

Faith Versus Fear

Review

Last week we talked about our mission and goal.

What did we say was our mission? To make reproducing disciples.

What did we say was our goal? to do all to the glory of God.

One application of the lesson was to identify one person in your life who needs Jesus and begin praying for them and looking for way to share Jesus with them.

Intro

What would you say is one the biggest reasons that keeps us from accomplishing this mission? Fear

How many of you would say that you struggle with fear? What is it that you are most afraid of?

Read Matt. 26:47-54

I. Jesus and Peter are experiencing exactly the same circumstances.

Judas is leading a large crowd armed with swords and clubs to come and arrest Jesus and for all Peter knows to arrest the 12 disciples as well.

This sounds like a tremendously scary situation. People are coming at you possibly to kill you.

II. Yet Jesus and Peter react very differently.

A. Jesus reacts with faith. He is calm.

B. Peter reacts with fear. He is violent.

III. Why the different responses?

A. Peter looked at the world very differently than Jesus did.

1. When he looked at the world he saw men coming with clubs and chains.

2. He saw the world as a dangerous place.

3. He saw chaos and destruction.

4. Do you remember from biology class when an organism feels threatened what does it do? fight or flight.

5. Peter starts with fight. He grabs his sword and cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest.

6. Later Peter exercises flight as do all the disciples when they run away.

7. Both flight and fright are a way to try to deal with your fear. They are a way to try to gain control over what appears to be an out of control, dangerous situation where you feel threatened.

B. It has been said that all human religions are a system of control based on fear. If the world is a dangerous place, then the best thing you can do is try to gain control over it the best you can. In religion you try to gain control over the gods who made it.

So how did people of old try to gain control over their gods? They did things to appease their gods so that the gods would be on their side. They would offer their firstborn child as a sacrifice so the gods would treat them well. They would possibly beat themselves to pay for their bad so that they gods would have pity on them.

C. How do people try to do this today?

They go to church, read their Bibles, pray, they try to obey and not give in to temptation, they try to be moral.

Are all these important things for us to do? They are, but the question is why do you do them? Do you do them because you have a relationship with God and want to worship Him or because you know you are supposed to and if you do then God is obligated to bless you.

If we believe that the world is a dangerous place, then our primary drive is fear and so we try to use God to gain control.

From this perspective it is not possible to please God. When we are consumed by fear our focus is on ourselves and our greatest concern is self-preservation and our well-being.

From that posture we can't bless those who curse us or love our enemies. We can only strike out in anger to try to protect ourselves or run away and hide.

I want to make a distinction between religion and Christianity.

Religion- tries to be good enough to use God to gain control.

Christianity- is not a religion. It recognizes that you can never be good enough to earn God's favor. Instead it acknowledges our sin and our need of Jesus as our Savior. It surrenders all our efforts to be good enough and instead trusts in Jesus alone to save us. Now we live out of a response to God of love.

D. How did Jesus look at the situation?

1. Jesus doesn't respond in anger or strike out.
2. He doesn't respond by seeking control, but He surrenders it.
3. In verse 52 Jesus tells Peter to put away his sword.
4. In other gospels we are told that Jesus picks up the ear of his enemy and miraculously reattaches it.
5. He shows love to this man.
6. How can Jesus respond this way?

Read 26:53-54

When Jesus looks at this scene, he acknowledges that it is evil and yet He sees beyond it. He sees the Sovereign God behind it.

What had Peter forgotten? That God was with him. That Jesus, God in the flesh, was right there with Him.

7. Jesus sees that all that is happening is according to God's greater plan. Could God have stopped all of this if He wanted to? Jesus says that God could have sent 12,000 angels if he had wanted to.

8. When Jesus looked at the world He saw it as a God-with-us world.

Read 26:54, 56

8. We don't have control and never will, but we can trust in the One who does.

9. When we give up trying to be in control of our world, then we are free to actually love. You realize that whenever you love someone else you run the fear of being hurt.

But that is where God comes in. God proved His love for us at the cross. We didn't earn it and we didn't deserve it and yet He loved us anyway. If God loved us then, why do we now think that He will not love us now.

10. When Jesus commissioned his disciples to go out into all the world what did he tell them?

Matt. 28:20 "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Conclusion

How do you see the world around you? Do you see it as a fearful place or do you see it as a God-with-us world?

Are you like Peter, and even though God in the flesh was standing right before him, he was afraid and missed God in his midst.

Do you see the world as a world -under -God's -control and know that nothing that is going to happen to you doesn't first pass through the loving hands of your Heavenly Father?

Psalm 46 speaks of God and our fear

Vs. 1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging"

Where does it say God is? He is an ever-present help. He is right here.

In verse 7, 11 the psalmist says, "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our strength." He has all strength and where is he? He is with us.

Our problem? We don't see God in the midst of our days.

We don't spend the time thinking about how great our God is.

That is why the psalmist writes.

Vs 8 Come and see the works of the Lord- he makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire."

Vs. 10 "Be still and know that I am God."

Tell the story of Jesus sleeping in the boat when the disciples are terrified that they are going to drown. Mark 4:35-41

They are afraid even though Jesus is right there with them in the boat.

But there are some things they haven't figured out yet and Jesus even questions them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

They think Jesus cared. "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" verse 38

They don't know Jesus power. He calms the storm by saying, "Quiet! Be still!" verse 39

They don't know who Jesus is. They ask each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him." verse 41

From our perspective we live in a fearful, scary world because we don't see God in our midst. We need to learn to see the world as Jesus did. By faith he knew that this is a God-with-us world and that even though that doesn't mean everything will be butterflies and rainbows it does mean that God is accomplishing His will.

Will you trust in Him, that He is with you and has it all in control?

Will you by faith take that step that feels risky and reach out to others and show them Jesus, even though it might seem scary?

We can as we see God in the midst of our world. We need to continually preach to ourselves that: God loves us, God is with us, and He is in ultimately in control.