

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

STUDY GUIDE

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

WRITERS

Phyllis Merritt

Jennifer Carson

Judy Hughes

BAPTISTWAY PRESS



Dallas, Texas



baptistwaypress.org

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Copyright © 2016 by BAPTISTWAY PRESS®
All rights reserved.
First edition: May 2016

Permission is granted for a church to make as many copies of this publication as needed for use within its ministry. Copies of this publication are not to be sold, distributed, or used in any other manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New Life Bible, Copyright © 1969, 1976, 1978, 1983, 1986 by Christian Literature International. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Abbreviated as NLV.

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English is published by BaptistWay Press. These quarterly studies follow the same curriculum plan as the BaptistWay Adult Bible Study curriculum.

Teachers may wish to purchase BaptistWay Adult Bible study materials as additional resources. These may be ordered through your church or directly:

Order online at: baptistwaypress.texasbaptists.org

Order by phone: (U.S. toll free): 1-866-249-1799

Mon to Fri, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Central Time)

Order by email: baptistway@texasbaptists.org

Additional contact information:

Baptist General Convention of Texas

7557 Rambler Road, Suite 1200

Dallas, TX 75231-2388 (888) 244-9400

Twitter: [@texasbaptists](https://twitter.com/texasbaptists) Facebook.com/texasbaptists

The NLV is accessed free online at: www.biblegateway.com and www.studylight.org, so it is easily available to your students via their tablet or phone in class.

The entire NLV is available as a download purchase as Kindle or ePub at www.barbour.publishing (search for “New Life”). The New Testament only is available for free download as Kindle or ePub at the Barbour Publishing site.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Executive Director

Baptist General Convention of Texas
David Hardage

Director, Church Ministry Resources
Chris Liebrum

Director, Bible Study/Discipleship Team
Phil Miller

Publisher, BAPTISTWAY PRESS®
Scott Stevens

LANGUAGE MATERIALS TEAM

Study Guide Writers

Lessons 1-4: *Phyllis Merritt*
Columbus Avenue Baptist Church, Waco, Texas

Lessons 5-10: *Jennifer Carson*
Northwood Church, Keller, Texas

Lessons 11-13: *Judy Hughes*
First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Study Guide Editors

Lessons 1-4: *Emily Martin*
Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

Lessons 5-9: *Amy Barker*
First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Lessons 10-13: *Cindy Dake*
First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Director

Office of Intercultural Ministries
Baptist General Convention of Texas
Patty Lane

*Made possible by your gifts to
the Mary Hill Davis Offering®
for Texas Missions*

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Introduction

Fear can be a good thing. It can warn us of danger and lead us to make wise choices. The Bible tells us to “fear the Lord” almost 50 times. In 1 Samuel 12:24, we read: “Only fear the Lord and be faithful to worship Him with all your heart. Think of the great things He has done for you.” That kind of fear means to honor God and to think of Him as holy and higher than all other people and things.

But most of our fears are not as good. Fear can bring much pain into our lives and rob us of joy. Television and newspapers tell us about sad or terrible events, wars, job losses, and more. What are we to do?

The Bible talks about fear for the first time in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve chose to sin. Later, they tried to hide from God to cover their shame. We have been living *with fear* and *in fear* ever since.

Fortunately, we have a Savior who gives us strength to face every fear. Jesus often told His followers to “Fear not” and to “Take courage.” With Jesus’ help, our faith will become greater than our fears.

The Old Testament writers often wrote about fear. Psalm 56:3-4 says, “When I am afraid, I will trust in You. I praise the Word of

God. I have put my trust in God. I will not be afraid. What can only a man do to me?”

This study consists of 13 lessons to help us learn how to face fear. Each lesson focuses on one kind of fear, what causes it, and how to overcome that fear with faith. As Christians, we can live so that we show other people how important it is to put aside their fears and to put their faith in Jesus.

About the Writers

Phyllis Merritt wrote Lessons 1-4 in the Study Guide and Teaching Guide. She has taught ESL since 1970 and travels to China each summer to teach English. She and her husband, Jack, are members of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church in Waco.

Jennifer Carson wrote Lessons 5-10 of the Study Guide and Teaching Guide. She and her husband, Mark, and their six children are members of Northwood Church in Keller, Texas. A graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Jennifer is a part-time English teacher, homeschool mom, and a long-time editor and writer for this curriculum series.

Judy Hughes wrote Lessons 11-13 in the Study Guide and Teaching Guide. Judy has taught English for many years and is an ESL trainer. She and her husband, a retired pastor, now attend First Baptist Church, Belton.

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson Overview

| | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| Lesson 1 | Where Fear Started | Genesis 3:1-19 |
| Lesson 2 | Moses Must Choose: Faith or Fear? | Exodus 3:7-8b, 11-15, 4:1-4, 6-7, 13-17 |
| Lesson 3 | Fearful, Not Faithful | Numbers 13:26 to 14:9 |
| Lesson 4 | Fear Takes Away Hope | 1 Kings 19:1-18 |
| Lesson 5 | Courage to Do What Is Right | Esther 4:4-17; 7:1-6 |
| Lesson 6 | Courage to Deliver Bad News | Jeremiah 1 |
| Lesson 7 | Courage to Obey God, Not Man | Daniel 3:1-2, 8-18, 25-29 |
| Lesson 8 | Courage to Love Our Enemies | Jonah 1:1-3, 3:1-5, 4:1-11 |
| Lesson 9 | Courage to Trust God for Things You Need | Luke 12:13-34 |
| Lesson 10 | Courage to Face Suffering | Matthew 26:26-46 |
| Lesson 11 | No Fear of Belonging to Jesus | Luke 22:31-34, 54-62 |
| Lesson 12 | No Fear of Death | 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 |
| Lesson 13 | No Fear of Telling the Good News | Acts 4:1-5, 7-14, 18-22 |

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Word List

Lesson 1

doubt: to think that something may not be true; to not trust or have confidence in someone

forbidden: not allowed or permitted

tempt: to make someone want to have or do something wrong, even though they know they really should not

Lesson 2

Levite: a person from the family of Levi. Levite men were to serve God as worship leaders.

rescue: to save someone from danger

Lesson 3

complain: to say that you are unhappy or that you do not like something

obstacle: something that blocks your way, so that you must try to go around it

spies: people who secretly try to find out things

Lesson 4

defeat: to overcome, win, beat

depressed: very unhappy; suffering from a medical condition in which you are so unhappy that you cannot live a normal life

Lesson 5

bribed: offered money in exchange for a promise to do something

captives: people who are captured and helpless

heritage: the history, race, or traditions of a person or group

injustice: something which is not right or unfair to a group of people

mourning: expressing great sadness, usually because someone has died

orphan: a child with no parents

rage: a deep anger

Lesson 6

compassion: a feeling of wanting to help someone who is in trouble

military: relating to the army or soldiers

prophets: ones who deliver a message

repent: to show you are sorry for something you did wrong

visions: pictures you see in your mind

Lesson 7

astrologers: men who learn from the stars

bargained: made an agreement in which one person says he will do something in exchange for something else

compromise: giving up something to make an agreement

persecution: to be treated cruelly or unfairly because of race or religious or political beliefs

threatened: expressed intent to harm someone

tragedy: a bad event that causes great sadness

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Word List

Lesson 8

brutal: extremely cruel, harsh, or violent

miserable: very unhappy, unpleasant, or uncomfortable

prejudice: an unfair feeling of dislike for a person or group because of their race, sex, religion, etc.

scorching: extremely hot

Lesson 9

abundantly: in a large way; more than enough

argument: an angry disagreement where two people have different ideas about something

depression: a period of time when there is little business activity and few people have jobs

interrupted: to ask questions or say things while another person is speaking; to do or say something that causes someone to stop speaking

paralyze: to cause someone to be unable to move or feel

shelter: a building that covers or protects

Lesson 10

endure: to experience pain or suffering for a very long time

extreme: very serious or severe

betray: to give information about someone to his enemy

symbols: an object that represents a certain thought or idea

ritual: a formal religious act that is always done in the same way

unleavened: flat bread made without yeast

Lesson 11

arrested: to use the power of the law to take and keep someone

attack: to try to hurt, injure, or destroy (something or someone)

deny/denied: to say something is not true

heartbroken: filled with great sadness

loyal: having or showing complete and constant support for something or someone; faithful

Lesson 12

immortal: not able to die or decay, living forever

mortal: certain to die and decay, temporary

temporary: lasting only a short time

victory: the act of winning

Lesson 13

courage: being able to do something you know is dangerous or difficult

reject: to refuse to believe, accept or think about some one or some thing.

threat: a statement that you will be harmed if you do not do what someone says

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Memory Verses

Lesson 1

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear. He gave us a spirit of power and of love and of a good mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

Lesson 2

“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Who has made man's mouth...So go now. And I will be with your mouth. I will teach you what to say.’” (Exodus 4:11a, 12)

Lesson 3

“Only do not go against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land.” (Numbers 14:9b)

Lesson 4

“Love the Lord your God, and obey His voice.” (Deuteronomy 30:20a)

Lesson 5

“Who knows if you have not become queen for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14b)

Lesson 6

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart....” (Jeremiah 1:5)

Lesson 7

“But even if He does not [save us], we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the object of gold that you have set up.” (Daniel 3:18)

Lesson 8

“For I knew that You are a kind and loving God Who shows pity. I knew that You are slow to anger and are filled with loving-kindness, always ready to change Your mind and not punish.” (Jonah 4:2b)

Lesson 9

“Give all your worries to Him because He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

Lesson 10

“He went away again the second time. He prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if this must happen to Me, may whatever You want be done.’” (Matthew 26:42)

Lesson 11

“Keep awake! Watch at all times. The devil is working against you. He is walking around like a hungry lion with his mouth open. He is looking for someone to eat. (1 Peter 5:8)

Lesson 12

“For sure, I am telling you a secret. We will not all die, but we will all be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:51)

Lesson 13

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes into your life. You will tell about Me in the city of Jerusalem and over all the countries of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 1: Where Fear Started

Bible Text

Genesis 3:1-19

Memory Verse

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear. He gave us a spirit of power and of love and of a good mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

Word List

doubt: to think that something may not be true; to not trust or have confidence in someone
forbidden: not allowed or permitted
tempt: to make someone want to have or do something wrong, even though they know they really should not

Have you ever been very afraid because you thought you might die? Do you know someone who is afraid they will die? This lesson teaches where the fear of death started. It began in the first book of the Bible, in Genesis 3.

God Made a Perfect World

The Bible begins in Genesis chapter 1 by telling about the one true God who made all the world. Genesis 2 is the story of God’s perfect world. This was the way He planned His world. God put the first man and the first

woman in the Garden of Eden. They were made in the likeness of God. They were to take care of God’s garden, to have children, and rule the garden. Everything was there for them. There were many good things to eat.

There was only one tree in all the garden that God told them not to eat from. It was called the tree of learning of good and bad. They were friends with God. They had everything they needed. What could go wrong?

A Perfect World Goes Bad

(Genesis 3:1-33)

Genesis 3 begins with the snake. The snake could trick or fool others, more than any of the other animals. The snake had fought against God, the One Who had made him. He wanted others to be like him and disobey God.

He did not argue with Eve. He asked her a question to see if he could make her start to **doubt** God’s goodness. He asked, “Did God really say?”

Satan still wants us to not believe God. He wants us to think that God does not care for us, or that God is not good. So Eve began to wonder why God told them not to eat of the tree. She did not think of all the trees that God had given. She started to think about the fruit of the only tree from which they were not to eat.

We also may be **tempted** to question what God says. Adam and Eve had no reason to doubt that God was good. But when the snake made them doubt, they were ready to disobey God. We must remember to trust God. This will keep us from trouble.

Eve answered the snake's question. But she changed what God said. She added that God had said not to *touch* the tree of learning of good and bad or they would die. God had not said that. He had told them not to eat the fruit from it.

The snake then lied about what God had said. The snake said, "You for sure will not die." He told her that instead her eyes would be opened. He made her begin to think that perhaps God was not to be trusted. The man and the woman began to doubt that God was good. They began to fear they could not trust God, that God was keeping them from something good.

The woman saw the fruit was beautiful. She wanted the fruit and she wanted to be like God. However, God had made the woman like Himself already. God had given power to her and her husband, so that they had power over everything else. The woman could have sent the snake away.

