

Facing Your Fears - Part 1

by Danny Bond

Fear is a universal human experience that can be overcome by trusting in God's sovereignty and control.

Duration: 35:58

Scripture: Deuteronomy 33:27, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 11:28, Hebrews 13:6

Topics: "Fear"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Jesus sending his disciples into a boat and commanding them to go to the other side of the lake. The disciples obey Jesus and begin rowing, but they encounter a massive storm that puts their lives in danger. Despite their fear and exhaustion, they continue rowing for about nine hours, only covering a distance of three miles. Eventually, Jesus comes to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on water and calming the storm. The speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in Jesus and not being surprised when he goes beyond our expectations.

Transcript

Every human being who lives on Earth faces fear. And I want to talk about it for a minute because we rarely talk about it. Most especially, it's rarely addressed in churches today because it's negative.

Purely because it's negative. Okay, fine, we understand, we identify it's negative. How about the fact it's real? Let's talk about it, shall we? It'll help us.

Fear is waiting for every human being who lives on the Earth. You know that, I know that, I've lived it, you've lived it. To be human and alive is to know fear.

It comes to us all, fear. It comes to the ungodly. Why does the ungodly, why does the individual who lives without God have so much fear? You ever wonder? I mean, I'm pretty sure all of you didn't all know the Lord your whole life.

So you were ungodly at some point. Why is there so much fear when you're ungodly? I'll tell you why. Sin generates paranoia.

Sin generates paranoia. It's like a paranoia factory. And it's always pumping out fresh paranoia.

Enough to fill your entire mind. Sin generates paranoia and that is fear. That is why Proverbs 28.1 says this.

The wicked flees when no one pursues. If that isn't a biblical definition of paranoia, I don't know what is. Proverbs 28.1. The wicked flees when no one's pursuing.

You're always looking over your shoulder. Before I came to know Christ, I was always looking in my rearview mirror when I was driving. Because I always had drugs in my car.

And I usually had alcohol in my car with the cap off. And so I was always looking in the rearview mirror for a black and white car behind me. Even if there wasn't one.

If I could just get to my buddy's house, I'll be okay. If I could just get home, I'll be okay. That is the wicked fleeing when no one is pursuing.

You know that I even at one point put a Jesus loves you bumper sticker on my car to throw the cops off. Figured if the cop starts tailing me, he'll say, Jesus loves you. He'll leave me alone.

Oh, he's okay. He's one of those Jesus freaks. And then I got so guilty feeling I was more afraid of that than I was the cop cars.

Because I thought, what if the Lord looks down here and he strikes me with lightning for doing this. Using his name. See, I believe in God.

I just didn't want to repent yet. You see, fear is waiting for every human being. And especially for the ungodly, because the wicked flees when no one pursues.

But here's the good news. And then the Bible, those who believe in the Lord are called the righteous. The righteous, it says.

In Proverbs 28, one are bold as a lion. Because you have a clean conscience. You know what? That's not because you're perfect.

It's because your conscience is washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. That's what Hebrews says. It says that all the sacrifices in the Old Testament that they would make did not have the power to make those people free in their consciences.

But the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses your conscience of all sin and gives you peace. So the righteous are bold as a lion. Proverbs 28, 6 says, Better a poor man whose walk is blameless before the Lord than to be a rich man whose ways are perverse.

So you can be poor and love the Lord and walk with the Lord humbly in the forgiveness of Jesus Christ. And you're better off than the richest man on earth who doesn't know the Lord. And Hebrews 2, 15 says that Jesus came to deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

One of the greatest fears you have when you don't know the Lord is death. The fear of death. It grips people the world round.

When you come to know Jesus Christ, he takes the fear of death out of your heart. So fear comes to the ungodly. Now, you may be interested to know that there is also fear that comes to the godly as well.

And that is true. It's in the Bible. I'll give you an example.

Elijah in the Bible. He's one of the most fascinating studies. I don't know if you've ever studied Elijah himself in the Bible.

But the prophet Elijah is so amazing. And he's so close to the Lord that one of the wicked kings said, you better not even speak a word in your bedroom in secret. Because that prophet Elijah will know that you said it.

