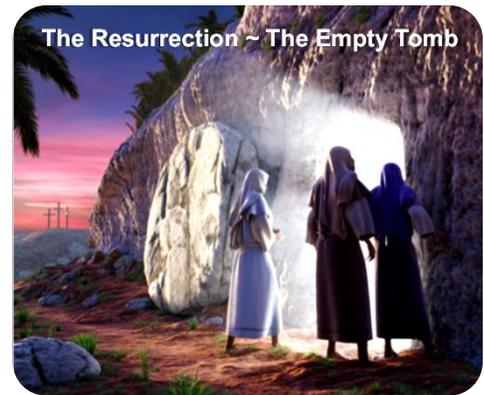


JESUS MEETS US IN OUR FEAR

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What happens after resurrection? What happens after you believe that Jesus is alive? What happens when this ominous feeling of fear comes upon you? It's exactly what happened to those who were there on that first Resurrection Sunday that we celebrated last week. You see it with the two ladies that walked into the tomb to find the tomb empty; fear came across them. You see it with the disciples locked behind closed doors fearful because of — well, the text tells us they were fearful of the people that had executed Jesus. They're connected to Him, they know who they are, and are they going to come after them? Fearful because that leader that they expected was going to be their deliverer that you're now connected with, you have to carry that association with you from there on out. Considering the fact that up until that point they had plans for the rest of their lives; they saw Jesus and their lives coming together but now they're locked in a room fearful.

Well, you think of those ladies, an angel at a tomb tells you something; your head is just swimming with thoughts and trying to understand. You take Peter, after a horrendous denial you're labeled, you're the "denier." And, you know, way more than being labeled you're carrying your own stuff with that; you're berating yourself, you're putting yourself down that, after all, you knew better and possibly had you made different decisions we wouldn't even be here in the first point, and you question your faith, you question God. But then again, he's locked into a room with a bunch of other guys and they're scared, too. They were in the same boat. Yeah, they weren't with him that night when he denied but yeah, they're fearful, too.



By the way, I want you to hear this. Fear tends to be our starter emotion. It tends to be our go-to emotion. And I don't know why but over the last couple weeks I've had quite a few people say to me or even send me a text or an email where they're quick to explain to me that they're not fearful, that they totally trust God and everything is fine and they're not fearful. And I've been thinking about that and even in preparing for our talk today I thought, *Well, am I fearful? Have I been fearful in all of this?* And I think to myself, *You know what? If you haven't had any feeling of fear in any way in the last four weeks, I'm not sure that you even have a pulse or that you have been living in this world.* And I realize moments that fear may subside, there may be moments where your fear is different than my fear. I still have a job today, you may not so your fear may be in a different area. There's still food in my cupboards, yours may be getting really thin so you may have fear in a different area.



I was even thinking about health here recently and I was thinking, *I don't know that I'm overly fearful about that*, and then I heard a story about how you have to drop off your loved ones at the hospital and you can't ever go in, and sometimes your loved ones die while you're in the hospital and you're left not having had the opportunity to give them a hug and say goodbye. And all of a sudden that hit me and I thought to myself, *What if I find myself in that situation with a family member?* And yeah, yeah, fear came. And I say all this because I do think in these moments there is this mindset that there are these super-Christians, these people that have no fear. That everything, all the list of possibilities, they're so tight with Jesus and they're so godly that there is zero fear going on.

Even the ladies who find the empty tomb, who get the privilege of being the ones who it's announced to that it's empty, the text says they were fearful. Even Peter who would become one who would become

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this whole mouthpiece for sending out the Gospel, he at this point is fearful. We understand fear and it's our starter emotion, but I want to read something about these ladies. It's found in Matthew Chapter 28 and these ladies, both of them called Mary, they're told by the angel in the tomb do not be afraid and in Matthew 28, verse 8, it says:

⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb

— and it gives us two emotions —

with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

The very ones that were at the cross when He died, and the very ones who saw an empty tomb, they had conflicting emotions of fear and joy. And Jesus comes to them and as He meets them:

¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid"

– MATTHEW 28:8 & 10a (ESV)

I mention this to you, all throughout Scripture I found this phrase "do not be afraid" mentioned over and over and over again¹ and I encourage you with those words, but I also tell you don't be afraid that you have fear in your life. But I want you to hear two emotions that are ruling in this story today that are mentioned over and over—there's fear and we just own that in our own lives, I have it, you have it. And you're not someone special if you don't have it; you probably have something else you're trying to cover up by pretending that you don't have the fear, it's okay. In fact, I read a book one time that said the gift of fear, and so there's something okay about that, but there's also another emotion that is spoken of here with these ladies that says joy.