Eve did not talk to God. She decided by herself that the fruit on the **forbidden** tree was something she wanted. She took the fruit and

ate it. She gave some to her husband, and he also disobeyed God.

The tree of learning of good and bad had the right name. As soon as Adam and Eve ate its fruit, "the eyes of both of them were opened." Now they knew bad as well as good. They knew they had no clothes and now they felt shame. They took leaves to cover themselves.

Their eyes were opened. Now they *saw* that they had done something wrong. It was called the tree of learning of good and bad. Now they *knew* bad.

Adam and Eve Suffer Because They Sinned (Genesis 3:8-13)

Now Adam and Eve were afraid because they knew they had done wrong. Instead of looking for God and enjoying being with God, they were hiding. They were afraid God would find out what they had done. But no one can hide from God.

God asked them questions and they answered. They began to say the other person was wrong. Eve said it was the snake. Adam said it was his wife. And Adam even blamed God, because God had given Eve to him! It was a bad day.

More Suffering from Sin (Genesis 3:14-19)

God punished the snake first. The snake

would now crawl on the ground and be hated.

Then God said that Eve would have children, but she would also have pain. God also told them that a future Child of those children of Eve would crush Satan's head. The snake could only crush Jesus' heel. This means that Jesus would hurt Satan.

From that day on, men would have to work hard to care for their families. The easy way of the Garden of Eden would be no more. This beautiful garden would no longer be their home. Adam would have to work to make his own garden.

Then God told them that their sin would bring death. They would work hard to live each day and know that in the end they would return to dust. Because of their sin, they would have the greatest fear of all, the fear of death.

We see Adam and Eve going from a place where they were always close to God to a place where they were far from God and

afraid. They went from spiritual life to spiritual death.

It is sad to read of man's fall, but we also see in this story how God has made a way for man to be saved from his sin. Even in the fall of man, we see the love of God for those He made. God is kind to sinful man.

Things to Remember

Sin is when we disobey God. Sin makes everything worse. Sin makes us fear others and fear being near to God. Genesis 3:15 is the first place in the Bible to tell about the coming of Jesus to take away our sin and fear.

We can pray: *Dear God, Please forgive me for the wrong things I have done. Change me and make me right with you. I need Your help so I will not fear. Your perfect love can take away my fears! I want to live for You. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Genesis 3:1-19

1 Now the snake was more able to fool others than any animal of the field which the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say that you should not eat from any tree in the garden?"

2 Then the woman said to the snake, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden.

3 But from the tree which is in the center of the garden, God has said, 'Do not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.' "

Things to Think About

1. What happened when Adam and Eve sinned?
2. How does sin hurt families today?
3. How does fear keep some people from doing what they should?
4. Can Christians find hope even when they are afraid?
5. What is your greatest fear? Do you know someone who could pray with you so that your faith in God would be greater than your fear?

4 The snake said to the woman, "No, you for sure will not die!

5 For God knows that when you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad."

6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasing to the eyes, and could fill the desire of making one wise. So she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were without clothes. So they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves clothing.

8 Then they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the evening. The man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 But the Lord God called to the man. He said to him, "Where are you?"

10 And the man said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden. I was afraid because I was without clothes. So I hid myself."

11 The Lord God said, "Who told you that you were without clothes? Have you eaten from the tree of which I told you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The snake fooled me, and I ate."

14 Then the Lord God said to the snake,

"Because you have done this, you will be hated and will suffer more than all cattle, and more than every animal of the field. You will go on your stomach and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

15 And I will make you and the woman hate each other, and your seed and her seed will hate each other. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel."

16 To the woman He said, "I will make your pain much worse in giving birth. You will give birth to children in pain. Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 Then He said to Adam, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I told you, "Do not eat from it," the ground is cursed because of you. By hard work you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

18 It will grow thorns and thistles for you. You will eat the plants of the field.

19 You will eat bread by the sweat of your face because of hard work, until you return to the ground, because you were taken from the ground. You are dust, and you will return to dust."

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 2: Moses Must Choose: Faith or Fear?

Bible Text

Exodus 3:7-8b, 11-15;
4:1-4, 6-7, 9-11, 13-17

Memory Verse

“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Who has made man's mouth. . . So go now. And I will be with your mouth. I will teach you what to say.’”
(Exodus 4:11a, 12)

Word List

Levite: a person from the family of Levi. Levite men were to serve God as worship leaders.
rescue: to save someone from danger

When my husband and I were asked to be missionaries in New York City we were excited. But we were also a little afraid. We were given some advice. “Do not be afraid to try new things.” We were told that some people never fail, but it is because they are afraid to try to do anything. They never try, they never fail. But they do not do good either. We wanted to not be afraid to try different ways to serve God. It was good advice — do not be afraid to serve God.

The Lesson

When God calls us, how do we answer? Not everyone is like Isaiah and will say, “Here am I, SEND me.” Many times we are like Jonah and say, “NOT me!” And sometimes we are like Moses and say, “Send someone else!”

We will see that Moses was afraid of speaking. For some people, speaking in front of others is one of their greatest fears. I have seen people shake when asked to speak or to pray aloud. One friend was able to overcome her fear of praying out loud when she decided that praying for missionaries on their birthdays was more important than her fear.

Moses learned not to be afraid and to have faith that God would help him. It was not an easy lesson.

God Who Cares (Exodus 3:7-9)

God heard His people when they were slaves in Egypt and cried for Him to help them. He saw what was happening to them. He cared about them. So God decided to **rescue** them.

God had called Moses in Exodus 3:1-6 and spoken to him from the burning bush. God could have rescued His people with His power alone. He chose to work with Moses. “I am sending you,” God said.

Moses’ work would be difficult. People from many different nations were already

living in Canaan. But God had given that country to His people.

God Who Calls (Exodus 3:10-13)

In the past, Moses had tried to help his people, but had failed (Exodus 2). Now he told God that he could not do what God wanted. God promised that He would always be with Moses. God may ask someone to do a special work. But He promises that they will never be alone. Moses thought he could not do God's work. But God showed Moses that He would make him able to do the job.

God Who Answers (Exodus 3:14-15)

Moses was afraid no one would believe God had called him to lead. They would want to know Who sent him. God's people had called Him the All-Powerful God. He was the God of their fathers. Moses was told this new name, I AM WHO I AM, or as it is often written, "Yahweh." It means God is, God has always been. He will always be. There is no other God. He is the God of every thing, every time, every place.

Moses was to teach more about God. This was the One True God his family and his people had worshipped a long time ago. He is the real God, and He is alive. He would be with them always, because He chose them. They were His people. He is God.

When God calls us, we might be afraid

that we cannot do the job. Do not think about your own fear. Think how big God is. He will be with us. He will not leave us. He will give us strength all along the way.

God's Power (Exodus 4:1-9)

Moses had fear. God gave Moses two signs and two promises. Moses had a stick he used to work with sheep. It became a sign of power as God changed it from a stick to a snake and back to a stick. Next, God showed that He could bring a skin disease and he could take away a skin disease. God has all power. He told Moses to take water from the River Nile and pour it on the dry land and it would turn to blood. The people of Egypt thought the River Nile was a god. The One True God would show Who made the river.

These mighty works were powerful. The people of Israel would believe that the God of their past fathers had come to Moses.

God's Love (Exodus 4:10-17)

Moses still had fear and not enough faith. He thought he did not have the right words. He thought he could not speak the right way. He had always felt this way. Perhaps he thought God had made him that way.

God reminded Moses that He had made Moses' mouth to speak for Him. God would help Moses to speak. He would teach Moses

what to say. Moses should not be afraid.

Moses still asked God to choose someone else. God was not happy because Moses did not trust Him. But God showed He understood Moses' fear and wanted to help him. So God promised that Aaron, the brother of Moses, would speak for Moses. Aaron became the chief priest. Like Aaron, all the priests came from the family called Levi. God promised to be with both Moses and Aaron. Aaron would receive God's messages from Moses. Then Aaron would speak to the people and he would give God's message to them.

Moses had a long list of reasons why he was afraid to say yes to God's call. God answered each of those fears. The good news is that finally Moses obeyed God. He had fears but he learned to trust God and trust God's power. He stopped being afraid of what others would think. He had faith that God would be with him all the time. His story helps us when we are afraid.

Things to Think About

1. What were Moses' fears?
2. How did God answer those fears?
3. What are some ways God calls us to do His work?
4. Are we afraid to answer God's call?
5. How can we be like Moses and answer God in faith?

Things to Remember

God still calls His people to serve Him.

What should we do?

- Know that God is still at work today in our world. He calls people to follow Him and be used by Him in His work.
- Pray that those in your church will know what God wants for your church.
- Pray to understand God's will.
- Pray to answer God's call with faith and not fear.
- Be happy when others answer the call of God in their lives with faith and not fear.

If we have faith that God wants us to do His work, we can have faith that God will help us do it — in our church, our neighborhood, our world. Moses was able to work for God after he stopped being afraid.

Exodus 3:7-8, 11-15

7 The Lord said, "I have seen the suffering of My people in Egypt. I have heard their cry because of the men who make them work. I know how they suffer.

8 So I have come down to save them from the power of the Egyptians. I will bring them out of that land to a good big land, to a land flowing with milk and honey.

...11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh and bring the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

12 God said, "But I will be with you. And this will be something special for you to see to know

that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this mountain."

13 Then Moses said to God, "See, I am going to the people of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they might say to me, 'What is His name?' What should I say to them?"

14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

15 Again He said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever. By this name I am to be remembered by all people for all time.

Exodus 4:1-4, 6-7, 9-11, 13-17

1 Then Moses answered, "What if they will not believe me or listen to me? They might say, 'The Lord has not shown Himself to you.' "

2 The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" Moses said, "A stick."

3 Then the Lord said, "Throw it on the ground." So Moses threw it on the ground, and it became a snake. And Moses ran from it.

4 But the Lord said to Moses, "Put out your hand and take it by its tail." So Moses put out his hand and caught it. And it became a stick in his hand. .

...6 The Lord said to him, "Put your hand inside your coat." So Moses put his hand inside his coat. When he took it out, his hand had a bad skin disease and was white as snow.

7 Then God said, "Put your hand inside your coat

again." So Moses put his hand inside his coat again. When he took it out of his coat, he saw that it had become like his other flesh.

...9 But they might not believe even these two things or listen to what you say. So then take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. And the water you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

10 Moses said to the Lord, "Lord, I am not a man of words. I have never been. Even now since You spoke to Your servant, I still am not. For I am slow in talking and it is difficult for me to speak."

11 Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes a man not able to speak or hear? Who makes one blind or able to see? Is it not I, the Lord?"

...13 But Moses said, "O Lord, I ask of You, send some other person."

14 Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses. He said, "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know he can speak well. Also, he is coming to meet you. And when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

15 You must speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I will be with your mouth and his mouth. I will teach you what you are to do.

16 He will speak to the people for you. He will be a mouth for you. And you will be as God to him.

17 You will take this special stick in your hand. And you will use it to make the special things happen for the people to see."

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 3: Fearful, Not Faithful

Bible Text

Numbers 13:26 to 14:9

Memory Verse

“Only do not go against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land.” (Numbers 14:9b)

Word List

complain: to say that you are unhappy or that you do not like something

obstacle: something that blocks your way, so that you must try to go around it

spies: people who secretly try to find out things

Our son and his wife want to move from Texas to Hawaii, buy land, and grow their own food. They have been thinking about this for several years. Soon they will take a trip to look at homes and land to buy. What will they find? Will it seem to be too hard? Will they find a land of milk and honey?

A Promise Is Very Near

(Numbers 13:1-25)

God called Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. God promised Abraham that his family would

have the land of Canaan.

They had lived as slaves over 400 years in Egypt. Many years had passed before the time of Numbers 13. The family of Abraham still had the dream of living in the Promised Land. Moses has brought them very close. They were camped right across the river. They could see for themselves what they had heard about for so long.

God showed Himself to His people as He rescued them from slavery and led them to the Promised Land. God gave them food and water as they walked across the desert. God showed them the way with a cloud in the day and a fire at night. God gave them The Laws so they would know how to live. They should have been ready to go and take the land.

God told Moses to send 12 spies to look at the land He was giving them. One person from each tribe was chosen. The time had come for the people of God to come back home.

So Close (Numbers 13:26-27)

The 12 men took 40 days to do their job. They found that the land had everything God had promised. They could grow all they needed. The fruit was large. They brought back some for the others to see. It was really a wonderful land flowing with milk and honey.