The Lord will tell him. That's how God worked with Elijah. He just knew things.

God told him, OK, that's because he was called. That's because he needed to know things. And that's because God really was so near to Elijah.

Not many men have left earth in a fiery chariot when they die. Have they taken up by God? That's how close he was. OK, that qualifies for intimacy, I would say.

Elijah, I'm going to be by in the morning to pick you up in a fiery chariot. Get your things in order. I mean, that's intimacy.

That doesn't happen. In fact, that's the only time I know of it happened. Except Enoch.

He was walking with God. And one day they walked so far. The Lord said, you know, you're so close to my house.

Why don't you come on home today and stay with me forever? The Bible says Enoch walked with God and he was not. God took him. But back to Elijah.

To be that intimate with God, you would say, well, the man probably didn't have no fear. But he did. You remember the day Elijah, the prophet, faced off with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

And all day long, he gave them first shot at it. He said, you make your altar. You call to your God.

And as ever, God comes down from heaven with fire and takes up the sacrifice. You win the God who can come down by fire. He's the God who wins.

So your God's Baal, my God's Jehovah. You do your altar. I'll do mine.

You guys go first. And so they began to call on Baal and they thought Baal would show up and come down with fire and take up the sacrifice. He didn't show up.

So they began to shout. He didn't show up. He didn't show up.

And then this is so weird, but so normal for satanic worship, which is what they had. They began to scream and cut themselves, cut themselves, hoping their God would show up. And at that point, Elijah began to mock them.

He said, what's the problem is your God on vacation? And he really gets into some heavy mockery. And finally they go, we give up. He goes, all right, stand back.

He said, I need a few guys. Bring a bunch of water. Don't bring the water.

We're in a drought. Bring the water. And they bring in the only water they have.

He says, douse my altar and they soak it so that it'll be much harder to burn. So he's showing them, I'm not going to do any tricks here today. This isn't going to be a magician's trick.

If this altar burns, you know, it's God because it's soaking wet. And the Bible says that fire fell from heaven and it consumed the sacrifice, the animal, and it consumed all of the wood and it consumed all of the altar. And everybody started shouting, whoa, the Lord Jehovah, he is God.

And Elijah goes, that's absolutely right. And now every one of you are going to die this day who have refused to serve him. And he killed 400 prophets of Baal.

Remember that? That was the greatest single act of victory in the life of Elijah against Satan. The high point in his life against Satan. You understand that? Absolute confidence.

Absolute victory. This man is bold. Right after all the guys are killed, the prophets of Baal, someone slips him a note.

He opens it up and it's from a woman, Jezebel. She says, I'm going to kill you. And he panics.

And he turns around and he starts to run. And he runs and he runs and he runs through the desert. He could face off with 400 prophets of Baal.

One woman sends him a nasty note. I'm going to kill you. He takes off running.

Why? Because this woman was a killer. This woman really did have the power to hunt him down and kill him. And suddenly tired from the victory.

You get tired during victories in spiritual warfare. Tired from the victory. Boom.

The devil. This is all right. You beat me in that round, but I was ready to go with the note.

And you weren't ready for the note. He gives him a note. It's like boom.

He takes off running. He's filled with fear. He runs for his life.

Elijah, the prophet, even the godly, even the godly can be filled with fear. And Satan is always looking for that spot to get you. To take away your confidence and replace your heart with fear.

Matthew Henry, thinking about this, once wrote, We need not look upon those enemies with fear whom God looks upon with contempt. And I'll tell you, if you follow this story through, The Count Jezebel was looked upon with contempt by God because of her wickedness. And God took care of her.

She was assassinated and her body thrown to the dogs. If you read the account. She got what she deserved for desecrating the Lord God's name and his people.

So the Lord worked out the enemy of Elijah. He could have trusted the Lord, but you see, he was human after all, wasn't he? It comes to us all, fear does. It comes from without to the godly to the ungodly.

I think that however, one of the greatest sources of fears in our life is within. Do you agree to that? It's within. We fear that so many things.

I fear I'll fail as a Christian. What if I've come this far and then I fail as a Christian? Or it is very common to fear that you'll be abandoned by a loved one. Why? Because so many times we have been.

