut to the heart and they gnashed on him with their teeth. Now I've preached a few times but no one's gnashed on me with their teeth yet. [32:36] So maybe I'm not doing it hard enough or strong enough. I don't know how sharp your teeth are. But they gnashed on Stephen with his teeth, with their teeth. Now that's pretty graphic kind of language, isn't it?

That they would get so angry and vicious and spitting chips. When we go witnessing, we do see some hostility. I guess in Australia it's a little bit restrained, isn't it?

But you could see in some countries where really and truly we know there's such a vehement hatred of the name of Jesus, isn't there? There's a violent response from some.

When you tell them of the name of Jesus, when you deliver the gospel message, it's palpable. You know, I've had instances not that long ago where in open air preaching settings, people say things like, you're not allowed to say that.

You're not allowed to say that. Or they say, that's illegal. And they will hatefully yell at you. That's hate speech. Ironic, isn't it?

[33:45] They hatefully yell at you. That's hate speech, you know? This is the world we're living in. And we see, as we see in the media of late of this one, Israel Folau, it's just one example.

A man quoting scripture is now being vilified and attacked and made out to be such a horrible man, yet he's simply quoting the Bible. And we face the real opposition to the gospel.

And I put to you that it's heightening, that it's increasing, this opposition, yet we must not be discouraged. Rather, it's what we ought to expect to happen.

We ought to expect it to happen. And rather than feeling like a failure or rejected by a world that hates your God, count it as a confirmation that you're on the right side.

Because we're here to manifest Jesus. We're here to be his missionaries, to fulfill his mission. Are we ready to glorify God? It's going to cost you everything.

[34:48] Everything. We must make a stand. In this world, it's increasingly hostile to the gospel. When the moral and cultural issues of our day are defined by those who hate God and hate the Bible, and the level of godlessness is just astonishing and increasing, as the world grows colder and colder towards the gospel truths, the Bible tells of vile affections.

What do we see? You know, not that I spend over much time looking at the world's media or current affairs, but you just have to watch it for a few minutes at times to see, just to get a feel for what's going on.

I've seen recent videos of radicals burning flags in the USA. They're causing disorder. There's some protest planned by some left radicals to promote their vile and misguided causes by supergluing themselves to roads in Australia.

This is planned for next month, apparently. There's these radicals who, by and large, are gospel-hating, Christ-denying radicals and disruptors.

The Bible tells of vile affections, and that's what guides these people, sadly. They're in the devil's hold.

[36:22] We don't hate them, but we hate what the devil's doing to them. We want to see them set free. We're not against them as such as individuals per se, but we're against the message that they're declaring.

And all the while, while all of this radical hatred to the gospel is uprising and increasing, all the while this is happening, the gatekeepers want to keep Christianity out.

So they're even filtering Christian videos out on YouTube. And I understand in social media circles, Christian media is being censored and filtered out so that it doesn't have the spread, that it doesn't have the reach that it could have.

You know, Google and such things, that they are putting algorithms in such that Christian messaging is being stifled, the Christian voice is being stifled.

And I've heard instances of that, of Christian media sites and Christian video proponents who their material is being denied access.

[37:34] Why? Because the gatekeepers as such, those who have the control, are generally radical, anti-Christ-led people. And when you see the sick world, the sick values and agendas of this world, the standards of this world, a world that has set itself against God, we can expect this to happen.

We can expect this is what we face. They will let anything in but Christianity. It's a world at war against God. We've got to pull out all the stops and do what we are able, God enabling us by faith to leave the fear zone and to start to speak up and stand out.

Yet it seems there's a drastic lack of discernment amongst many professing Christians. They're ignorant of these things. And the more folk that I meet from here and there, it seems like there's a biblical illiteracy.

There's a lack of knowledge. There's a wishy-washiness that prevails. We stand by conviction, not so much preferences.

We're not here talking about preferences here. But this is conviction. This is biblical convictions. This is there is one saviour. There is one salvation. And this is a truth that must be declared loudly and clearly, but it's being eroded.