Then came bad news from 10 of the spies. They said that the people who lived

there were big and strong. The buildings and cities had walls around them. The words were true, but they forgot one thing. God had given them the land.

Seeing Obstacles; Not Trusting God (Numbers 13:28-33)

The country was good, but 10 of the men did not want to obey God. They gave reasons why they should not go in. They were afraid and they made the people very afraid.

One of the spies was different. He had faith. His name was Caleb. He said they should obey God and go into the land. He believed God's promises. He trusted God. He told the people, "We are well able to go."

The other 10 spies began to say more bad things about the land God had given them. Instead of seeing God, they saw problems. Instead of seeing what God saw, they saw **obstacles**. Instead of faith, they had fear. They thought it would be impossible.

They thought the land would destroy them. They thought the people were too large and they were like grasshoppers. The people became more afraid and felt small. They forgot that God is bigger than any of these problems.

When we have problems, it is easy to worry and be afraid. Like the people of Israel, we should remember that God will look after us. We must believe that He can help us. Like

Caleb, we must trust Him and we must obey Him always.

Acting in Fear (Numbers 14:1-4)

Like a fire, fear spread among the people. When they heard the false report, they cried because they didn't believe God would help them. They began to cry loudly all night long. Everyone in the camp became afraid to go into the land God wanted to give them. They said they did not want to live there. They **complained**, as they complained many times before. They were afraid of the Egyptian army when they left Egypt (Exodus 14:10-14). They complained then. They thought that they would die. They complained when they had no water to drink in the desert (Exodus 15:22-27 and 17:1-7). They complained about the food God gave them (Numbers 11:6).

They said they wanted to go back to Egypt where they had been slaves. They wanted to get a new leader who would take them back. They said they would rather die in Egypt or in the desert than go into the land. They let fear keep them from the land God promised.

We can learn something very important from this. When we have problems, we have a choice. We can cry out to God, or we can complain against Him. We can ask for His help, or we can fight against

Him. The people of Israel made the wrong choice, not just once, but many times.

Acting with Faith (Numbers 14:5-9)

Moses and his brother Aaron lay down with their faces in the dirt and prayed. This showed their great respect for God. The people of Israel had seen God's power in the past. They had seen Him take care of them. Now they let fear destroy their faith in God.

The two spies who believed God would help them were Joshua and Caleb. They tore their clothes to show how unhappy they were. People in those days tore their clothes when someone died as a way to show sadness.

They spoke to all the people. They spoke words that were full of faith. They said it was not a land that would destroy them. It would be "a very, very good land." They reminded the people it was land that flows with milk and honey. Joshua and Caleb were future leaders. They wanted the people to

think about God, not about the problems. God was with them. He would protect them.

But the people did not believe Joshua and Caleb. Instead, they became more angry with them. They wanted to kill Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb. But God was with them. He showed His shining-greatness to all the people.

Then what happened? The people got what they wanted. They did not enter the land. Anyone 20 years and older would die over the next 40 years in the desert. Only their children would enter the land.

Things to Remember

Do not let fear take you away from God. God will help you with your problems. God made all the world. We do not need to be afraid. The next time an obstacle comes, ask God which way to go. Remember God is leading you. We have His words in the Bible. We have His spirit living within us. He will give us strength. Perhaps He will turn your giants into grasshoppers!

Things to Think About

1. What report should all 12 spies have given?
2. Why were the 10 spies so afraid?
3. What are some fears in your life today?
4. How do you respond when obstacles are in your path?
5. What are some lessons you have learned in dealing with obstacles?

Numbers 13:26-33

26 And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the people of Israel in the desert of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought news to them and to all the people, and showed them the fruit of the land.

27 They told Moses, "We went to the land where you sent us. It does flow with milk and honey. This is its fruit.

28 But the people who live in the land are strong. The cities have walls and are very large. And we saw the children of Anak there.

29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev. The Hittites and Jebusites and Amorites are living in the hill country. And the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

30 Then Caleb told the people in front of Moses to be quiet. And he said, "Let us go up at once and take the land. For we are well able to take it in battle."

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go against the people. They are too strong for us."

32 So they brought the people of Israel bad news about the land they had spied out, saying, "The land we have gone to spy out is a land that destroys those who go there to live. All the people we saw in it are very large.

33 We saw the Nephilim there. (The sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim.) We looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we

looked the same to them."

Numbers 14:1-9

1 Then all the people cried out with a loud voice, and they cried that night.

2 All the people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this desert!

3 Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to be killed by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be taken away. Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

4 So they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and return to Egypt."

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in front of all the gathering of the people of Israel.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh tore their clothes. They were among those who had spied out the land.

7 They said to all the people of Israel, "The land we passed through to spy out is a very good land.

8 If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us. It is a land which flows with milk and honey.

9 Only do not go against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land. For they will be our food. They have no way to keep safe, and the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 4: Fear Takes Away Hope

Bible Text

1 Kings 19:1-18

Memory Verse

“Love the Lord your God, and obey His voice.” (Deuteronomy 30:20a)

Word List

defeat: to overcome, win, beat

depressed: very unhappy; suffering from a medical condition in which you are so unhappy that you cannot live a normal life

Some Christians today are afraid and think about their problems all the time. They feel hopeless. One person said, “I smile all the time so that nobody knows how sad and lonely I am.” Another said, “I am the only Christian in my whole city.”

We can not tell by looking at others how they feel. But God knows. Perhaps He can use us to help others. He can help us so we know that we are not alone. He cares for us and wants what is best for us.

Elijah

Elijah was one of the most famous of Israel’s early preachers. He spoke God’s Word to the people. One time God helped Elijah win a powerful battle with 850 preachers of the false gods. Elijah told them to ask their false gods to make a fire come down and burn their offering. The false preachers danced and shouted. Nothing happened. Elijah prayed to the God of Israel. Even after much water was poured on the offering, God sent a fire to burn it all up. The people said, “The Lord, He is God. The Lord, He is God.” (1 Kings 18:39) They believed. The king, Ahab, did not.

Earlier Elijah had told King Ahab that there would be no rain. There was no rain for a long time. After God sent the fire to burn the offering, Elijah told King Ahab that a heavy rain was coming. God sent rain.

An Angry King and a Fearful Preacher (1 Kings 19:1-3)

King Ahab and his evil wife, Jezebel, worshiped false gods. Ahab told Jezebel that Elijah had killed the false preachers of the false god, Baal. Jezebel was very angry. She sent news to Elijah that she would kill him by the next day.

Elijah had just seen God **defeat** the false gods. He had every reason to be brave. But he was afraid. Jezebel’s words showed

that bad people still were in control of Israel. Elijah felt that he was no better than the early preachers before him. They had not been able to turn the people back to God.

Elijah felt that he had failed too. The king and his wife did not turn to God after seeing God's power. So Elijah ran from the northern kingdom to the far south of the southern kingdom.

The Bible tells both the good and the bad about people in the Bible. We learn that Elijah just gave up. The great preacher sent home his servant and wanted to die. He was tired, in his body, and in his mind. He was sad. He was **depressed**. He felt he was the only one who had tried to serve God. He lay down under a tree and fell asleep.

People who are depressed often have a change in how they sleep. Some people want to sleep all the time. Others may sleep only a few hours a night. Elijah did not want to live. He needed help.

Rest (1 Kings 19:5-8)

God sent an angel two different times to give Elijah food and water. God helped Elijah. It took some time. Elijah's strength returned. He was not going to die after all. God still had a plan for him.

God took care of Elijah so that he was strong enough to walk for 40 days and nights through the desert to the mountain of God.

God Speaks to Elijah

(1 Kings 19:9b-14)

Elijah's trip ended at Mount Horeb, also called Mount Sinai. This was the same place Moses had found God in the burning bush (Ex. 3:1). It is where God had given Moses the Laws (Ex. 19:16). It was a special place. Elijah hid in a cave there.

God asked Elijah, "What are you doing here?" God did not ask because He did not know. God knew Elijah was there. God knows everything. Elijah would learn that God had a plan for him. Elijah gave a long list of how he felt. He ended by saying, "Only I am left, and they want to kill me."

The angel told Elijah to come out of the cave and go stand on the mountain before the Lord. Elijah waited for God in the wind. He listened for God in an earthquake. He tried to see God in a fire. God did not speak from any of these.

This time God spoke to Elijah in the sound of a gentle wind. It was a quiet, soft sound. God can use powerful events. The fire had burned up the offering. God sent a storm when Elijah prayed for rain. But this time God spoke in a very gentle way. Elijah knew that God was there with him.

Then Elijah covered his face. God asked Elijah again, "What are you doing here?" Elijah answered God's question. He explained that he had tried very hard to serve

God. He wanted to bring the people back to worship the One True God. They had seen God's power, but had not really changed.

Elijah thought that he was alone. He thought he was the only person who still followed God. Fears seems stronger when you are the only one. But that was not true. Obadiah, the palace official, was still loyal to God. And the 100 preachers protected by Obadiah were loyal to God. (I Kings 18:3). Soon God would tell Elijah about many more who were serving God.

A New Job (1 Kings 19:15-18)

God heard Elijah's list of problems. But God did not answer all of them. Instead, God gave Elijah a new job. Elijah had been called even when he was running away. When he was able to take his eyes off himself, he found God's next plan for his life. God told him, "Go return on your way to the deserts of Damascus."

God made clear that Elijah was not

Things to Think About

1. What made Elijah so tired and fearful?
2. How did God help Elijah when he was depressed?
3. What causes people today to feel the way Elijah felt?
4. How can our churches help us in these times?
5. What can you do to help people who have fears and feel depressed?

alone. He let Elijah know that he was still needed. He was to go and set apart three other people who would continue to work for God after Elijah was gone. Elijah was to choose Elisha to speak for God in Elijah's place. Together they would work to do what Elijah had been trying to do—call God's people to be faithful and serve the One True God.

God said there were 7,000 others in the land who served Him. Elijah was not alone. God was there and other believers were there.

Things to Remember

Sometimes, in our prayers, we try to tell God what we want to happen. God knows best what He wants to happen. We may feel God speak to us in our hearts, our minds, our spirits. If we are too busy to listen we might not hear His words for us. Perhaps that is why Elijah did not hear God's word at first. Perhaps Elijah needed to wait until his heart was calm enough to hear God's message. Are you calm enough to hear God's voice?

1 Kings 19:1-18

1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done. He told her how Elijah had killed with the sword all the men who spoke for Baal.

2 Then Jezebel sent news to Elijah, saying, "So

may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow."

3 Elijah was afraid. He got up and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba of Judah, he left his servant there.

4 But he himself traveled for a day into the desert. He came and sat down under a juniper tree. There he asked that he might die, saying, "It is enough now, O Lord. Take my life. For I am not better than my fathers."

5 When he lay down and slept under the juniper tree, an angel touched him. The angel said to him, "Get up and eat."

6 Then Elijah looked and saw by his head a loaf of bread made ready on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.

7 The angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him, and said, "Get up and eat. Because this traveling is too hard for you."

8 So he got up and ate and drank. And he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.

9 He came to a cave, and stayed there. The word of the Lord came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 Elijah said, "I have been very careful to serve the Lord, the God of All. For the people of Israel have turned away from Your agreement. They have torn down Your altars and have killed with the sword the men who speak for You. Only I am left, and they want to kill me."

11 So the angel said, "Go and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And the Lord passed by. A strong wind tore through the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord.

But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind the earth shook. But the Lord was not in the shaking of the earth.

12 After the earth shook, a fire came. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a sound of gentle blowing.

13 When Elijah heard it, he put his coat over his face, and went out and stood at the opening of the hole. Then a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 He said, "I have been very careful to serve the Lord, the God of All. For the people of Israel have turned away from Your agreement. They have torn down Your altars. And they have killed with the sword the men who speak for You. Only I am left, and they want to kill me."

15 The Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the desert of Damascus. When you get there, set apart Hazael to be the king of Syria.

16 Set apart Nimshi's son Jehu to be the king of Israel. And set apart Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah to speak for God in your place.

17 Jehu will kill the one who gets away from the sword of Hazael. Elisha will kill the one who gets away from the sword of Jehu.