Fears from within. You fear you'll catch a terminal disease. You fear that you will die young.

You fear you'll die old. Fear. It comes from within.

You fear you'll lose a child. You fear you'll lose your job. You'll fear you'll lose your friends.

Why? Because so many of these things have happened, if not to us, around us. You fear you'll lose your house. You fear you might lose your bank account.

Or you fear that you'll be single your whole life. Or that you'll get up to the pearly gates and God will be gone. Come on in.

Come on in. Come on in. I know you.

I know you. Hold it! Who are you? You fear the Lord won't let you into heaven. When it's all said and done.

Or we have lots of fears on our own from within. How about this one? We fear that God won't take care of us. Here you are serving the Lord, loving him.

And suddenly you don't have what you've always had. Wait a minute, Lord. You promised.

You said if I seek first the kingdom, you'll add everything else unto me. And suddenly we fear he's not going to take care of us. I know that you've never been there.

But people in other states have been there. We fear that God will not take care of us. Or how about this? This is too real.

That it gets so scary. We fear that God will allow to happen to me what he has already allowed to happen to others. Now you know it's possible.

You've seen it. It just never happened to you. So you fear it will happen to you.

Oh yes. Fear comes to the godly. And it comes even from within.

A.W. Tozer said fear is of the flesh. He said panic is of the devil. The devil would love to see you cave in to the fears that come from within and then start shoving you from behind to turn it into panic.

To be human and alive is to know fear. I'm going to take you deeper into this before we come out into the solution. To be human and to be alive is to know fear.

Now watch this. We have our Bibles open, right? We're studying them. We're seeking to study in depth.

Revelation right now. To plow deep in the Bible will be to discover new fears. To plow deep in the Bible will be to discover new fears.

We read right here in Revelation chapter 6 of new fears, don't we? You may be sitting here right now thinking what if I do miss a rapture? What if I am facing this earthquake? I have new fears. I came in here without these fears. I am now filled with this fear.

I will be in a cave praying to a rock. And the whole earth is shaking and the moon is blood. You are scaring me to death.

What if you've taken all my peace away? Well, you have to stay to the end of the study. So, I'm saying to plow deep in the Bible is to discover new fears. And that's true.

Now, you can leave your Bible aside, never study it. And you can bump into the fears anyway in life. Or you can study your Bible in depth and run into new fears.

But you'll find them first in the Bible instead of life. And that is the best way to find them. Because then you know that if you found them in the Bible, the new fears, then you can also find the answer to them in the Bible as well.

And that is where I would point you. I would point you to plow deep into the Bible even though you will discover new fears. How about the life of Job? The life of Job, if you study the book of Job and his life, I guarantee you, you will discover new fears because Job's life teaches us something that is extraordinary.

And it takes sometimes Christians their entire life to learn this. The sooner you learn it, the better. What the life of Job teaches us in the Bible is that there are no boundaries except what God allows or what God determines for His glory and for His purpose.

There are no boundaries except what God determines for His glory and ultimately, hear this part, for your highest good. No boundaries on bad things that can happen to you. That's what I'm saying.

Except the boundaries that God determines. And what you find in Job is that he will knock down just about any boundary there is if it's for your highest good. Because that's what happened to Job.

And here's the thing. Job was the most righteous man on the earth. We don't read the book of Job and start into it and read, and there was in the land of Oz a very wicked man indeed.

A drunkard was he. A slacker indeed. And every night he smoked his joint.

To say he was righteous would be a moot point. We don't read of such things. We don't read that he was an evil man.

We read he was the most righteous man in all the earth. And Satan comes before God and God says, Have you considered my servant Job? Check him out. He is righteous.

And Satan said, Yeah. That's because you give him stuff. Take the stuff away and he'll curse you to your face.

And the Lord goes, Really? Go take the stuff. Only one boundary. Don't afflict his body.

He takes all the stuff. He comes back and he says, You know what? You wouldn't let me afflict his body. You let me afflict his body, he'll curse you to your face.

God says, All right, afflict his body. You just can't kill him. The only boundary left was you can't kill Job but follow this.

