

Romans010700-012212  
Bridge of Hope  
January 22, 2012

“Why Faith?”

Faith changes us. It will revolutionize us and turns us into a people of faith. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ our lives are forever changed. But the secret to “forever changed” is found in what Paul said in **Romans 1:17** (NIV) *For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is **by faith from first to last**, just as it is written: “**The righteous will live by faith.**”* We are “forever changed” when we live by faith from first to last in Jesus Christ. He is the one whom we love, believe in, and treasure most in life.

Today we want to look at the issue of fear and its relationship to faith. It appears to me that fear strives to interrupt our faith. In fact, I think this interrupter of faith has as its goal, to not only impede faith in our life, but to stop it all together. At the least, fear will interrupt a life of faith and, at its worst, it becomes a killer of faith.

In observing people and working with them I have noticed that fear seems to have a bit of an edge in this battle. What I mean is that people allow fear to win more often than they do faith. Which brings me to my first question for today: **WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE SO PRONE TO FEAR RATHER THAN HAVE FAITH?** (Discussion)

Given that these are plausible reasons for why fear seems to win. Then it would seem that as Christians who try to live righteously and want faith to win that our next question should be: **HOW DO YOU THINK WE CAN OVERCOME FEAR THAT SEEKS TO INTERRUPT OUR FAITH?** (Discussion)

As we look at the interaction between fear and faith and how they impact one another we will discover an epic battle between them. We will look at some areas where faith takes on fear in the life of a person and can actually help them win the battle with fear. To get started I would like to use a scripture where Jesus directly addresses the issue between faith and fear with His disciples. We read in . . .

**Mark 4:35–41** (NIV) *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”*

*He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*

*He said to his disciples, “**Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?**”*

*They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”*

Apparently the lack of faith allowed fear to grab hold of their hearts. Which would also seem to indicate the converse that the presence of faith will free you from fear. In what I like to think of as

an unfiltered interaction between Jesus and His disciples, we get this strong statement of what Jesus thinks. He is asleep getting much needed rest and is awakened by His disciples because fear has taken hold of them. He deals with the problem and questions them about fear and faith.

The time is now for us to understand that our faith takes on fear just as fear wants to interrupt faith. This is our focus for our talk today as we talk about “why faith?”

○ **WHY FAITH? BECAUSE FAITH TAKES ON THE FEAR TO TRUST GOD.**

1. **WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME TRUSTING GOD? (discussion)**
2. There are many different reasons for why people choose not to trust God, but that doesn't change the truth that we need to learn to trust Him.
  - Now here is the deal with this, the only way we will discover that we can trust Jesus is by moving ahead in faith.
  - We have to take the chance in order to find out that He is trustworthy.
3. This actually brings me to another question that is really important. **HOW DO WE LEARN TO TRUST GOD? (Discussion)**
  - There are some who have been terribly misguided by well meaning people that didn't understand some of the truth about trusting God.
    - They didn't mean to cause others to stumble or fall away; they wanted them to trust God with all their heart.
    - In our efforts to raise the level of trust and faith we sometimes step over the boundaries of what the Bible teaches. We share from our experiences which causes us to get caught up in the moment, and overstate the case a bit. Instead we need to let the Bible speak and state the case.
    - But hear me today, if this has happened to you it is no reason for you to not trust the Lord. It time to lay aside the disappointment and excuses and step out in faith as you learn to trust the Lord.
  - Just like in learning to trust a person, Jesus wants you to learn to trust Him.
  - He isn't asking you to go from 0 to 10 right away as He is willing to walk with you one step at a time, if that is what you need, but He does expect you to learn to trust Him.
4. Faith takes us to that place of trust.
  - As we place our faith in Jesus we find trust building as we go.
  - And when we lack faith in our life our trust factor can erode with it.
  - We get an interesting picture in scripture as we watch how Jesus called on His disciples to overcome their fear and step out in faith. Here is one that demonstrates it well for us.
    - **Matthew 14:22-33 (NIV)** *Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.*

*Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It's a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.*

*But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

*"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."  
"Come," he said.*

*Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"*

*Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

*And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*

5. **It isn't always easy but sometimes we just have to get out of the boat and give it a try.**
  - Peter took Jesus at His word and walked on water even if it was just a few steps.
  - He did more than any of us ever did. Fear was there and he was struggling, but he did it.
  - What I love about this example is that it lets us know we don't have to be perfect at it, just willing to trust Him. Just willing to overcome the fear and trust him. Because you messed up last doesn't mean you can't try again.
  - That is powerful.

Conclusion: Faith builds trust as it provides the path through which we grow to know and understand Jesus more and more. Our lives are forever changed by the power of God as we call on Him to lead us and guide us.

The Bible says in **Proverbs 3:5-6** (NIV) *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.* When we have to make hard decisions and have to trust God, that only comes through relationship with God. The more you know him, the more you trust him.

Peter's trust factor grew, he was in the boat when Jesus was asleep, he then walked on water, later he was at the Gate Beautiful and told the lame man that "silver and gold I have none", but what I do have...get up and walk in the name of Jesus." Same guy who said I won't deny you Jesus...Peter's trust had grown as his relationship with Jesus had grown.

When you know Jesus, failures and defeats are actually building blocks to trust. Through our love for Him, faith and love tied together, we learn we can trust Him. Like Paul said, whether I have a little or a lot it just doesn't matter.

#### **WHERE DOES FAITH NEED TO TAKE ON FEAR IN YOUR LIFE SO YOU CAN TRUST CHRIST MORE?**

Think about this, where in your life do you need to attack fear, so trust in God can grow in you.