18 But I will leave 7,000 in Israel whose knees have not bowed down in front of Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 5: Courage to Do What Is Right

Bible Text

Esther 4:4-17; 7:1-6

Memory Verse

“Who knows if you have not become queen for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14b)

Word List

bribed: offered money in exchange for a promise to do something

captives: people who are captured and helpless

heritage: the history, race, or traditions of a person or group

injustice: something which is not right or unfair to a group of people

mourning: expressing great sadness, usually because someone has died

orphan: a child with no parents

rage: a deep anger

The Book of Esther tells an interesting story about God’s people. The book does not mention God. But we can see His power at work in this story. Esther was one of God’s people. She was an **orphan**. She had no father or mother. Her cousin Mordecai raised her as his daughter. They lived in Persia many years after Jews were taken there as **captives**.

At this time, King Ahasuerus ruled over the people in Persia. Queen Vashti was his beautiful queen. He was not a strong or wise leader. One of his bad decisions caused him to lose his wife (Esther 1:10-19). After this, King Ahasuerus looked for a new queen. He sent his servants to find the most beautiful girls in the land. They searched the whole kingdom. They brought the most beautiful women back to the king. The king could choose a new queen from the girls they found.

Esther was beautiful “in body and face” (2:7). The king’s servants noticed Esther right away. Everyone liked her. And the king liked her, too. King Ahasuerus chose Esther out of all the women he saw. He placed the crown on her head. He “made her queen instead of Vashti” (2:17).

Esther’s Jewish **heritage** was secret to everyone in the palace. Her cousin Mordecai worried about her. He stood in front of the palace each day. He wanted to watch for Esther. He watched to make sure she was safe. One day, he overheard a plot to kill the king! Mordecai told Esther what he had heard. She then went and told the king. Together they saved the king’s life (2:21-23).

Every day Mordecai continued to stand in front of the palace. One day Haman passed by him. Haman was an important leader who hated the Jews. Haman wanted everyone to bow to him (3:1-2). But Mordecai would not

bow. Haman became very angry. In his **rage**, Haman made a plan to kill all the Jews. He told lies about the Jews to the king. Then he asked the king to kill them all. He promised to give the king money in return. Haman **bribed** the king to destroy the Jews!

An Important Message (Esther 4:4-7)

Mordecai heard of Haman's plan. He became deeply sad and troubled. Mordecai knew he would need Esther's help. Mordecai dressed in special Jewish **mourning** clothes made from hair. He cried aloud at the king's gate. Esther heard him. She did not know why Mordecai was troubled. She sent her servant to take Mordecai new clean clothes. She did not want Mordecai to mourn. But Mordecai would not take the clothes Esther sent. Esther sent her servant, Hathach, to find out what was wrong with Mordecai.

Facing Fear (Esther 4:8-17)

Mordecai told Esther's servant about Haman's plan. Mordecai sent her a message. He asked for Esther's help. He asked her to go before the king and beg him to save her people. Mordecai knew what he asked Esther to do was dangerous. The king could reject Esther. He could have her killed just for going to him when she wasn't invited. But Mordecai could think of no other way to save their people from the harm that was planned.

Sometimes God asks His people to walk in danger. Many times, we must take risks to do what is right. We might risk our jobs or reputations. We might have to risk our relationships with family or friends. Esther would be risking her very life. The king could kill anyone who entered his room without being invited.

Esther knew the risks. She sent a message back to Mordecai. She let Mordecai know the dangers. She had not been invited to see the king in thirty days! Her fear was understandable. If the king was not pleased with her, she would die. Fear stood between Esther and the task she needed to complete.

Fear can be a good thing. It can make us stop and think about the dangers we might face. It can give us time to make wise decisions. But God does not want fear to get in the way of our obedience to Him. Fear must not stop us from helping those who need our help. It must not keep us from standing up for those in need. God does not want fear to keep us from doing what is right.

Mordecai understood Esther's fear. But he told her something important. Esther would not escape Haman's plan. She, too, was a Jew. She would not escape just because she lived in the king's palace. Mordecai encouraged Esther to act with courage. Maybe she had become queen just so God could use her to save His people!

Esther focused on God's power to use her in this hard time. When she focused on Him, she found courage to act. Esther decided to go to the king for help. So she prepared for action. She asked all of God's people to go without food or drink for three days. She asked them to pray special prayers for her during these days. She knew her life was in God's hands. She looked to Him to save her from her fears.

Acting in Courage (Esther 7:1-6)

Esther showed amazing courage. She stood up against Haman's evil plan. She did not have a promise of God's protection. Yet she trusted God and loved His people. God showed Esther favor. Not only did the king accept her, he offered her up to half his kingdom! Esther's courage was the exact thing God used to save His people.

Things to Think About

1. Think about Esther. What does her example teach us about fear in the face of danger?
2. Read Mark 14:35-36. What does Jesus' example teach us about fear in the face of danger?
3. Was Mordecai's request for Esther to risk her life a reasonable request? Why?
4. Have you ever been asked to stand up for others in an unfair or unjust situation? What did you do?
5. How is Esther's story similar to events in our world today? Who are the "Esthers" of our world? Do we support them? How?

Things to Remember

Every year, Jewish people celebrate Esther's strong courage in the face of fear. The celebration is called the Feast of Purim. It helps the Jews remember how God saved His people in Persia. They remember how Esther's faith was greater than her fear.

Haman was seeking to do evil against the Jews. His plans were not right in God's eyes. In the world today, there are many examples of things which are not right in God's eyes. The world is full of sin. Because of sin, things are not the way God designed them to be. Our world is full of slavery, poverty, homelessness, racism and other kinds of **injustice**. What will you do if God calls you to take action? Will you stand up in the face of fear? God uses people whose faith is bigger than their fear!

Esther 4:4-17

- 4 Then Esther's women and men servants came and told her, and the queen was very troubled. She sent clothes for Mordecai to wear, that he might take off his clothes made from hair. But he would not take them.
- 5 Then Esther called Hathach from the king's servants whom the king had chosen to help her. She told him to go to Mordecai and find out what was wrong and why.
- 6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai at the king's gate in the open space of the city.

7 And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him. He told him just how much money Haman had promised to pay to the king's store-houses to have the Jews destroyed.

8 He also gave him one of the letters of the law that was sent out from Susa to destroy the Jews, that he might show it to Esther and let her know. And he said that she should go in to the king and beg him to show favor to her people.

9 Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said.

10 Then Esther told Hathach to say to Mordecai,

11 "All the king's servants and the people of the king's nation know that he has one law for any man or woman who comes to him in his room who has not been called: They will be put to death, unless the king holds out his special golden stick to him so that he may live. And I have not been called to come to the king for these thirty days."

12 Then Mordecai was told what Esther had said.

13 Mordecai answered, "Do not think that you in the king's special house will live any more than all the other Jews.

14 For if you keep quiet at this time, help will come to the Jews from another place. But you and your father's house will be destroyed.

Who knows if you have not become queen for such a time as this?"

15 Then Esther told them to say to Mordecai,

16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and have them all go without food so

they can pray better for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my women servants will go without food in the same way. Then I will go in to the king, which is against the law. And if I die, I die."

17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had told him.

Esther 7:1-6

1 So the king and Haman came to eat with Esther the queen.

2 And the king said again to Esther on the second day, as they drank their wine at the special supper, "What do you want to ask of me, Queen Esther? It will be done for you. What do you want? You would be given as much as half the nation."

3 Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your eyes, O king, and if it please the king, I ask that my life and the lives of my people be saved.

4 For I and my people have been sold, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be done away with. If we had only been sold as men and women servants, I would have kept quiet. For our trouble is not to be compared with the trouble it will make for the king."

5 Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would do such a thing?"

6 Esther said, "This sinful Haman hates us very much!" Then Haman was very afraid in front of the king and queen.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 6: Courage to Deliver Bad News

Bible Text

Jeremiah 1

Memory Verse

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart....”
(Jeremiah 1:5)

Word List

compassion: a feeling of wanting to help someone who is in trouble

military: relating to the army or soldiers

prophets: ones who deliver a message

repent: to show you are sorry for something you did wrong

visions: pictures you see in your mind

An Army chaplain has a hard job. He has many duties. One of his hardest jobs comes when a soldier dies. Sometimes a soldier dies in battle. Other times, a soldier dies while training for battle. When the Army loses a soldier, the chaplain must tell the soldier’s family.

Army families know a soldier’s job can be dangerous. All military families know this.

Many families fear that a chaplain might arrive with bad news. All chaplains fear having to deliver this kind of bad news to a family. The news of a lost soldier is painful. It is painful for the family to hear. It is painful for the chaplain to say. Many chaplains become deeply sad and broken after delivering these messages.

Sometimes the truth is a hard message to deliver. It is hard to hear and hard to say. But God wants His people to hear truth, even when it is hard. He prepares special servants to speak His truth. His special messengers are called **prophets**.

In 627 BC, God had a message for His people. He wanted them to change their ways. He wanted them to stop sinning. God wanted to give them one final chance to **repent**. God sent Jeremiah to deliver hard news that no one wanted to hear.

How Things Went Wrong

(Jeremiah 1:1-3)

Before Jeremiah’s time, God’s people had two kingdoms. Israel lived in the north. Judah lived in the south. Then Assyria destroyed Israel. Now it was 100 years later. Judah was in trouble. They were surrounded by three powerful enemies. Egypt was a strong power to the west. Assyria was a

powerful force to the north. Babylon was growing in strength to their east.

God was unhappy with the kingdom of Judah. The people's hearts were not faithful to God. They worshipped other gods. The One True God wanted to show them the danger of following the wrong gods. Israel had fallen because of such sin. Now it was Judah's turn.

God sent His faithful servant Jeremiah to warn them. Jeremiah was from a family of priests. Jeremiah was young. He thought he was not ready for the job. He also knew the people would not like the hard news. He feared what the people might do when they heard God's message.

God Chooses Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-10)

God is a personal God. He knows each one of us by name. He knows our hopes and fears. He knows our strengths. And He knows our weaknesses. He designed us. He has a purpose for each of us. He knew Jeremiah this same way. God showed this truth to Jeremiah. God told Jeremiah that he was chosen for a special purpose.

God had chosen Jeremiah before he was even born (v. 5). God's words are similar to David's in Psalm 139:13: "For You made the parts inside me. You put me together inside my mother." Paul also wrote similar words in Galatians 1:15: "But God chose me before I

was born. By His loving-favor He called me to work for Him." Jeremiah needed to know God had a plan for his life.

Sometimes God's plans mean we must do things that make us afraid. And sometimes we make excuses when we are afraid. Like Jeremiah, we think of reasons we cannot do what God asks. We want to run away from God's plan. In fear, we may back away from what God is telling us to do.

God encouraged Jeremiah. Then He gave him a promise. God promised to be with him "to take [him] out of trouble" (v. 8). Finally, He touched Jeremiah's mouth. God gave him the words to speak. When God chooses someone to serve Him, He also prepares His servant for the job. We should seek to do the things God calls us to do. And, like Jeremiah, we should rely on His help to do the job.

God Gives Two Visions (Jeremiah 1:11-16)

God wanted Jeremiah to be sure of His special calling. **Visions** were not common in Jeremiah's time. But God gave Jeremiah two important visions. These pictures helped Jeremiah understand God's message.

First, God gave Jeremiah a vision of an almond tree. God's people knew the almond tree was the first to blossom in the growing season. The word used here means *to be*

ready. This picture clearly warned that God was ready to punish His people.

The second picture was one of a boiling pot. Babylon was a growing power to the east. Assyria was weakening in the north. God was warning that Babylon would destroy Jerusalem. Jeremiah began to understand the message God gave him. It was very serious. These pictures helped Jeremiah understand the important job God had given him.

God Strengthens Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:17-19)

God had **compassion** on Jeremiah in his fear. God gave him strength for his task. He did not want Jeremiah to give in to fear. Now Jeremiah would have to walk in the strength God gave him. He would need to be like a strong city at war. He would have to be strong like iron and brass. If he used this

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever had to deliver bad news? What excuses did you make?
2. Have you ever had to deliver an unpopular message? How did others respond?
3. Do you know of a hard truth that you need to speak to someone right now? What is stopping you?
4. What can you learn from Jeremiah's example to help you do what God is asking you right now?
5. How does the truth that God knows you personally give you strength and encouragement in hard times?

strength to obey God's call, God would help him. Jeremiah's enemies would not have power over him.

Things to Remember

God may never call us to deliver a harsh message like the one He gave Jeremiah. But we can be sure that God has a special purpose for each of us who follow Him. Like Jeremiah, we might face fear in doing the jobs God calls us to do. We might have to deliver a message others do not want to hear. We must rely on God to give us His courage to say hard things. We must rely on God to give us love for those who must hear hard things. We can look to Jeremiah's example to find strength. And we can rely on God's promise to be with us and protect us.