A lot of other people were killed. He lost his crops. He lost his cattle.

He lost his money. He lost sons. He lost daughters.

His wife said, Curse God and die. And we know probably where she went when she died because of her attitude toward God. In other words, the only boundary in the life of the most righteous man on earth at that time was you can't kill him.

Now, I read that and I discover new fears because I came to Christ with all these preconceived ideas of what God would never allow. And so did you. Oh, what God would never allow.

And I look at what happens when what he would never allow comes to me or to a loved one. And sometimes the result is panic because I start to think I'm not safe even with God. Think about that.

I'm not safe even with God. Look at Job. Now, follow me on this.

You have no control over your life anyway. For starters, this is backup. You have no control over your life anyway.

For starters. If you're an existentialist, you think you do. But you don't.

You have no control over your life for starters. So much of it. So in the end, the only place of real protection in your life and mine is the center of God's will.

Would you agree to that? The only place of real protection of my life is in the center of God's will, because there at least I'm confident that what's happening to me is being allowed by God because it's been sifted through his will for my highest good. So the only place I can be really confident on Earth is in the center of God's will. If I'm in rebellion and I'm drifting from God, then anything's possible at that point.

And it's my fault. So I say to myself, I will walk in the center of God's will and there I will have the only control over my life I can ever have. And that's his control.

OK. But what if he allows the unthinkable to come into my life as he did with Job? And it brings out my greatest fears and I'm right in the center of his will. What then? Well then I would say look to him in the face of your greatest fears to bring the greatest faith you have ever had.

Because that is exactly what happened to Job. In Job 13:15, as Job is propelled through his circumstances, one loss after the next until he's lost everything and every boundary has been shattered except his own life. He's sick, he's oozing with pus, he's puffed up with ellipsis, he's not sitting in a nice room like this.

He isn't even on a nice metal chair. He is on a heap, a rubbish heap. And there's broken pottery there and he's oozing with pus from his skin.

And he's just scraping the pus off of his skin. Outdoors, because every building has been blown down by the hurricane from Satan. And he's just sitting out there, scraping, oozing filthy pus.

And then along come his righteous friends and they start to encourage him. Aha, Mr. Righteous Job, on the dirt pile, puffed up like an elephant. Bugs crawling in your skin and oozing.

Are you righteous? Alright. And they just start to tear him down thinking they know all about God. And they're so far off because they don't have any clue of the high purposes God is working in this man's life.

Which I'll give it away. You want to know what the high purpose is God is working in his life? He is showing to the entire, all of creation, all of the universe, everything, this great reality, especially to Satan and his demons, that saving faith is not fragile. He is showing in the life of Job, saving faith is not fragile.

When I save an individual and he believes in me, you can shatter his life utterly, and when it's all done, he will still believe in me. The one I save, I save permanently. The one I rescue, the one who believes on me, believes on me no matter what.

Why? Because I sustain an individual. And that is the whole message of Job. Saving faith is not fragile.

That is it. So in the middle of it, Job doesn't know that though. Job doesn't know that.

So in the middle of it, he's going through all of this and he's propelled forward and he has his greatest fears. He actually says, Job actually says that that which he had feared, most feared had come upon him. Job 325, he says, what I feared has come upon me and what I dreaded has happened to me.

You know, I've heard about stuff like this, but I never thought it would happen to me. I kind of figured that because of the way I walked with God, he wouldn't allow it. But now what I feared has come upon me and what I dreaded has happened to me.

And he says in Job 326, I have no peace, no quietness. I have no rest but only turmoil. So as he's propelled through all of this, you know what happens to him? In Job 1315, he gets to the point of his greatest faith.

He says this, write it down. This is worth remembering. Job 1315.

He says, though he slay me, yet I will trust in him. And I will maintain mine own ways before him. One translation renders that I will defend my own ways before him.

It isn't he is not saying I'm going to defend how righteous I am. He is saying, though he slay me, I will defend my trust in him. I will hold on to my trust in him.

I will trust in him no matter what. Even if he allowed the last thing to be taken, which would be my life. Job 1315, though he slay me, yet I will trust in him and I will maintain my own ways before him.

