

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Text: Luke 23:44-24:12

Plain Truth

The only thing to fear is _____.

Principles to help us understand the fear of the Lord.

1. Fear not _____ but do fear not _____.
2. Fear _____, so stay _____.
3. _____ is conquered by _____.

April 28 & 29, 2018

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April 28 & 29, 2018

Life Group Lesson

Week of April 29

Fear is a paralyzing force that can keep us from a life of faith. No one is exempt from some level of fear. But fear doesn't have to back us into a corner. The Lord wants us to live into His purpose and be on mission for Him. He wants to help us see the wonderful things He is doing, meet new people, try new things, and help us develop an outlook of gratitude. With God we can face the present and future courageously. He will help us with our decisions, and be a stronghold in times of trouble. In Christ we no longer have to be enslaved to fear and anxiety.

Read Luke 23:44 – 24:12

While Jesus' suffering and death on the cross looked like utter failure to the watching world, it was, in fact, the biggest victory of all time. His death accomplished a work that had been on heaven's agenda from before the beginning of time (see 1 Peter 1:20). Christ's death and resurrection restores God's creation to Himself.

1. Think about it: often what looks like failure (at first) is not. Just as God had a bigger plan in place when His Son took the cross, He has a bigger plan over your hardships and struggles if you will trust Him. How can you begin to change your perception of failure?

In the message we learned: 'Failure is not failing to reach your goals, but failure is not setting any goals to reach' – how do fears and anxieties keep us from setting goals? What goals would you like to achieve for God?

Jesus' death on the cross was long and horrific. He was on the cross for six hours, from 9:00 until 3:00. The last three hours was total darkness: "By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. The light from the sun was gone" (v44-45). When Jesus, the light of the world, breathed His last breath, the Roman centurion overseeing the crucifixion 'worshiped God' exclaiming, "Surely this man was innocent!" Inside the Temple the veil was tearing at the quaking of the earth. The people 'beating their breasts' left the scene while the disciples, including the women, stood watching. Much was culminating at this point! – and notice the common denominator in vv46,54,56 – the work of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, and the women was all being accomplished before sundown so that the Sabbath could be observed as required by God (Genesis 2:1-3 and Exodus 20:8).

2. We must keep an eye on God's bigger picture. Jesus said we would have troubles in this world, but remember, He has overcome! (see John 16:33) Are you dissatisfied with this world? Is there a longing in your heart for something more? Perhaps the Lord wants to remind you that this earth is not your permanent home (Hebrews 13:14). How can keeping an eye on heaven help us with our fears and anxieties?
3. Also, there is power in community. Being with brothers and sisters in Christ can help us stay-the-course and remain in a place of obedience. The disciples (and the women) were certainly at a loss to understand it all, yet they stuck together and remained in communication. Why is this important for us, as well, in times of deep distress?

Close by reading the apostle Paul's words (written from a jail cell, imprisoned for his faith!) as he writes the church in Philippi:

"Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

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