Jeremiah 1

- 1 These are the words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the religious leaders at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.
- 2 The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his rule.
- 3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, when the people

of Jerusalem were taken away.

4 Now the Word of the Lord came to me saying,

5 “Before I started to put you together in your mother, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart as holy. I chose you to speak to the nations for Me.”

6 Then I said, “O, Lord God! I do not know how to speak. I am only a boy.”

7 But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy.’ You must go everywhere I send you. And you must say whatever I tell you.

8 Do not be afraid of them. For I am with you to take you out of trouble,” says the Lord.

9 Then the Lord put out His hand and touched my mouth, and said to me, “See, I have put My words in your mouth.

10 I have chosen you this day to be over the nations and the kings, to dig up and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.”

11 And the Word of the Lord came to me saying, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree.”

12 Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching to see that My Word is completed.”

13 The Word of the Lord came to me a second time saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, with its face turned away from the north.”

14 Then the Lord said to me, “Out of the

north trouble will come upon all the people of the land.

15 For, see, I am calling all the families of the nations of the north,” says the Lord. “And they will come. Then every one will set up his throne at the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls around it, and against all the cities of Judah.

16 And I will tell how they are to be punished for all their sin. For they have turned away from Me and have given gifts to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands.

17 Now get ready. Stand up and tell them everything that I tell you. Do not be afraid of them, or I will make trouble for you in front of them.

18 Today I have made you as a strong city ready for war, as a pillar of iron and as walls of brass against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, the rulers, its religious leaders, and the people of the land.

19 And they will fight against you. But they will not have power over you, for I am with you to take you out of trouble,” says the Lord.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 7: Courage to Obey God, Not Man

Bible Text

Daniel 3:1-2, 8-18, 25-29

Memory Verse

“But even if He does not [save us], we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the object of gold that you have set up.” (Daniel 3:18)

Word List

astrologers: men who learn from the stars

bargained: made an agreement in which one person says he will do something in exchange for something else

compromise: giving up something to make an agreement

persecution: to be treated cruelly or unfairly because of race or religious or political beliefs

threatened: expressed intent to harm someone

tragedy: a bad event that causes great sadness

Some days, the news from our world is hard to hear. Bad things happen in the world every day. Frightening stories fill the television, radio, newspapers, and Internet. Even close friends share personal stories of

sickness, pain, and **tragedy**. Christians are not free from these troubles.

Around the world, Christians face **persecution** and even death. In Colorado, two young men chose to shoot Christians at their school. In the Middle East, even children have been killed for their parents’ faith. We may hear such stories and wonder how we would act in the same place. We ask ourselves: *Would I trust God if I faced threats to my life? Would I obey God if my family were in danger?*

The Book of Daniel tells the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Their story gives Christians great hope and courage. The actions of these three young men inspire us. They teach us to face danger without fear. Their story shows that we can trust God even in times of danger. He has power over every situation.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego

These three young men never planned to live in Persia. They never planned to stand before a powerful king. But their lives did not go as they planned. They were taken captive when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem in 605 BC. The Babylonians took the best and smartest young men from the Jews. These young men, and their friend Daniel, were chosen to serve the king. The king planned to train them as court officers.

The Babylonian king wanted them to learn Babylonian ways. He even gave them Babylonian names. Daniel and his friends had Jewish names. These names gave honor to the One True God. The king wanted to erase all that was Jewish about these young men. So he gave them new names. These new names gave honor to the false gods of Babylon.

Think about each name change:

- The name **Daniel** (*God is my judge*) was changed to **Beltshazzar** (*Bel's prince*).
- **Hananiah** (*beloved by the Lord*) became **Shadrach** (*illuminated by Sun-god*).
- **Misael** (*who is as God*) was changed to **Meshach** (*who is like Venus*).
- **Azariah** (*the Lord is my help*) was changed to **Abed-nego** (*servant of Nego*).

Next, the king's official brought food from the king. But God had rules about the kinds of food that Jews should eat. They were not to eat pork. They were not to eat food given to idols. So Daniel and his friends made a decision. They would not make themselves unclean by eating the king's food and wine. They asked the head ruler to allow them to eat only foods that honored God. This showed their courage. They would not **compromise** what they knew was right. They knew there was only one true God. They knew God was in control. They chose to trust God in hard times. And God gave them favor in King Nebuchadnezzar's court.

Called to Worship (Daniel 3:1-2)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego faced troubles once again. The king was a proud and powerful leader. He worshipped many gods. He built a statue of gold. It was about 90 feet tall and nine feet wide. Then he ordered the people to worship it. He called together the most important leaders in the kingdom to see it. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came to see it. But they knew they could not worship a false god. They also knew that their decision would anger the king.

Facing Danger (Daniel 3:8-18)

King Nebuchadnezzar made a law. He said that every man must worship the gold statue. When music played and horns sounded, they must drop to their knees in worship. Some **astrologers** noticed that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego did not obey this law. They told the king what they saw. The king was, indeed, very angry.

The three men had done what was right. They obeyed God. They refused to worship a false god. When we obey God, others take notice. Sometimes our obedience will encourage others. Sometimes it will make them mad. In either case, obedience always points people to God.

King Nebuchadnezzar **threatened** to throw the men into a hot fire. They had only one way to escape. They could worship the

king's statue. But they would not. They knew God was powerful enough to save them. But they did not know what God would choose to do. The men chose to honor God no matter what. They told the king they would not worship the statue. They did not let fear keep them from obedience.

God's Power in the Fire (Daniel 3:25-29)

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego did not **bargain** with the king. They chose obedience to God alone. They trusted God with their lives. The king must have thought they were the most foolish men in Babylon! But it is never foolish to trust God. God stays close to those who obey Him. In fact, as the king looked in the fire, he saw a fourth man with them! The fourth man looked like the Son of God.

The king was amazed. He called the men to come out of the fire. When they did, everyone saw that they were not burned.

Things to Think About

1. Who was the fourth figure walking with the men in the fire?
2. What false gods do we have today? What ways do we worship them?
3. In what ways are Christians persecuted today? Have you ever felt persecuted?
4. How does this story strengthen your faith?
5. Do you trust God will always deliver you from trouble and pain? What if He does not?

They did not even smell like smoke.

Nebuchadnezzar knew that the God of the Jews was more powerful than other gods. He ordered that no one should speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. God became famous throughout the land.

Things to Remember

Do you have faith like these men? Do you trust God even when He does not promise to do what you want? Do you trust God even when He does not make sense? Or do you only follow God when He acts in ways you understand? God has always proved His faithfulness to people. Because God is faithful, we do not need to fear what man may do to us.

Daniel 3:1-2, 8-18, 25-29

1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an object of gold which looked like a god. It was fifteen times taller than a man, and as wide as three long steps. He set it up on the plain of Dura in the land of Babylon.

2 Then Nebuchadnezzar called together all the captains, leaders, rulers, wise men, money-keepers, judges, and law-keepers of Babylon's lands. He called them to come to the first showing of the object that he had set up.

...8 At this time certain ones who learned from stars came up and spoke against the Jews.

9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

10 You yourself, O king, have made a law that every man who hears the sound of the horns and harps and all kinds of music is to get down on his knees and worship the object of gold.

11 And whoever does not get down and worship must be thrown into the big and hot fire.

12 There are certain Jews whom you have chosen as leaders over the land of Babylon. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. These men have not listened to you, O king. They do not serve your gods or worship the object of gold which you have set up.”

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar became very angry and called for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And they were brought to the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the object of gold that I have set up?

15 Now if you are ready to get down on your knees and worship the object I have made when you hear the sound of the horns and harps and all kinds of music, very well. But if you will not worship, you will be thrown at once into the fire. And what god is able to save you from my hands?”

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer to this question.

17 If we are thrown into the fire, our God Whom we serve is able to save us from it. And He will save us from your hand, O king.

18 But even if He does not, we want you to

know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the object of gold that you have set up.”

...25 He said, “Look! I see four men loose and walking about in the fire without being hurt! And the fourth one looks like a son of the gods (or the Son of God)!”

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near the door where the fire was burning, and said, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” So Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the fire.

27 The captains, leaders, rulers, and the king’s important men gathered around and saw that the fire had not hurt the bodies of these three men. Their hair was not burned. Their clothes were not burned. They did not even smell like fire.

28 Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. He has sent His angel and saved His servants who put their trust in Him. They changed the king’s word and were ready to give up their lives instead of serving or worshiping any god except their own God.

29 So I now make a law that if any people of any nation or language say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, they will be torn apart and their houses will be laid waste. For there is no other god who is able to save in this way.”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 8: Courage to Love Our Enemies

Bible Text

Jonah 1:1-3, 3:1-5, 4:1-11

Memory Verse

“For I knew that You are a kind and loving God Who shows pity. I knew that You are slow to anger and are filled with loving-kindness, always ready to change Your mind and not punish.”

(Jonah 4:2b)

Word List

brutal: extremely cruel, harsh, or violent

miserable: very unhappy, unpleasant, or uncomfortable

prejudice: an unfair feeling of dislike for a person or group because of their race, sex, religion, etc.

scorching: extremely hot

A young child lived next door to a man who had only one leg. The child was afraid of this neighbor. The man did not speak harshly. He was not unkind. He was a good neighbor. Still, the young boy was always afraid of this man. Whenever this neighbor was outside, the boy would run back inside his house. Why was the boy afraid of him? Because the man was different.

The young boy had never known a man with only one leg. People are often afraid of those who are different from them. We often fear what we don't know. We naturally fear what we don't understand. But fear can build walls that keep people out. Fear can cause **prejudice** to grow. The story of Jonah is certainly a story of fear and prejudice. But it is also a story of God's loving-kindness to all.

Jonah Does Not Obey (Jonah 1:1-3)

Jonah's story begins with a simple request. God asked Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh. God wanted Jonah to preach a special message in Nineveh. The people of Nineveh were evil. God wanted them to change their ways.

Nineveh was one of the largest cities in the world. It was the capital of Assyria. People everywhere feared the **brutal** ways of the Assyrians. They were right to be afraid. The Assyrians were skilled in killing. They enjoyed causing pain for their enemies. Imagine Jonah's shock when God asked him to go to the wicked people of Nineveh!

Jonah feared the people of Nineveh. He hated the Assyrian nation. Why would God want to speak to such evil people? Jewish prophets were usually sent to preach to God's chosen nation of Israel. They did not often speak to other nations. But Jonah should not have been surprised at God's request. The

Jewish scriptures clearly taught that their God was the Lord of all nations. He was Lord even of a nation as evil as the hated Assyrians.

Jonah did not feel God's love for all nations. Instead, he felt fear and hatred. So he ran away. He got on a ship sailing to Tarshish. Tarshish was a city on the coast of Spain. It was in the *exact opposite* direction of Nineveh. Jonah turned his back on God. He walked the other way. Jonah listened to his fear and hatred. He did not obey God.

Jonah's Second Chance (Jonah 3:1-5)

Things did not go well for Jonah. Disobedience always brings trouble. Jonah's ship was caught in a terrible storm. The sailors on that ship believed someone must have angered the gods. They decided the storm was Jonah's fault. They knew Jonah was running away from God (1:10). They tried to row to safety, but they could not reach the shore. At last, they threw Jonah out of the boat. Then the storm stopped.

Jonah could have drowned because of his disobedience. But God had mercy on Jonah. He sent a fish to swallow Jonah and keep him safe from the sea. God provided for Jonah even in the midst of his sin. In the belly of that fish, Jonah sang to the Lord. He sang songs of thanks and praise to God. Jonah sang of God's power in his life. Jonah vowed to fulfill all his promises to God. He would obey

God. God heard Jonah's prayers. The fish spit Jonah onto the shore.

God gave Jonah one more chance to obey. This time, Jonah went to Nineveh. He did exactly what God asked. He delivered God's message: "In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!" (v. 4). This time, Jonah's obedience brought a surprise. The people of Nineveh listened! They heard his message and believed in God.

The people of Nineveh did not just believe in God. They also showed they were sorry. They stopped eating. They wore special clothes to show God how sorry they were. They showed they were willing to change their evil ways. In His love, God reached out to the people of Nineveh. They responded to His warning. God used Jonah to save Nineveh! Obedience to God bears good fruit in our lives and the lives of others.

