

Romans010700-020512  
Bridge of Hope  
February 5, 2012

“Why Faith?”

Introduction: Good morning! It is great to have you with us for worship today.

Paul wrote to the church in Rome, “*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.**’*” (Romans 1:17 NIV) Every day . . . every step . . . all by faith.

Today we are going to continue our look at the battle between fear and faith. We have been talking about the problem of fear as the interrupter of faith. In fact, sometimes fear becomes the killer of faith in the heart of a person. Let’s look at the 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 Jesus had an expectation for His disciples that they would be living by faith at some level. And they were not meeting that expectation. How did Jesus know this? Because they were allowing fear to rule them rather than living by faith. In essence, Jesus was saying to His disciples that if you were living by faith in me you wouldn’t be panicking right now and waking me up from a much needed rest.

The time is now for us to understand that our faith takes on fear just as fear wants to interrupt faith. We have already discussed 2 points in this battle between faith and fear.

“WHY FAITH?”

- **BECAUSE FAITH TAKES ON THE FEAR TO TRUST GOD.**
- **BECAUSE FAITH TAKES ON THE FEAR TO HOPE IN CHRIST.**

Let’s get started on the next thought we have for today in this battle.

- **WHY FAITH? BECAUSE FAITH TAKES ON THE FEAR TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS.**
  1. **WHY ARE DISCIPLES OF JESUS AFRAID TO SHARE ABOUT JESUS WITH OTHERS? (Discussion)**

2. This is the responsibility of every follower of Jesus Christ and yet so many of us are completely immobilized when it comes to telling others about the love of God.
  - Our fear of rejection is strong and keeps us from doing something we really want to do.
  - Our fear of looking foolish is difficult to overcome because we fear we may not have the answer someone needs or say it in the right way.
  - Our fear of ridicule is a pretty powerful persuader as we think about how others might view us as one of those religious fanatics that we so despise being likened to.
  - We fear that we might lose our job if we offer to pray with someone at work; we are concerned that we will be misunderstood if we speak up with a different opinion.
  - There are a lot of different reasons we remain silent and are immobilized by the fear in our hearts.
3. Faith in Jesus takes on this fear.
  - The closer we get to Christ the more we feel compelled to share about Him.
    - This actually makes me think of another question that might be good to discuss, **WHY DO YOU THINK GETTING CLOSER TO JESUS MIGHT HELP US TAKE ON THIS FEAR THROUGH FAITH?** (Discussion)
    - There are a lot of things that can probably get involved in this and what has been shared is very true.
    - For me, I think that the biggest reason is we become more like Him when we get closer and that impacts us.
    - The more like Jesus we are, the more we start wanting what Jesus wants.
    - And the heart of God is to bring salvation to people, so all of a sudden John 3:16 becomes really important to us.
    - Listen to what Jesus said to Zacchaeus in **Luke 19:9–10** (NLT) *Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”*
    - To the Pharisees Jesus said in **Mark 2:17** (NLT) *“Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”*
    - And finally during the last week as Jesus approached the city of Jerusalem we see what is in His heart in **Luke 19:41–42** (NIV) *As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.*
    - The closer we get to Him, the more our heart becomes like His heart, the more compelled we feel that we must share the Good News concerning Jesus the Christ.
  - And at the same time, the closer we get to Jesus, the bigger this battle seems to become.
    - Sometimes the problem is our self-preservation kicks in, and we realize what acknowledging Jesus really means. It means . . .
      - hard work and lots of our time and resources.
      - our life is not as much our own as we thought it was and that is hard to swallow.
      - others might reject us, and if they reject us, then what? So the battle gets bigger and more intense within us.
    - There is something else we need to be aware of in this whole process as we take on the fear to share the Gospel through faith.
      - That “something” is that our enemy wants us to feel the heat and give up.
      - Yeah, Satan wants you to be afraid to share and uses whatever is available in hopes that it will stop you.
      - He wants you to do the opposite of what is best for you.

- If you are struggling with this fear, the best thing you can do is get closer to Jesus and then step out in faith and share what Jesus is doing in your life.
- It really does work when we do this. Listen to what Paul says . . .
  - **2 Corinthians 5:14–15** (NIV) *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*
  - **Acts 20:22–24** (NIV) *“And now, **compelled by the Spirit**, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; **my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.**”*
- 4. The reality is faith will always be a part of sharing the Gospel.
  - With each step we build confidence that helps us overcome the hurdles in front of us.
  - The more we apply ourselves in small group Bible study, the more we learn and the better we get at answering questions that come up.
  - Here is the beauty of this thing when we do it in the context of a small community of believers like a small group.
    - We can join together in sharing the Gospel so that the responsibility doesn't fall on one person, but on a small group of people.
  - There is actually a title we use for small groups that catch this vision; we call them Missional Communities.
    - What it means is that they are a small group that invite others in to meet with them, other people who don't believe in Jesus.
    - And together we grow in friendship and learn from one another.
    - Of course we hope they will find that Jesus is who we have found Him to be, but the relationship doesn't rest on their responding the way we want.
    - They are our friend.
  - When we grasp this concept we discover what Jesus was talking about in **John 13:34–35** (NLT) *So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. **Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.**”*
    - So here is another question that comes to mind: **WHY DO YOU THINK THAT SHARING THE GOOD NEWS THROUGH THE CONTEXT OF A GOSPEL COMMUNITY COULD HELP US OVERCOME OUR FEAR?** (Discuss)
    - None of us need to feel the pressure of having to know everything.
    - The beauty of the body of Christ is that we have other people to help us in areas which we are weak.
  - While we are all responsible to share our faith . . .
    - some people are better at making connections with people who don't know about Christ.
    - others are better at explaining the truth of the Bible.
    - still others are better at helping grow people in living for Jesus.
    - No one has to do it all alone; we do this together in the context of our missional community/small group.
  - Guess what happens to this fear when we begin to understand this concept?
    - Yep! Fear, at the very least, reduces in size and even at times disappears all together.

Conclusion: As we come to a conclusion, I would like each of us to think about living out the mission that Jesus has given to us, and what it is that keeps us from actually doing it. Listen to what the Bible says about those who take such steps of faith in **Romans 10:15-17** (NIV) *And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"* **Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.**

There are several things we can do to help us with the step of faith needed in sharing the Gospel, but I think it will always cause the moment where the hands get a little sweaty, dry mouth starts to set in, and the stomach does the flip thing. It will always require us to step out and trust Christ as we share about Christ.

Here are my final questions for you to prayerfully answer on the back of your notes page in the Bridge Weekly:

- **WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HAVE "BEAUTIFUL FEET" AS YOUR FAITH OVERCOMES THE FEAR THAT HAS HELD YOU BACK FROM SHARING THE GOSPEL?**

And . . .

- **HOW CAN FAITH DISPEL FEAR IN YOUR LIFE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS?**

As we share in this time of communion today we reflect on the emblems of Christ's love and are challenged by them to share the Good News of Jesus love. This is a great time to recommit yourself to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ: to go into all the world and make disciples of all people. It starts in your home and spreads to your neighbors and co-workers and to all whom Jesus sends you to. The time is now!