Now, I'm gonna take you to 1st Peter because in the book of 1st Peter, that's what we're studying right now. Peter, writing to a group of people who are scared out of their minds because a wicked ruler by the name of Nero is ruling and has put their world upside-down. They are out of control and everything is good. And Peter says these words—by the way, right after the words where he talks about the resurrection of Jesus and listen to the words that he says—I'm gonna start in verse 5:

⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

— and he says this —

⁶ In this you rejoice,

— joy, and he keeps on saying this —

though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

— we get it, we're going through that, we're in the middle of it, ALL of us are, it's a universal thing right now going through various trials. Then he explains it. He says:

⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

– 1 PETER 1:5-6 (ESV)

¹ "Do not be afraid" – 42 results → https://classic.biblegateway.com/quicksearch/?quicksearch=do+not+be+afraid&qv_version=ESV

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— and then he says this, hey listen —

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him

— and he says —

and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

– 1 PETER 1:8-9 (ESV)

Peter, when he's talking about the resurrection, when he's talking to a group of people who are going through the most difficult time of suffering, he says listen, you do not get to the end of the path without going through some suffering. And when you get through that suffering, suffering will be the conduit that's gonna lead you to joy.

A week before Jesus is crucified we had Palm Sunday. What were they doing on that week? Hosanna! Hosanna!² Everyone's shouting, they're holding up signs, and they're hooting and hollering. This joy that Peter's talking about is very different than that day because that day that kind of shouting, that ballpark-type shouting, that ends so quickly. What Peter's talking about is something happened in the resurrection for him and for these two ladies, Mary, that brought something from deep within them a joy that was deeply settled despite outward trials and outward things going on. And here's what I want to share with you, I think this is so huge to capture: Jesus walks right into their fear. Matthew Chapter 28, here's what happens, Jesus meets them on the road, that's the words he uses, Jesus meets them there. What was their situation? Fear. They had just come from the empty tomb. They have fear, they have joy, they have these competing emotions, but they have fear and Jesus meets them in their fear.

⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

– MATTHEW 28:8-10 (ESV)

I want to take you to Peter for a moment, John Chapter 20, verse 19,³ that's the text where he's in this room and he's locked in there with these other guys for fear of those who would come after them, and Jesus walks right into that locked room and He looks them in the eyes and He says, "Peace."

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

– JOHN 20:19 (ESV)

So Jesus meets the ladies in their fear; Jesus walks in on these men's fear. Here's what I want for everyone here today: That Jesus would meet you in your fear. That Jesus would meet you right where you're at. I'm so convinced of it. In your fear Jesus wants to meet you there; He wants your eyes turned on Him. Peter would be the one whose story would explain that. Remember the story, it's so well

² See Matthew 21:9 & 15, Mark 11:9-10, John 12:13

³ Transcriber source correction: Chapter 20, verse 19 (Chapter 16, verse 20, was cited in video)

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known of Jesus saying to Peter come on, walk over here, and he walks across the water.⁴ And as he's walking across the water he looks up and he's looking at Jesus, and he's able to walk on water, unbelievable, and then all of a sudden he looks and he puts his attention on the waves and it doesn't go well. He starts to sink and he starts to go down. Why? Because he took his eyes off of Jesus.