Jonah's Anger and God's Loving-Kindness (Jonah 4:1-11)

God saw their changed hearts. He forgave the people of Nineveh. But Jonah did not. He could not believe that God would show His loving-kindness to such evil people. The people of Nineveh had never shown mercy to anyone! Jonah was angry. He would rather die than watch God show loving-kindness to his enemies in Nineveh. Jonah's heart was filled with hatred.

Anger can be powerful. It leads to hatred. And hatred leads to death. Jonah was so angry he wanted to die. He asked God to take his life. He would rather die than think he had helped the people of Nineveh find forgiveness. He wanted them to die, too. He hoped to watch Nineveh be destroyed. So he set up a tent outside the city. Jonah was **miserable**. He sat and watched, baking in the hot sun.

God was not pleased with the hatred in Jonah's heart. He tried to teach Jonah a lesson. God sent a plant to grow up and give shade to Jonah. Jonah loved the plant and was happy about it. The next day, God sent a worm to destroy the plant. Then God sent a **scorching** hot wind to blow on Jonah. Without the plant, Jonah had no protection from the sun and heat. Jonah had loved the plant, and now it was gone. Again, Jonah wanted to die.

Things to Think About

1. Why could Jonah never give up his hatred?
2. Who do we see as our enemies today?
3. What are some fears that lead to prejudice today?
4. How can you fight prejudice in your own life? In the church? In society?
5. Is there a group of people whom you feel do not deserve God's forgiveness? Ask God to help you love them the way He does.

God knew Jonah's heart was wrong. Jonah cared more for a plant than he did for people. God wants His people to love others. When we love others, we show them what God is like. When people know God's love, they will choose Him.

Things to Remember

The world is filled with many different kinds of people. It is easy to love people who are like us. It is harder to love people who are different from us. It is especially hard to love people who make us afraid. We must remember that God created every person. He wants each of us for Himself. God has no place for the walls that fear and hatred build. In loving-kindness, God wants to draw all people to life in Him.

Jonah 1:1-3

- 1 The Word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,
- 2 "Get up and go to the large city of Nineveh, and preach against it. For their sin has come up before Me."
- 3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord going toward Tarshish. He went down to Joppa and found a ship which was going to Tarshish. Jonah paid money, and got on the ship to go with them, to get away from the Lord.

Jonah 3:1-5

1 The Word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying,

2 “Get up and go to the large city of Nineveh, and tell the people there the news which I am going to tell you.”

3 So Jonah got up and went to Nineveh, as the Lord had told him. Now Nineveh was a very large city. It took three days to walk through it.

4 Jonah started into the city, for a day’s walk, and he cried out, “In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!”

5 Then the people of Nineveh believed in God. They called for a time when no food was to be eaten. And all the people, from the greatest to the least, put on clothes made from hair.

Jonah 4:1-11

1 But Jonah was not pleased at all, and he became angry.

2 He prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, is this not what I said You would do while still in my own country? That is why I ran away to Tarshish. For I knew that You are a kind and loving God Who shows pity. I knew that You are slow to anger and are filled with loving-kindness, always ready to change Your mind and not punish.

3 So now, O Lord, take my life from me. For death is better to me than life.”

4 And the Lord said, “Have you any reason to be angry?”

5 Then Jonah left the city and sat to the east of the city. There he made a tent for himself, and sat in its shadow until he could see what would happen in the city.

6 Then the Lord God made a plant grow up over Jonah to cover him from the hot sun and to stop his suffering. Jonah was very happy about the plant.

7 But at the beginning of the next day, God sent a worm to destroy the plant and it dried up.

8 When the sun came up, God sent a hot east wind. And the sun’s heat came upon Jonah’s head so that he became weak and begged with all his heart to die. He said, “Death is better to me than life.”

9 Then God said to Jonah, “Do you have a good reason to be angry about the plant?” And Jonah said, “I have a good reason to be angry, angry enough to die.”

10 The Lord said, “You had loving-pity on the plant which you did not work for. You did not cause it to grow. It came up during the night and died during the night.

11 And should I not have loving-pity for Nineveh, the large city where more than 120,000 people live who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 9: Courage to Trust God for Things You Need

Bible Text

Luke 12:13-34

Memory Verse

“Give all your worries to Him because He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

Word List

abundantly: in a large way; more than enough

argument: an angry disagreement where two people have different ideas about something

depression: a period of time when there is little business activity and few people have jobs

interrupted: to ask questions or say things while another person is speaking; to do or say something that causes someone to stop speaking

paralyze: to cause someone to be unable to move or feel

shelter: a building that covers or protects

Franklin D. Roosevelt became President of the United States in 1932. People in the United States were having a hard time. The country was in the midst of the Great **Depression**. Many people had no jobs. As many as 15 million people could not find work. They struggled to buy food. Many did

not have enough money for a place to live. Many people were homeless and hungry. Millions of people faced daily fear. They feared that their basic needs might not be met.

In his first presidential speech, Roosevelt talked to Americans about these things. He talked about hard times. And he talked about fear. In his speech, Roosevelt said some famous words. He said, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” The new President reminded the country that fear only makes things worse.

Roosevelt knew that fear can **paralyze** people. During hard times, fear can make people stand still. Roosevelt knew that fear was a serious enemy. It might keep Americans stuck in powerlessness and hopelessness. It might keep Americans from taking important steps forward. The only way to make it through hard times is to keep going. His words are still remembered today. His advice is still valued.

Jesus knew that His followers would go through hard times, too. He knew there would be times when their needs were not met. He knew they might face hunger and homelessness. He knew troubles would come because they followed Him. Jesus wanted to prepare them for problems. One day, He began to teach them how to stay faithful in hard times. While He was teaching, a man **interrupted** His teaching.

Riches Make Men Feel Safe

(Luke 12:13-21)

A man from the crowd demanded that Jesus help him. He was having a fight with His brother. He wanted Jesus to settle their **argument**. The father of these two brothers had died. They were fighting about money and land their father left behind. When the riches were divided. One brother felt he was treated unfairly. The brother felt he deserved more of his father's riches. He wanted Jesus to make things right.

The man's problem seemed to have nothing to do with Jesus' teaching. But Jesus was a good teacher. He knew how to use the brothers' fight to make an important point. So Jesus told a story about a rich farmer. He spoke to the whole crowd. He knew everyone could learn something from the lesson He wanted to teach.

A wealthy farmer had stored up grain in his barn. However, he had an unusually good grain crop one year. Since his barn was full, the farmer had no place to store his grain. The farmer decided not to share the extra grain he harvested. He decided he must keep it for himself. He thought this extra grain would make him rich. So he built a bigger barn and filled it up with all his grain.

The farmer felt safe because he had so much grain stored in his barn. He felt that he could live an easy life now. But the man did

not know that he would die that night. Jesus ended the story with an important question: "Who will have all the things you have put away?" The two fighting brothers knew the answer. Everyone else knew the answer, too. Other people would get the man's riches.

The wealthy farmer was a fool. His actions were not wise in God's eyes. Riches cannot keep a person safe. It was foolish for the brothers to fight over their father's riches. Riches only have value on this earth. Jesus knew that only the riches of God will last forever. God's riches can never be taken away from the ones who receive them (v. 33).

Trust God to Provide What You Need

(Luke 12:22-28)

In telling this story, Jesus gave important advice to His followers. He knew they would face hard times. He knew they might not always have things they needed. He encouraged them to always trust God when they had needs. He reminded them that God provides what is needed. He provides for plants and animals. He will provide for His followers, too.

A Warning Against Worry (Luke 12:29-34)

Sometimes life is scary. Sometimes we can't see any way that things will get better. Sometimes we don't know how we will get the things we need. When we are afraid, it is

easy to worry. We worry about getting many things we need: food, money, health, clothes, **shelter**, medicine, jobs.

But God knows everything we need. He does not want us to lose hope. He does not want us to get stuck in our fear. He does not want us to stop serving Him. He does not want His followers to stop working to build His kingdom. He wants us to trust Him no matter how hard life gets. He wants us to know that He cares about our needs. God provides food for the birds. He provides beautiful clothing for the plants. He will surely provide for those who trust Him! God will always take care of those who are seeking to do His work. Our trust honors Him. It points others to His goodness!

Things to Think About

1. What are some of the most common things people worry about?
2. Why do people worry?
3. What are your biggest fears and worries in life right now? Be specific.
4. What are some ways to help you overcome fear and worry?
5. What part of this Scripture passage is most challenging for you? Who in your life encourages you not to worry? Who helps you to hold firm to your trust of God?
6. List three concrete actions you can take to help you gain victory over fear and worry in your life.

Things to Remember

Jesus ended His teaching with an important warning. Fear and worry must never take over our lives. When we are chained to fear and worry, we are stuck. When we are stuck in fear and worry, God cannot use us for His good purposes.

We can be sure that God cares for our needs. We can be sure He loves us even more than birds and plants. He loves us **abundantly!** His heart toward us is good. This knowledge is the true riches of God. His love for us can never be taken away. His love gives us courage to keep going through hard times.

Luke 12:13-34

13 One of the people said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the riches that our father left us.”

14 Jesus said to him, “Friend, who has told Me to say who should get what?”

15 Then Jesus said to them all, “Watch yourselves! Keep from wanting all kinds of things you should not have. A man’s life is not made up of things, even if he has many riches.”

16 Then He told them a picture-story, saying, “The fields of a rich man gave much grain.

17 The rich man thought to himself, ‘What will I do? I have no place to put the grain.’

18 Then he said, ‘I know what I will do. I will take down my grain building and I will build a bigger one. I will put all my grain and other things I own into it.

19 And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many good things put away in your building. It will be all you need for many years to come. Now rest and eat and drink and have lots of fun.’”

20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! Tonight your soul will be taken from you. Then who will have all the things you have put away?’

21 It is the same with a man who puts away riches for himself and does not have the riches of God.”

22 Jesus said to His followers, ‘Because of this, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you are going to eat. Do not worry about your body, what you are going to wear.

23 Life is worth more than food. The body is worth more than clothes.

24 Look at the birds. They do not plant seeds. They do not gather grain. They have no grain buildings for keeping grain. Yet God feeds them. Are you not worth more than the birds?

25 ‘Which of you can make yourself a little taller by worrying?’

26 If you cannot do that which is so little, why do you worry about other things?

27 Think how the flowers grow. They do not work or make cloth. Yet, I tell you, that King Solomon in all his greatness was not dressed

as well as one of these flowers.

28 God puts these clothes on the grass of the field. The grass is in the field today and put into the fire tomorrow. How much more would He want to give you clothing? You have so little faith!

29 Do not give so much thought to what you will eat or drink. Do not be worried about it.

30 For all the nations of the world go after these things. Your Father knows you need these things.

31 Instead, go after the holy nation of God. Then all these other things will be given to you.

32 Do not be afraid, little flock. Your Father wants to give you the holy nation of God.

33 Sell what you have and give the money to poor people. Have money-bags for yourselves that will never wear out. These money-bags are riches in heaven that will always be there.

No robber can take them and no bugs can eat them there.

34 Your heart will be wherever your riches are.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 10: Courage to Face Suffering

Bible Text

Matthew 26:26-46

Memory Verse

“He went away again the second time. He prayed, saying, “My Father, if this must happen to Me, may whatever You want be done.”
(Matthew 26:42)

Word List

endure: to experience pain or suffering for a very long time

extreme: very serious or severe

betray: to give information about someone to his enemy

symbols: an object that represents a certain thought or idea

ritual: a formal religious act that is always done in the same way

unleavened: flatbread made without yeast

In 2015, none of 35 runners who began the Barkley Marathon finished the race. It is a 100-mile race through the mountains of East Tennessee. The mountains are difficult ground to run. The race also includes 66,000 feet of climbing. Many people say it is the

hardest race in the world. This might very well be true.

The race began in 1986. In 30 years, few have ever finished. Only 14 of about 1,000 runners have ever completed the course. The runners prepare for months and even years. They hike and run and climb thousands of miles to prepare. They know the **extreme** difficulty of this race. It takes nearly 60 hours to complete. The aid stations are only every 20 miles along the course. Runners **endure** mental and physical pain along the way. If they hope to finish the race, they must do everything they can to prepare.