I will trust him to the end. Job is deeply persuaded that even if he dies at the hand of the Lord, he's not going to curse God. And at this point for Job, trust in God transcends even death.

At this point for Job, trust in God transcends even death. You know something? That's where we all need to go. That's where we all should be heading ultimately to that point.

So that we're not surprised by anything. See, we all bring preconceived ideas of what God would never allow into our walk with the Lord. And his will, we are surprised when we find that he goes beyond our pre-set boundaries.

And it shocks us. One of the things that most delights me about this month's cold waters, just happened to have one here, is that right here it says lessons from life's unavoidable test. Because you see, in this account from the Gospel of John, Jesus sends the disciples into this boat.

He sends away the multitudes who are trying to take him by force and make him king. And he sends the disciples into this boat and he says, get into the boat and go to the other side. Then he sends away the multitudes.

He goes up to the mountainside to pray. And these men are in the boat. It's about six o'clock in the evening.

They begin to row. They're fishermen. It's Passover time.

There's a full moon. So there's light at night. That's OK.

Evening. You tell us to go to the other side. We have a full moon.

We can see the Passover moon. And the Lord, well, he made us do this because Mark, or I think it's Mark in his account, says in the Greek, Jesus had to raise his voice. They wouldn't get in the boat.

They were kind of feeling what the multitude was feeling. Well, maybe you should be king now. And so he's trying to protect them so they won't get in the boat.

So he has to raise his voice. Get in the boat. We're in the boat.

We are in the boat. So they jump in the boat. You got it, Lord.

Row. We're rowing. We are rowers.

We row for Christ. And they're in the boat and away they go. It's nice and glassy.

They have obeyed Jesus. He even had to raise his voice to get them to obey. They have obeyed Jesus.

And now there they go. Oh, row, row, row. You know, here we go.

And then all of a sudden a storm comes out of nowhere. And it's the biggest storm of their whole life. And they fear that they will die.

And they are left out there. The first watch of the night is six o'clock when they went out. Second watch is nine o'clock.

The third watch is twelve o'clock. The fourth watch of the night goes from three in the morning until six in the morning. The Bible says he came to them in the last watch of the night, the fourth watch of the night.

They were rowing for somewhere around nine hours in the greatest storm of their life. These were seasoned fishermen. The storm was so huge that even these men feared for their lives.

And just about the time they're thinking, our lives are gone. He didn't come. We rowed until we can row no more.

And John fills this in. They'd only gone about three miles in nine hours. Nowhere, in other words.

By the time their strength is exhausted, they can't make another move. Jesus comes in the last watch of the night. And he commands the sea to be still.

It's still and glassy and calm. He calms the storm. And John records, and instantly we were at the shore where we were going.

That was a miracle because they hadn't gone hardly anywhere. He stopped the storm. He brought them through.

But you see, by obeying him, they entered the biggest storm of their whole life. And all of their pre-set boundaries were shattered. Why? Because he wanted to take them farther than they'd ever been.

And he came to them in the midst of the storm in John 6:20. And he said to them, it is I, be not afraid. It is I, be not afraid.

And there is where deliverance is from every fear in your life. It is I, be not afraid. And that's why even to know that in the center of God's will, things can happen to you that you never thought would be allowed to happen to you as a Christian.

You can know in the center of his will that if it's happened, it is I, be not afraid. You're in the boat. You've been rowing all night.

You think you're about to die. It is I, be not afraid. I'll take care of you.

He calms the storm. Why? Because he's done working with their faith. And they're at the shore because it's over.

When the Lord was done with Job, suddenly, out of nowhere, in the book of Job, God speaks to Job out of a whirlwind, and the trial ends. Why? It goes on and on and on and on. It comes out of nowhere and goes on and on and on and on.

And all of a sudden, it ends suddenly. Why? Because God was done. When God is done testing you, growing your faith, the trial ends.

So the way out is always forward. And you'll find these words to your heart. It is I. Be not afraid.

Because he seeks to take the fear out of your heart. Even when the circumstances around you make you want to be fearful, he comes to the depths of your being and he says, It is I, be not afraid. And it says in John 6:21, Then they willingly received him into the boat.