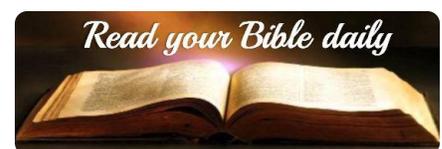
Let me take you even forward a little bit more in John Chapter 21, Peter's at this place where it says he decides to go fishing [v. 3]. And in John Chapter 21 what that means is he's going back to his old career and he says to the other guys you come with me and they go back to fishing. They go back to their old career. They go back and start their back old business up again because they look at it, because this isn't working, this probably won't work, and they don't catch a thing. And it's in that moment that Jesus calls a group of guys who have been wallowing in their fear, who have all sorts of excuses. In fact, he makes some to Jesus in that very moment. He has regrets, he's hurting, he thinks Jesus has no interest in him any longer, and he's for sure is convinced that Jesus is deeply disappointed, deeply upset with him, and is done with him. And in that moment Jesus looks at Peter and says come and "Follow me" [v. 19].

Let me repeat it again, Jesus steps into your fear. Jesus meets you in your fear. Jesus invites you in the midst of your fear to Himself. But here's where we go wrong. Many of us say, "God, I have a better plan. I have a better way to work this out." And so we live in a culture of pride that says I can control this, and the way I'm gonna control this is to make sure that I never go through any pain. That I just stuff any of those questions that I have, that I deny that I have any fear, that I pretend that everything is okay. Unfortunately, we are or we have been addicted to stuff. We have been addicted to more things. We have been addicted to creating experiences and having what we want, and we have been able to create that around us, and when trials came we did everything to buy our way out of those. But listen to what Peter says based on his own personal experience here in 1st Peter Chapter 1. He says [v. 6], ". . . *though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,*" but he says, "*so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold.*"

We may be going through some tough stuff right now and that tough stuff normally causes us fear. It causes us fear going what's the future, will I make it, am I going to be ok, how's this going to go, how did I get here in the first place, where's God in this, what's things gonna look like when this is all over? It might be in the midst of that moment but he says hey listen, what you're gonna find out at the end of this is that your faith is legit. If there was ever a time you need faith, it's right now. If there's ever a time you realize that this culture of control and pride – that I've got this – isn't working for me. It's not working for our government. It's not working for the governments of the world. It's a matter of me stepping back and saying listen, something's gotta change. And what's happening is I'm missing the big things, or it's possible I'm missing the big things that God's trying to do because I'm still focused back on what I've lost, all those little things. And so as a result of that, that's all this little stuff, that when he says hey trials are going to burn away all that little stuff, and when all that little stuff gets burned away all of a sudden we come to this place where we go, "Wait a minute. God, You're enough. God, You're okay."

Faith

Can I just encourage you right now in this time? Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying? Are you taking time every day to do that? There was a day when you didn't have the time to do that and you used that excuse. Right now you have time, you have the ability



⁴ See Matthew 14:22-33

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to start your day with this. Right now you are realizing that He is your only hope and that He's there. Most of the time in these moments here's what's happened to us—we've gotten the score wrong. We think that we're losing. Reason why I want you reading this Book is He's the one that keeps coming to everyone in the midst of their panic and their fear and He says peace be with you, peace be with you, I love you, come to Me, come to Me, I will take you where I'm trying to take you. And what we find out with the score, it's not what it looks like, it's not what we're being told on that big screen, it's not what we're being told on this lighted rectangle [*holds up his cell phone*]. What we find in here is that He wins. He won on the cross. He won when He came out of the grave alive. And as a result, what He begins to explain here is that there is rejoicing in our lives.

I want you to picture something. Picture a rope as long as you can see that way [*motions to his right*], a rope as long as you can see that way [*motions to his left*] – that is the history of the world. You can't see that end [*right*] and you can't see that end [*left*] and right here is this tiny little dot – that's us sitting on that dot. All that there [*right*] all that there [*left*] and when we focus in on that dot [of right now] we miss all of this, God's got something more. If you get a chance this week and in your groups—and I just encourage you, if you're not in a group, get in a group; if you're in a group, make sure you're jumping onto those groups. You can go onto our app and become part of a group. When you're in your group this week here's what I would love for you to do, look at the rest of these verses. He says here in verse 8:

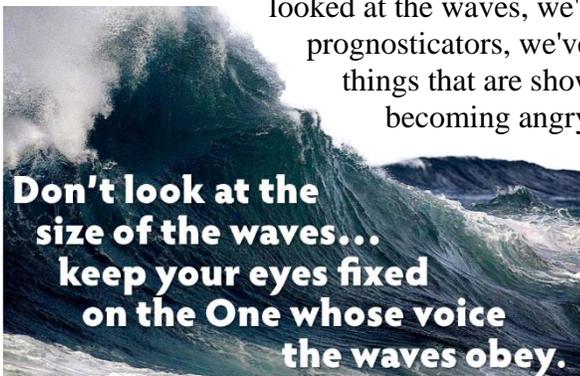


*⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,
⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