[39:01] Friends, these are days we must stand for the truth. Stand for the truth even if you are a lone voice. It's leaving the fear zone.

Of course, there's discernment and tact in workplace settings. You know, it's about how you do that respectfully and get the hearing of those who will have an ear to hear.

We see persecution heightening. And God is looking for big-hearted people, people of faith, the people in Hebrews 11.

It's as if we can be added to that chapter, as it were. Not that we add to or take away from the word of God, but there's that sense where, you know, we should be in their number. We should be in their number and counted amongst them.

In this day when the forces against us want to silence the gospel, it's too hot to handle. We ought to be a people not ashamed, to leave the fear zone and to remove some things that hold us back and to lay hold of some things, hold fast some things.

[40:12] Let's not make Jehoshaphat's mistake of being not wholehearted. He was not wholehearted. Friends, let's make our intent to not be half-hearted, but to be wholehearted.

Let's not make Jehoshaphat's mistake of a weak effort when we face the enemy. Let's do what we should do wholeheartedly, zealously, firmly, strongly.

And rather let's stand with Joshua and Caleb, not with the ten. Stand with Joshua and Caleb and the like, because they saw the giants, but they saw God was bigger than the giants.

Can you see the bigness of your God? He is greater than any giant you face. And recognise the deceitfulness of sin. Keep short accounts with God of yourself.

I know for myself. Remove fear. Let go of fear. And hold fast the word. The reality is that truth always has been, is and always will be the truth.

[41:27] The truth can't be revised or changed. It always is the truth. People might try to erode it or discard it, but it always remains the truth.

It always is the truth. And we must hold it fast. We see in Proverbs 22, 28, Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.

There's a sense where God set something in stone. It's a landmark. It's a marker. It's something steadfast and stated and declared.

It's like the post that they bang around that land that you want to build your house on. That is defined. There's no moving of it. It's set.

It's the boundary marker. And God's given us boundaries. He's given us clear and set instructions, the truth. And so there's a sense where we should be a stickler for that.

[42:33] Be a stickler. Someone might say, oh, you're stuck in the mud. You're old-fashioned. You're not keeping up with the times in this supposedly enlightened age. You're out of touch. But the truth is the truth.

It always will be. It always has been. Be a stickler for the truth. So determined to practice biblical separation in the sense that we will not be swayed.

We will not be detoured from that which is the truth because the truth does not change. We're not talking about preferences. We're talking about conviction, biblical convictions that are very clear. And it says in Psalm 4 verse 3, But know the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. The Lord will hear when I call unto him.

There's a sense where God has set you apart. You that are godly. That's a precious thing.

Separation is precious. Separation is a beautiful thing.

[43:32] It's a sanctified thing. The beauty of holiness. It's a wonderful thing. To be set apart unto God. To be specially his. For you to be his and he to be yours.

That's special. That's precious. And he's set you apart. You that are godly for himself. He's got a very special, personal, individual purpose for you.

So pursue that in grace. Living in grace. Practicing grace. And grasp the reality of the crucified life. That's by faith. The crucified life.

It's the exchanged life. The life I now live, says Paul. I live by the faith of the Son of God. He says, I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live.

Truly live. Question is, who do you identify with? We can stay in the campsite of fear. Or we can move forward in faith. We can see the promised land with the giants there.

[44:33] But we see God is bigger than them. Amen. Amen. Victory comes by faith. It always has and always will. You can be an overcomer. Maybe this week ahead, there's some giants in your pathway.

There's some giants you're going to have to face up to. Know God's overcoming power. Faith. Know his truth does not change.

Maybe you face some circumstances that are draining and hard for you. There's spiritual uncertainty.

There's need for healing. It could be of a situation of being hurt, of being wounded. In Jeremiah 8 verse 22, the prophet says, Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Is there no balm in Gilead? The balm is that healing ointment.

[45:38] And the sense is there is healing. There is healing. The remedy is still the same. The healing is still the same. The soul sickness is still the same.

And the remedy is still the same. Now some would go to New Age sources or gurus or sit at the feet of some mystical teachers that the healing is not there for the soul sickness.