Immediately then the boat was at the land where they were going. See, fear is waiting for everyone who lives into this tribulation. But here's my whole point.

We hate fear so much. Why would you want to reject Christ and go on into more fear than you've ever dreamed possible? Come to Christ now. Perfect fear.

Perfect love. Fear has torment, the Bible says. Fear has torment.

But his perfect love casts out what? All fear. So the deliverance from fear for every human heart is found in Jesus Christ. He is the answer.

Do you know that one of the greatest statements in the whole Bible is found in the book of Deuteronomy? It's in Deuteronomy chapter 33 verse 27. This is what it says. The eternal God is your refuge.

And underneath are the everlasting arms. Moses is about to leave the children of Israel and go up into the mountain and God's going to take him. He's going to die.

One of the last things he ever says to them as a nation. Three million of them spread out in front of him. The eternal God is your refuge.

Don't ever forget it. And underneath you, holding you up, are his everlasting arms. One of the greatest scriptures in the whole Bible.

That's why Jesus in Matthew 11, 28 said this. Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. I will.

And he said, take my yoke upon me and learn from me. That's what we've been doing tonight. We're learning the ways of the Lord.

Learn from me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will ultimately find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Hebrews 13, 6 says, so we may boldly say the Lord is my helper. Thus, I will not. What? Fear.

Fear what? What man can do to me. What man can do to me. In Isaiah 41, 10, this is what God says.

Fear not. I am with you. Soak this in because this is where we're going to stop.

Fear not. I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God.

I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Underneath are the everlasting arms. Behold, all who are incensed against you shall be ashamed and disgraced. They will be as nothing.

Those who strive with you will perish. You will seek them and not find them. Those who contended with you who were against you shall be as nothing as a non-existent thing.

Isaiah 41, 13, for I, the Lord, your God, will hold. This is so tender. Will hold your right saying to you, whispering in your ear to your heart.

Fear not. I will. I will help you.

It is I. Be not afraid. It is a picture of a loving parent tenderly holding the right hand of the child. Fear not.

I'll hold your right hand. I will help you. That's your God.

And that is the source of deliverance from your fear. The Lord, your God. Well, he'll allow things that will surprise you and shock you.

But he also promises he will hold your right hand. And that is where you find your rest and your peace. I'll leave you with the words of Martin Luther.

He says, he said it so long ago. I know not the way he leads me. But oh, well, do I know my guide.

What then have I to fear? I know not the way he leads me. Speaking of Jesus Christ, he said, but oh, how well do I know my guide. What then do I have to fear? He knows the way.

He's holding my hand. And he's not going to let go. Until I am in heaven.

In heaven. You see, the book of Revelation opens to us with great candor. The realities of where earth and the human race is going.

We see what's coming on this earth. And we'll go on and finish it off in this chapter next time. But we also find that the only place, whether it's there, whether it's here or now.

There's freedom from fear. Is in Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ.

Fear not. It is I. Be not afraid. I will hold your hand.

You know him and love him. And he's holding your hand today. And he will never let you go.

Never. The Lord says go to the other side of the lake. It may take a while to get there.

But if he says you're going to the other side, guess what? You're going to get to the other side. And those men thought they were going to die on the lake in the storm. He had said, go to the other side.

And in the middle of the storm, he came. Walking on the water of all things. Stopped the storm.

Boom. They're at the other side. When God's in the boat, the boat cannot sink.

He will never let go of your hand. Let's pray, shall we? Father, thank you. Thank you, Lord, for reality.

Thank you for the truth that makes us free. Help us to understand, Lord, that you are so huge. You are far beyond anything what we ever imagined.

And that your ways are far above ours. And God, may we safely then trust in you. May we find your love flowing in our hearts.

Poured out by your Holy Spirit from you into our hearts. And may your love set us free from our fears. No matter what our eyes or ears see or hear.

That the greatest reality in all of our life would be Christ in us. The hope of glory. And we thank you, Lord.

That all those that come unto you. You will in no wise cast out. We are yours.

And underneath us are the everlasting arms. And we bless you and praise you. In Jesus' name.

For this great salvation. Amen. Well, normally I don't digress that far.

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