

Faith versus Fear

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'Weather the storm with our faith'

We can all recall storms in our lives, storms of trials, testings, sufferings, challenges, and the feelings of the unknown.

We all went through storms in our lives, and we know how it feels to be in the middle of the storm.

Reading: Matthew 14:22-27

- The disciples encountered a sudden storm. They were in danger of rough water and raging waves with no life vest. Circumstances in their condition gave them fear.
- Fear is a natural human emotion
- In the middle of the raging waves, Jesus had a word for them. So, if you are in the storm, God has also a word for you
- Jesus wants us to deepen our faith and grow in Him before He calms our storm because He wants faith to win over fear.
- Faith and fear cannot co-exist in our hearts, only one has to win. Like a seesaw, if one is up, the other is down.
- If we allow fear to rise then faith will decline, if we increase our faith, fear will fall.

Matthew 14:22 Immediately, he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

- Jesus gave the disciple His word that they were going to make it to the other side.
- Today, God is also giving us His word - that we are going to make it through whatever crisis we are in. He is true to His word, and we can count on Him for He is a promise keeper.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[a] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord
(Romans 8:38-39).

- Not even sufferings, challenges, trials, storms, or even Covid-19 can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. Hang on to the promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them **(Matthew 14:23-24)** .

- Not only did Jesus give them His word, He knew what was going to happen to them; how their situation is going to end even before they step on the boat.

- Jesus allowed the raging storm to exist at the moment when the disciples were in the middle of the sea.

Revelation: Whatever it is that we are going through, whether it makes sense or not, remember that God knows what He is doing. He has it all planned out already. He will show up and He will take care of us just as He promised. (**Jeremiah 29:11**) My plan is not to harm you but to give you hope and a future.

Have you ever felt that God left you alone in the storm of your life?

God has never taken His eyes off of us. He is just waiting for the right time to respond. His response depends on our faith.

The best time to put our faith in action is when things don't make sense; when we don't understand what is going on. Today, we don't understand why Covid-19 is taking so long - this is the right time that we let the faith rise.

Showdown between Faith and Fear

In one corner there's raging waves - a deadly storm; trials of life, sufferings, people losing their jobs, relationship problems, depression, anxiety, worry. In this corner, we wonder if God is alive. Does God really care?

On the other corner, there's Jesus Christ.

Faith vs. fear - it's our choice!

Matthew 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.

1st watch: 6-9pm

2nd: 9-12mn

3rd: 12-3am

4th: 3-6am

- Jesus did not come to the disciples until early morning; they were out on the sea being tossed and turned by the storm. They were tired, exhausted with so much fear.
- Jesus waited until the worst time, before he decided to show up. He came to them walking on the sea.

2 very important things about our God

1. Jesus showed up not when they wanted him to show up.
 - The absence of the storm in your life is not a proof of the presence of God because even if there is a storm in your life, Jesus is right there with you; He is very present.
 - The presence and power of God are more evident in the worst time or the darkest hour of our lives. King David knew this about God, he said: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for God is with me" (**Psalm 23**). So,

whatever kind of storm we are in, we should not be afraid because we know that God is with us.

2. Jesus did not stop the storm

- Faith does not eliminate distractions. It shifts our attention to Jesus, who has never been defeated. He is stronger and mightier than whatever is coming against us.
- We can weather the storm because the presence of God is with us, and the power of God is for us.

Fear vs. Faith: Which one is going to win?

- What we feel vs. what we know about our God
- What we are going through vs. what Jesus did for us on the cross
- If Jesus conquered death then He can conquer anything that we are going through.
- What our eyes see vs. what our faith sees
- What our situation says vs. what the Word of God says

Faith is summed up in one verse in the bible: “All things work together for the good according to God's purpose, which is always good” (**Romans 8:28**). He can turn the bad things in our lives into good things.

But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear” (**Matthew 14:26**).

- The disciples were afraid of the storm, and were terrified by a ghost - a fear on top of the other. Today, we feel the same way; we fear about a lot of things - afraid to be infected; death
- Because of fear, they did not recognize that it was Jesus. Fear can cloud your judgment
- Fear gains the upper hand in our thoughts. It takes hold of our emotions.
- Fear tells us the real deal.
- Faith is the absolute belief that God is working behind the scene in every area of our lives even if we don't have tangible evidence to support.

Fear and faith are totally opposite

- Fear backs us down; faith makes us stand.
- Fear threatens; faith praises.
- Fear despairs; faith hopes.
- Fear looks at the situation; faith looks at Jesus.

Faith is not based on a good feeling, but it is based on who Jesus is.

Matthew 14:27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

- The timing of God is different but perfect.
- Jesus brings comfort to the disciples by focusing their faith on who He is and not on the raging waves.
- God is always available when we need Him.

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.

- God is always present no matter what happens.
- We may be in great danger, but Jesus comes to us saying "take courage, it is I"

Revelation: God is the great I am.

- He is whoever we need Him to be; He is everything that we want Him to be.

Faith versus Fear: Fear is a continuous showdown between what we feel or see versus our faith in who our God is and His promises.

The winner is determined by our focus. Let us not fear the storm. What we have in our lives is the Maker of Heaven and Earth. Instead of fearing Covid-19 or the future. Let faith rise above our storm.

God knows what is happening, and He is going to show up. When He does, great things happen.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for Your Words. The fear we are facing is overwhelming. We do not know what to do. We feel confused and uncertain about the future. We are worried about the effects of this pandemic in our lives. We are anxious about the current crisis in our personal lives. Sometimes we wonder if You are listening, but tonight we heard that You have never taken your eyes off of us and you're just waiting for the proper time to respond.

Lord, please help us to come back to You. Bring us safely under the shelter of Your wings. We long for Your presence and peace again. We trust that Your power is far greater than all difficulties we are up against. We believe that You are mighty and that You are bigger than the storm. Thank you that You are our refuge and our strength in times of trouble. Thank you for being true to your promise. We ask for your miracle and claim that You are our ever-present help in this time of pandemic. In Jesus' name, Amen.