As hard as the Barkley Marathon sounds, the Lord Jesus knew He must prepare for something even harder. He knew the final week of His life would be the hardest thing He would have to do. All four Gospel writers include long descriptions of Jesus’ final days on earth. During this time, Jesus returned to Jerusalem. He celebrated a special religious supper with the 12 followers. Hours later, He died on the cross. These days are some of the most important in the Gospel story.

Jesus Eats the Special Supper (Matthew 26:26-35)

The 12 closest followers of Jesus gathered in a small upstairs room. They were celebrating a special religious supper to remember how the Jews left Egypt many

years before. This was a religious **ritual**. The Jews did this every year. The meal included a roasted lamb, bitter herbs, spices, and **unleavened** bread. Each part of the meal had a special meaning. The words spoken at the meal were special, too. All these things helped the Jews remember an important event. They remembered how God saved them from slavery in Egypt many years ago.

At this meal, Jesus reminded His followers He was going to die. He also revealed that one of them would **betray** Him. He said it would be a very bad thing for the one who did this. It was hard for them to believe these hard, sad things that Jesus said.

Jesus gave them special instructions. He wanted them to remember Him in a special way. He showed them a piece of bread. He showed them a cup of wine. These were special **symbols**. The bread would remind them of Jesus' body. The wine would remind them of Jesus' blood. He wanted them to remember how He gave up His life. He did this to save all people from the punishment of sin. He did not want them to forget.

Even today, Christians gather to remember Jesus' life. When they do, they thank God that Jesus gave His life for all people. They celebrate Jesus' life, death, and how He came back to life. This is what makes us free from the punishment of sin.

Jesus Confronts His Deepest Fear (Matthew 26:36-39)

Jesus knew He would soon die. He left the special supper with his 12 followers. He led them outside the city to pray with Him. They came to a garden named Gethsemane. His words were written in Scripture: "My soul is very sad. My soul is so full of sorrow I am ready to die" (v. 38). Jesus' words meant that He was full of sadness and surprised by fear. He knew that He would soon die and be separated from God the Father for a time.

He shared His inner struggle with three special men. Peter, James, and John ("the sons of Zebedee") were Jesus' closest followers. They had seen Him do special miracles the others had not seen. Now He asked these three to stay with Him. In a time of great fear and sorrow, Jesus wanted His friends near. He found comfort in their presence.

He also wanted to talk with God the Father. He prayed with honesty and deep feeling. He prayed with His face on the ground. His heart was full of pain. He poured out His fears to God. Even in the midst of His fear, Jesus chose obedience to God's plan.

Jesus Confronts His Fears Alone (Matthew 26:40-44)

Jesus' friends were nearby, but they fell asleep while He cried out to God. In the hardest time of His life, Jesus found Himself

very alone. Even His closest friends failed Him. Again, He begged them to stay awake and pray. Even as Jesus prayed to the Father again, His friends fell asleep again. A third time, Jesus asked His friends to stay awake and pray. They failed for the third time. Jesus had to face His pain, sorrow, and fears alone.

Jesus Overcomes His Deepest Fear (Matthew 26:45-46)

But Jesus not truly alone. God the Father was present as Jesus prayed. The Father comforted Jesus and gave Him strength. Jesus' prayers opened His heart to receive the power He needed that night. Jesus faced fear and death with God's power.

Jesus did not stray from God's plan. He stood strong in obedience. He did not resist arrest. He did not defend Himself. He depended on God's power to complete God's plan.

Things to Think About

1. How do you prepare for difficult times?
2. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus experienced fear, too?
3. What are some ways God has helped you in times of deep trouble?
4. What do you expect to happen when you pray deep and honest prayers to God?
5. How could you be an encouragement to someone who is facing deep fear?

Things to Remember

Jesus was God's Son. But Jesus was also human in every way. He felt fear and sorrow and pain. God gave Him the courage to face deep suffering. In His most difficult hours, Jesus needed three things:

- To be with others in His time of deep need
- To speak His prayers honestly to God the Father
- To get God's strength to endure the painful death that was ahead.

Jesus' example is a strong one for us to follow. When Christians face suffering, these three things can help us, too.

- Being with other believers who care for us brings deep encouragement.
- Honest prayer about our fears and struggles pleases God. His love for us is bigger than our struggles; His love is deeper than our fears. In the most difficult times, we can trust Him with our hearts.
- Finally, we can depend on His power to fill us with strength to face the hardest times.

When we open up our hearts to Him, He pours out His power. His strength alone gives us courage to face our deepest suffering.

Matthew 26:26-46

26 As they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread. He gave thanks and broke it in pieces. He gave it to His followers and said, "Take, eat, this is My body."

27 Then He took the cup and gave thanks. He gave it to them and said, "You must all drink from it."

28 This is My blood of the New Way of Worship which is given for many. It is given so the sins of many can be forgiven.

29 I tell you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine again until that day when I will drink it new with you in the holy nation of My Father."

30 After they sang a song they went out to the Mount of Olives.

31 Jesus said to them, "All of you will be ashamed of Me and leave Me tonight. For it is written, 'I will kill the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be spread everywhere.'

32 After I am raised from the dead, I will go before you to the country of Galilee."

33 Peter said to Jesus, "Even if all men give up and turn away because of You, I will never."

34 Jesus said to him, "For sure, I tell you, before a rooster crows this night, you will say three times you do not know Me."

35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never say I do not know You." And all the followers said the same thing.

36 Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, "You sit here while I go over there to pray."

37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee

with Him. He began to have much sorrow and a heavy heart.

38 Then He said to them, "My soul is very sad. My soul is so full of sorrow I am ready to die. You stay here and watch with Me."

39 He went on a little farther and got down with His face on the ground. He prayed, "My Father, if it can be done, take away what is before Me. Even so, not what I want but what You want."

40 Then He came to the followers and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Were you not able to watch with Me one hour?"

41 Watch and pray so that you will not be tempted. Man's spirit is willing, but the body does not have the power to do it."

42 He went away again the second time. He prayed, saying, "My Father, if this must happen to Me, may whatever You want be done."

43 He came and found them asleep again. Their eyes were heavy.

44 He went away from them the third time and prayed the same prayer.

45 Then He came to His followers and asked them, "Are you still sleeping and getting your rest? As I speak, the time has come when the Son of Man will be handed over to sinners.

46 Get up and let us go. See! The man who will hand Me over is near."

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater Than Fear

Lesson 11: No Fear of Belonging to Jesus

Bible Text

Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

Memory Verse

“Keep awake! Watch at all times. The devil is working against you. He is walking around like a hungry lion with his mouth open. He is looking for someone to eat. (1 Peter 5:8)

Word List

arrested: to use the power of the law to take and keep someone

attack: to try to hurt, injure, or destroy (something or someone)

deny/denied: to say something is not true

heartbroken: filled with great sadness

loyal: having or showing complete and constant support for something or someone; faithful

Signs in a train station in India warn Christians. They say “no more Christians” and “no more Bible.” Some people want India to be more Hindu. What are Christians in India to do? How will they live for Christ in a land where people may hate them?

In many parts of the world, Christians are under attack. Even in America, some

people don't like Christians. They don't want us to tell the Good News of Christ.

Believers in Jesus are in a battle that we cannot see. Our enemy is Satan. He wants to destroy us. We are always in danger of his **attacks**. But too often, we don't know he is near.

What can we do to be strong and **loyal** to our Savior? How can we show God's love even to those who hate us?

Jesus Knows! (Luke 22:31-34)

The followers of Jesus did not know they were being attacked by Satan. But Jesus warned them. He said Satan wanted to shake them hard. Jesus knew His arrest and death would be very hard for them. He knew fear would make them run away and leave Him. Jesus knew Peter would be very afraid.

But Peter did not listen to Jesus' warning. He thought he was stronger than the other followers. He thought he would be loyal to Jesus even in prison or death. But Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. He knew Peter's fear would make him sin. He knew that before a rooster crowed the next morning, Peter would deny Jesus three times. Peter would even say he did not know Jesus.

Satan was against them, but Jesus was for them. That was true then, and it is still true today. Jesus prayed for His followers. He

prayed for Peter. He knew Peter would **deny** that he knew Jesus. But Jesus knew that Peter would return to Him. Jesus prayed that when Peter returned to Him, Peter would help other followers.

Unbelievers Are All Around Us (Luke 22:54-55)

Peter was brave and bold at the supper with other believers. When Jesus was arrested, all the others ran away. But Peter followed. He did not stay close, but he followed. He wanted to know what was happening to Jesus. He sat around a fire with people who hated Jesus. In this crowd, Peter became afraid. He thought they would arrest him if they knew he was a follower of Jesus.

It is easy for us to be loyal to Jesus when we are with other people who love Him. But we cannot always stay in a safe place with other believers. We live in a world of people who do not believe. We need to work and live among people who do not know Jesus. We cannot tell them the Good News if we are not with them. Are we afraid to let them know we love Jesus?

Peter had slept in the garden while Jesus was praying. Jesus had warned His followers: “Pray that you will not be tempted” (Luke 22:40). But they slept instead of praying. Prayer would have given Peter the strength to stay loyal to Jesus.

Fear Tempts Us! (Luke 22:56-60)

A servant girl saw Peter first. She looked at him very carefully. Then she boldly said that Peter was with Jesus. She had no power to arrest Peter. But her words scared him anyway. Peter was afraid of what they might do to him. He lied and said he did not know Jesus. Then a man said Peter had been with Jesus. Again, Peter **denied** he was one of Jesus’ followers.

An hour passed while Peter waited. Maybe Peter became even more afraid as Jesus was on trial. Then a man said he was sure he had seen Peter with Jesus. John 18:26 tells us why this man was so sure. When Jesus was arrested, Peter cut off the ear of this man’s relative. A person remembers things like that! This man was sure he had seen Peter in the garden with Jesus. He even said that Peter talked like the followers of Jesus.

This time, Peter used very strong language to deny he knew anything about Jesus. At that very moment, a rooster crowed. The sound of that rooster reminded Peter of Jesus’ warning. Suddenly, he was very sorry for what he had said.

Sorrow Bring Us Back to Jesus (Luke 22:61-62)

Just as the rooster crowed, Jesus looked at Peter. We do not know exactly how this happened. Maybe they were taking Jesus out

of the house. Maybe He was bleeding from being hit by the soldiers. Peter saw Jesus and Jesus saw Peter.

At that moment, Peter knew Jesus knew what he had done. In the same way, God knows everything we have done. We can never hide our sin. Peter was **heartbroken** at that moment. We don't know the exact look on Jesus' face. He was surely sorry that Peter had said such things. But Jesus always showed love and mercy. Even in the garden when Peter cut off that man's ear, Jesus put it back on! Jesus always loves us, even when we sin.

After that moment of seeing Jesus, Peter went somewhere and cried very hard. But his sadness did not destroy him. Peter's sorrow made him return to Jesus. His broken heart brought him back to Jesus. Peter remembered that Jesus had prayed for Peter

to return to Him. And Peter did. The New Testament tells us that Peter served Jesus the rest of his life.

Keep Awake!

Later, Peter wrote these words: "Keep awake! Watch at all times. The devil is working against you. He is walking around like a hungry lion with his mouth open. He is looking for someone to eat" (1 Peter 5:8).

On the night of Jesus' trial, Peter learned a lesson that he never forgot. He learned that we have an enemy who wants to destroy us. He learned that prayer protects us from our enemy. God forgives us and restores us to His service even when we fail Him. Peter spent the rest of his life helping other believers learn these things.

Things to Remember

Jesus set the example for us in the way He faced death. He prayed for Himself and for His followers. Prayer helped Him to offer grace and mercy even to those who were arresting Him. Fear did not stop Him from doing everything His Father planned for Him.

We can have power over being tempted to deny Christ, too. Prayer protects us from the evil one. Prayer makes our faith stronger than our fears. Prayer helps us know that God is working in us and through us.

Things to Think About

1. What might it cost you to say you belong to Christ today?
2. How do you prepare yourself to face the attacks of Satan? Do you have a regular time of prayer?
3. How hard does someone have to look at your life to see that you are a follower of Jesus?
4. What verses have you learned that help you face hard times?
5. Do you pray for other believers who are facing hard times?

Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

31 The Lord said, “Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has wanted to have you. He will divide you as wheat is divided from that which is no good.

32 But I have prayed for you. I have prayed that your faith will be strong and that you will not give up. When you return, you must help to make your brothers strong.”

33 Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, I am ready to go to prison and to die with You!”

34 Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, a rooster will not crow today before you will say three times that you do not know Me.”