– I PETER 1:8-9 (ESV)

Here's what he's telling us, that when we experience Jesus, when we keep our eyes on Jesus, rather than the little dot of right now we get a piece of eternity, we get a piece of Heaven, we get a piece of our eternal salvation right now. It's like you pay into your retirement fund and they look at you and say, "Hey, you can have a portion of that every month to enjoy now." What you were gonna experience in retirement you get to enjoy a little bit right now. Here's what we're finding, here's what Peter says, I understand it's hard and I understand sometimes we go through some of this yuck, and it's because we're focused on the dot. He says back up a minute, if you'll take your eyes off of that and you'll focus in on Jesus and you'll cry out, "Help me" – He will.

And here's what I want you to know, some of us are becoming overwhelmed by the waves and we've looked at the waves, we've listened to the news, we've listened to the prognosticators, we've read the articles on both sides. We are watching the little things that are showing up in our Facebook feed right now and we are becoming angry and we're becoming hurt and we're becoming fearful. And Jesus goes to a group of people that are fearful and the first thing is He says: Fear not. And in Matthew Chapter 14 when Peter's about to sink and he holds out his hands and he looks at Jesus, he says, "Save me." So I'm saying to you, if you're gonna be honest like I am, that there's fear in your life, that you would hold out your



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arms to Jesus and put your eyes on Jesus; the one who's won it all, who's got it all figured out, who sees the other end of that rope that we can't see on both ends—save me. Hold your hands out to Him asking Him for rescue right now. That's what this text is saying.

By the way, I want to take you all the way down to verse 12, it talks about what's coming and it says even the angels are blown away by it and it says they wish they could figure it out.

¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

– 1 PETER 1:12 (ESV)

They look at us jealously because they see the joy that the salvation of the cross can bring to us. They can see the change in our lives that can happen. And all of a sudden when we say help me we move from fear to joy. And I get it, that's one of these things where a lot of people talk about it and it sounds just like this ethereal ideal out there. I want to invite you that when we say help Jesus, save me, and we put our eyes on Him, He will give us a joy that even the angels are going, "I wish I had that." Want to offer that to you today. If you've never put your trust in Jesus, if you've never looked at Him, if you've never said, "I need You" – I beg you to do it right now. And it's as simple as just asking Him, "Lord, come into my life." Would you trust Him?

There's a little button above your screen right now that says **Yes to Jesus**, love to invite you to let us know that you're praying that prayer right now. If you're praying that prayer right now, maybe just press the heart ♥ buttons on your screen. I would even go so far as to say type it in right now under comments, say *I'm putting my trust in Jesus right now*. So I'm gonna invite you – would you join along with me right now?

Jesus,



I pray for each person that's calling out to You for help; especially those who have never called on You, have never put their trust in You, they've always trusted in themselves and they realize they're a sinner and everything they've put their trust in will fail. Lord Jesus, I pray right now we'd be able to put our trust and faith in You. I pray that You would forgive us of our sins and come into our lives and change us from the inside out. We trust You alone for that, nothing we can do.

It's in Your Name we pray. Amen.

And I would just say to any of you who are watching on who are saying, "I've done that. I'm so there, but I'm not feeling that joy right now." It's because you've sort of mixed all this worldly stuff with your salvation and all that worldly stuff's been peeled off, that's all the little stuff, and now your faith is being purified. So,

Jesus,



I pray for each person whose faith is being purified; encourage them, strengthen them right now. And I'll pray that they'll just feel as they put their eyes on You and say save me, help me, Jesus, that You would just lift them up right now and encourage them.

We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

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Peace I leave with you;
My [perfect] peace I give to you;
not as the world gives do I give to you.
Do not let your heart be troubled,
nor let it be afraid.
[Let My perfect peace calm you in every circumstance
and give you courage and strength for every challenge.]

– JOHN 14:27 (AMP)

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