

## Equipped to face up to fear (part 2)

Are there any fears in your life at the present time that you need to face up to? In part one, we considered three examples of fear in the Bible. Here are three more.

The servant: **fear of failure**. You can read the story of this nameless man in **Matthew 25:14-30**. In verse 25, the servant admits that the reason he did nothing with the money his master had given him was because he was afraid he would lose it. His master responded angrily to him, pointing out that he could at least have banked the money in order to gain some interest. But the servant would rather risk his master's displeasure than risk failure in the way he used what was entrusted to him. Is fear of failure preventing you from moving forward and taking God-honouring risks? Would you rather play it safe by denying your gifts and talents than face the possibility of failure? Has past experience whispered in your ear that, no matter what you do, it never works out well anyway?

*Fear-buster for when you're afraid of failure* - make sure you're doing what is right according to biblical principles. Commit your way to the Lord and trust him for the outcome.

The disciples: **fear of the storm**. The disciples in **Mark 4:35-41** were no wimps. Some of them had been fishermen, no doubt accustomed to the sudden storms that swept into the Sea of Galilee. Yet, here they are, terrified for their lives, accusing Jesus of not caring about them. Look how Jesus responded to them: "...*Why are you so afraid? Do you still not have faith in me?*"

<sup>1</sup> Often, the storms of life can threaten to overwhelm us, and sometimes do, because we temporarily replace faith in God with fear of circumstances. Are you going through a particularly fierce storm at the present time? Perhaps it's a serious illness, or a problematic marriage, or an extremely difficult work situation. Maybe it's none of these things, but you know yourself what your particular storm is. You've no idea when it's going to be over, and you wonder how much longer you can keep going because you feel so battered and bruised by what is happening to you. Remember this: if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, then he's as much with you in this storm as he was with the disciples in their storm. You don't need to ask him, as they did, whether or not he cares for you - be assured that he does. Listen again to his gentle voice asking you: *Why are you so afraid? Do you still not have faith in me?*

*Fear-buster for when you're afraid of the storm* - get into the habit of focusing your mind on the Lord Jesus Christ and say with King Jehoshaphat, "...*We do not know what to do, but we are looking to you for help*".<sup>2</sup>

The woman: **fear of what might happen**. In **Mark 5:25-34**, a woman tentatively reaches out to touch the fringe of Jesus' robe in order to be healed of a chronic illness. After she had done this, Jesus asked, "*Who touched my clothes?*"<sup>3</sup> and looked around to see who had done it. At this point, the woman is described as being frightened. Why? Perhaps she was afraid of how Jesus would react to what she had done; maybe she was afraid of being the focus of attention; possibly she was afraid of what her new-found freedom from her illness would mean for her future. We can only speculate about the possible reasons for her fear, but it seems she was afraid of what *might* happen. Are you presently in a state of fear over what might happen in the future? How realistic are your fears? Are you in the habit of handing them over to God?

*Fear-buster for when you're afraid of what might happen* - remind yourself that God is a sovereign God who is in complete control of the future, including yours.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 4:40 (NLT)

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chronicles 20:12 (NLT)

<sup>3</sup> Mark 5:30 (NLT)