

## 6. Fear Not

My favorite word is with. I love it when someone says to me “would you like to come with me or would you help me with this?” I also love it when someone says “hey I would love to sit with you or get an ice cream with you.” But most of all I love the word with because of God’s promise in Mathew 28:20b, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” He is always with me in the good and the bad. Not just sometimes - always. As you walk this journey called life make sure you are asking others to do it with you. It helps to ease the fear.

Proverbs 12:25 says, “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down but a good word makes him glad. Psalm 37:8 says, “Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself: it tends only to evil.” Fear is something that all of us struggle with. What if....what if.....? It can cripple you and keep you from moving forward. It can stop you in your tracks and make you turn around. Sometimes it even keeps you from getting out of bed.

When I was 11 and 12 on the farm in Iowa I loved to take care of the animals. I would often check on them by myself before going to bed, and it would be dark and scary outside. The barns were over a hundred yards from the house. The owls would screech, the trees would talk at you, the cows would moo, the coyotes would howl, and it could paralyze you. So one of the things I would do to drown out the noise till I got in the barn was sing a hymn at the top of my lungs. It was usually “How Great Thou Art”. Singing it reminded me of the promise that God is always with me. He is bigger and greater than any fear.

One thing I learned along the way was, there is no need for courage if fear isn’t legitimate. I used to think fear is made up and wrong, and one should try to ignore it. People would say when you were afraid “don’t be a ‘scaredy cat’”. Just conquer your fear. However, fear does have its good side. It gives you respect for the situation you are in. It makes you realize your need for God and others. Christine Caine puts it this way, “At the threshold of every major transition the enemy will send a spirit of fear. Recognize it, don’t allow it to paralyze you. Keep moving.” When fear strikes, recognize it and know its purpose.

I love the story in Joshua 1 as God commissions him to go into the Promised Land. Five times he tells him to be strong and courageous. Why? Because he knew they were going to be in situations that would give him legitimate reasons to fear, so he was going to need courage and stay strong. Don’t turn back, don’t give up - keep moving. God says it this way in verse 5-6: “I will not leave you or forsake you, be strong and courageous”. In verse 7 He says, “Only be strong and very courageous.” Then in verse 9 He says it again “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go”. And in verse 18 he reminds him to “Only be strong and courageous”. If you have time read Psalm 27, it’s filled with an effective remedy for fear and a recipe for courage.

If we are going to live life abundant and full, we cannot be dismayed, full of panic, fretting and anxious. When we believe deep in the promises in God’s Word and trust Him to keep His promises we can stay above the circumstances. He tell us to fear not and to be strong and courageous. The way to do that is to admit your fears to God and ask Him to overcome them

with you. Remember He is always WITH you! “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” Psalm 27:14.