The healing is in Christ. The balm of Gilead. It's Christ, isn't it? Christ alone can heal the soul sickness. And he alone can save us as a people in a nation where our culture is increasingly anti-Christ.

And there's a major ignorance of God's word. It's Christ's point, really. And when we look at the circumstances we face, we can stay in fear, as it were.

We can stay in unbelief. We can doubt God and be amongst the ten who saw the giants and saw their lack and their weakness, but they did not see God's strength.

[46:49] Or we can be like Caleb and Joshua who saw the giants, but they saw God's enabling. They saw God's power.

They saw God's promises. And they realised that. Let's move from fear to faith, as it were. And I guess I'm putting this in the analogy of contrasting the two.

Of course, to be saved is faith, isn't it? Faith, God's grace. It's trusting in the finished work of the cross. It's trusting Christ died for our sins.

Christ died for sinners. His death pays our wages of death. Our sin and its penalty. We can receive payment for that.

And that moment of faith we save for time and for eternity. Let's put that faith into action. As Christians, we can be saved, but we can still stay in that zone of fearfulness where we're afraid to stand.

[47:52] We're half-hearted or we settle for half measures such that we stay in defeat. We don't know the victory because we've never stepped out

of the comfort zone.

As Peter, he stepped out of the boat and he trusted God's promises. He stepped onto God's word. And friends, tonight, as believers, whatever your circumstance, whatever your need here, but most especially in that situation of putting your faith into action, simply trust him.

Trust him to take you beyond. And when you see, as it were, the things that evoke fear in you, whether it be a huntsman spider on the windscreen or whatever it be, you can face your fears. You can face those scary things of life knowing that faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you are our great almighty God and our mighty conqueror. And Lord, our faith can be entirely squarely in you. We thank you, Lord, for creating faith in our hearts and making us a people of faith, that we can put that faith into action.

[49:10] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Let's go to our final song. Be encouraged to, I trust, to find some application of this, I pray.

When you face challenges ahead, to know there is a balm in Gilead that is still his healing for your soul's dread condition.

There's still his healing power to save the soul from that dread disease of sin. And he can help you face your fears.

Amen. Let's go to that final song. All to Jesus I surrender. You know, I like to think we won't just mouth these words, but it will mean something.

A personal profession. Hymn number 12. Let's stand and sing, shall we? All to Jesus I surrender.

[50:13] All to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him.

In His presence daily live. I surrender all. I surrender all.

All to Thee, my blessed Saviour. I surrender all. Let's just hold it there.

All to Jesus I surrender. Humbly at His feet I bow. Worldly pleasure all forsaken. Take me, Jesus.

Take me now. The next one it says, all to Jesus I surrender.

Make me Saviour. Holy Thine. That wholeheartedness. Holy Thine. Completely Thine. Fully Thine. Let me feel the Holy Spirit.

[51:17] Truly know that Thou art mine. Let's go to the next verse. All to Jesus I surrender. All to Jesus I surrender.

Lord, I give myself to Thee. Fill me with Thy love and power.

Let Thy blessing fall on me. Make it personal. I surrender all. I surrender all.

All to Thee, my blessed Saviour. I surrender all. And the last.

All to Jesus I surrender. Now I feel the sacred flame.

[52:17] Oh, the joy of full salvation. Glory. Glory. Glory. To His name.

I surrender. I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Saviour.

I surrender all. Let's pray again. Lord, we thank you for your grace. It's all sufficient. Lord, if there's any that have yet to trust you, they might put their faith squarely and entirely in you right now.

And Lord, let it be a life-changing profession of faith. Lord, for each one, as believers, may we be stirred up and encouraged in a good way, knowing that you are with us.

Your word says, fear not, for I am with thee. Lord, we claim that promise. That there is no reason for any fear. Because you are with us.

[53:28] You are with us. And all authority, all power is in your hands. And so we trust in you, our all-powerful God, to help us with whatever faces us Monday or from here on.

Lord, that we can know faith that is the victory that overcomes the world. In Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. Amen.