54 Then they led Jesus away to the house of the head religious leader. Peter followed a long way behind Him.

55 They built a fire in the yard and sat down. Peter sat down with them.

56 One of the servant-girls saw Peter as he sat by the fire and looked right at him. She said, “This man was with Jesus also.”

57 Peter lied and said, “Woman, I do not know Him.”

58 After awhile another person saw him and said, “You are one of them also.” Peter said, “No, sir, I am not.”

59 About an hour later another person said the same thing, “For sure, this man was with Jesus also because he is from Galilee.”

60 But Peter said, “Sir, I do not know what you are saying.” And at once, while he was talking, a rooster crowed.

61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. He remembered the Lord had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know Me.”

62 Peter went outside and cried with a troubled heart.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater than Fear

Lesson 12: No Fear of Death

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Memory Verse

“For sure, I am telling you a secret. We will not all die, but we will all be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:51)

Word List

immortal: not able to die or decay, living forever

mortal: certain to die and decay, temporary

temporary: lasting only a short time

victory: the act of winning

The truth of Jesus’ is shown in the way His followers lived and died after He returned to heaven. They could have gone back to their old lives. But none of them did that. They could not stop telling the story of Jesus! What they had seen was too wonderful to keep quiet. We know that they told the story of Jesus in Africa, Asia, and Europe.

They all died for that truth. Some died by being hung on a cross. Some had their heads cut off. Some were stoned or stabbed or run through with a spear. All were beaten. Only one died of old age. But all of them

stayed true to Christ. They faced death without fear because the truth of Christ is stronger than the fear of death.

Truth Is Stronger than Lies (1 Corinthians 15 background)

There were some people in Corinth who believed in Jesus. But they said no one comes back from the dead. They said that only our souls, not our bodies, will live with God forever.

But Paul knew better. Paul knew he needed to help the people of Corinth understand the truth about what would happen to them after death. Paul tried to explain what was wrong with their ideas. He wrote that if a body cannot rise from the grave, then even Jesus’ body could not rise again. If there is no life after death, then all the followers of Jesus were suffering for their faith for no good reason. It would have meant that their faith was in a man who was just like any other man. But Paul knew Jesus was *not* like any other man! To prove this was true, Paul wrote about the many people who had seen Jesus alive after His death and after He rose from the grave. Jesus spent 40 days with His followers. He was seen by different groups of people in different places. Paul made a list of those people who had seen Jesus:

First of all, I taught you what I had

received. It was this: Christ died for our sins as the Holy Writings said He would. Christ was buried. He was raised from the dead three days later as the Holy Writings said He would. Christ was seen by Peter. After that, the twelve followers saw Him. After that, more than 500 of His followers saw Him at one time. Most of them are still here, but some have died. After that, James saw Christ. Then all the missionaries saw Him. Last of all, Christ showed Himself to me as if I had been born too late. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

Many people could tell this truth:

“Jesus had a body after He rose from the dead. We have seen Him with our own eyes!”

But this was the problem: The believers in Corinth were trying to mix what the Greeks thought with what Christians believed. Paul knew this: *The world’s lies cannot mix with God’s truth.*

- The Greeks said anything that we can feel or touch is evil. *God said everything He made was good (Gen. 1:31).*
- The Greeks said the evil body could not rise to live with God. *But Jesus said all of us will rise one day (John 5:28-29).*
- The Greeks said Jesus rose but we cannot. *Jesus said we will meet Him in the air (1 Thes. 4:17).*

Paul wanted the believers in Corinth to know the truth about life after death. We must hold on to the truth and not be afraid of death. Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32)—free from sin and free from fear.

Life Is Stronger than Death

(1 Corinthians 15:50-53)

It must have made Paul very angry to think that such lies were being told in the church. He wrote this letter to his Christian brothers in Corinth. He wanted believers to understand that God has planned for us to live with Him forever.

Paul explained that our bodies are not made to live in heaven. The body we have on earth is called the **mortal** body. Mortal bodies die. Every living thing on earth will die. From the first breath we take, we begin to die slowly. We fight sin and sickness all our lives. We live and we die. When we die, our bodies decay.

The believers in Corinth wondered what would happen to people who had already died. Would they be left in the grave? Would they rise with decayed bodies? What would happen to people who were still alive when Christ returned? Would they have to die before they could go with Him?

Here is a great secret for believers: “We will not all die, but we will all be changed”

(1 Corinthians 15:51). Before Christ comes again, there will be many believers whose bodies have died. When Christ comes, those dead bodies will be changed into bodies that will never die. They will come out of their graves with new bodies. They will have **immortal** bodies. They will go first to meet Jesus in the air.

Then those of us who are still living will be changed. We will have new immortal bodies, too. We will see Him coming on the clouds. Suddenly, our bodies will change and we will meet Him in the air. Every believer will be changed because *death cannot mix with life. Mortal cannot mix with immortal.*

Christ Defeated Sin and Death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

What hurts us most about death is sin. We feel bad about the wrong things we have done. We don't want to face our Lord and admit our sin. Without faith, sin makes us

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever been told a lie that was against God's truth? Could you tell it was a lie or were you fooled by Satan?
2. What can you do to protect yourself from lies that make you afraid?
3. Why do people fear death?
4. What should we be doing to help our friends and family not be afraid of death?

fear death. We suffer because of sin. But Jesus won the **victory** over sin on the cross. We are set free from sin by Christ. We don't have to live sinful lives anymore. We will never have to pay for sin in heaven. Our sin is paid for by Jesus, so death doesn't hurt anymore. It was because of our sin that Christ died. But death couldn't hold Him.

Death has always been our worst enemy. Sin brought death, sickness, and decay. Doctors try to make us live longer, but death still wins. God never wanted death to win. He rose again and won the victory over death for all of us. Today, what seems to be a win for death is only **temporary**. It doesn't last forever. When a believer we love dies, we feel the pain of being left behind. But it is only temporary. We will one day be together with them in heaven. When our bodies die, it is only temporary. We will one day rise in a new body to live forever with our Father.

In heaven, there will be no sickness, sadness, sin, decay, or death. This is the way God wanted things from the beginning. Our bodies that suffer and die will be changed into bodies that will never die. Our bodies that make us want to sin will be replaced with bodies that are holy and pure. *Sin cannot mix with God's goodness.*

Believers have so much to be thankful for. Christ died and rose to show us that death

is not to be feared. We have a Savior who has already defeated death. He paid the price for our sin. Death doesn't win or even pain us because it is defeated by life in Christ.

**So Then, Be Strong
(1 Corinthians 15:58)**

All this truth gives us reason to be strong in the Lord. We must never let the world tell us lies against God's truth. The evil one wants to trick us into being afraid. The truth of God sets us free to live strong for the Lord. Let us always stay busy doing the work of the Lord!

Things to Remember

Paul wanted the Corinthian church to be strong against the lies they were hearing. He said that when Christ comes, the believers who have died will be given new bodies that will never die. The believers who are still alive will get new bodies, too. We will all meet Jesus in the air, never to die again.

Paul also wrote to remind them that our work for God never dies or decays. Just as we cannot see over into heaven, we cannot see how God is using our work for Him in ways that last forever.

Be strong! Remember that anything you do for the Lord will last forever. Nothing is wasted in God's kingdom!

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

50 Christian brothers, our bodies which are made of flesh and blood will not go into the holy nation of God. That which dies can have no part in that which will never die.

51 For sure, I am telling you a secret. We will not all die, but we will all be changed.

52 In a very short time, no longer than it takes for the eye to close and open, the Christians who have died will be raised. It will happen when the last horn sounds. The dead will be raised never to die again. Then the rest of us who are alive will be changed.

53 Our human bodies made from dust must be changed into a body that cannot be destroyed. Our human bodies that can die must be changed into bodies that will never die.

54 When this that can be destroyed has been changed into that which cannot be destroyed, and when this that does die has been changed into that which cannot die, then it will happen as the Holy Writings said it would happen.

They said, "Death has no more power over life."
55 O death, where is your power? O death, where are your pains?

56 The pain in death is sin. Sin has power over those under the Law.

57 But God is the One Who gives us power over sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. We give thanks to Him for this.

58 So then, Christian brothers, because of all this, be strong. Do not allow anyone to change your mind. Always do your work well for the Lord. You know that whatever you do for Him will not be wasted.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Faith Is Greater than Fear

Lesson 13: No Fear of Telling the Good News

Bible Text

Acts 4:1-5, 7-14, 18-22

Memory Verse

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes into your life. You will tell about Me in the city of Jerusalem and over all the countries of Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Word List

courage: being able to do something you know is dangerous or difficult

reject: to refuse to believe, accept or think about some one or some thing.

threat: a statement that you will be harmed if you do not do what someone says

John Waller lived in Virginia in the 1700s. In those days, the law said people had to belong to the same church. They believed people were saved by belonging to the church. But John’s life had been changed by Jesus. He knew the Good News was not about a church. It was about the Savior. The leaders said John had to have a special paper before he could preach. But John didn’t have that paper. So they put him in jail. They said if he would not

preach for one year, he could go home. But John stood at the window of his jail cell and preached for 43 days. Some people threw rocks, but others believed and were saved.

Jesus ordered His followers to tell the Good News at home and all over the world (Acts 1:8). We don’t need to decide on a plan. God has a plan. He gives us power from the Holy Spirit. We don’t need a special paper from other people to say we can tell about Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives us **courage** and helps us know what to say.

A believer from India has said, “The whole world needs this message of Jesus.”

No Fear of God’s Plans

After Jesus went back to heaven, the new believers did not know where to worship. So they continued to meet in the Jewish Temple. The book of Acts, chapter 3, tells us what happened one day as Peter and John went to the Temple to pray.

They saw a man who could not walk. He asked them for money. They were on their way to pray at the Temple. They might have thought they were too busy to stop and help a poor man. But Peter and John knew Jesus would have stopped. They knew everyone—even this man—needed to know about Jesus.

Peter and John told the man they had no money, but they could give him something much better. In the name of Jesus, they healed

him. The man who had never walked was now walking and jumping! The first thing he did was walk to the Temple to give thanks to God.

A large crowd gathered. People had known this man for many years. Now they wanted to know how he had been healed. Peter and John began to preach the Good News of Jesus. They told the people that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Many people believed because of Peter and John's words. But not everyone was happy about what Peter and John were preaching.

No Fear of People with Power (Acts 4:1-4)

The Temple leaders wanted all the believers to stop preaching. The Temple leaders were afraid they would lose their rights and power if the crowds believed in Jesus. The Good News of Jesus Christ was everything they did not believe and teach:

- *The Temple leaders taught that no one could be raised from the dead.* But Jesus was raised from the dead. Hundreds had seen Him in person after He was raised.
- *The leaders said there was no life after death.* But Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever" (John 3:16).
- *They taught that God would not send a Savior for the people.* But Jesus said, "For

God did not send His Son into the world to say it is guilty. He sent His Son so the world might be saved from the punishment of sin by Him" (John 3:17).

When the Temple leaders saw the crowd and heard Peter and John preaching, they became very angry—and afraid. They were afraid of their Roman rulers. If the people believed in Jesus, the Temple leaders would lose their power. The Roman rulers would make life hard on them. So they put Peter and John in prison that night.

No Fear of Failing (Acts 4:5, 7-14)

Peter was very brave as he spoke to the religious leaders. But we know Peter was not always so brave. A few months before, he sat by the fire on the night that Jesus was on trial. (See Lesson 11.) Peter was afraid to be called one of Jesus' followers. But not this time! Everything changed when Jesus rose from the dead. Peter knew the power of God.

That night in prison, Peter and John knew they were in danger. These were the same Temple leaders who had sent Jesus to the cross. But Peter and John were not afraid.

The next morning, the Holy Spirit gave them the courage to speak and the words to say. Peter and John had seen how God could change lives. They knew these leaders' lives could be changed by Jesus.

When the leaders heard Peter and John

speak, they were surprised. How could simple men preach with such power? Who gave them this power? The leaders knew these men had been with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit gave Peter the power to say the right things. First, Peter asked why they were in trouble for doing a good thing—helping a man to walk. “Are you asking how he was healed? You and all the Jews must know that it was by the name of Jesus Christ... that this man stands in front of you well and strong” (verses 9-10). Brave words!

Then Peter told them what they had done wrong. He pointed out their sins. Peter said the exact words of Psalm 118:22: “The stone that was put aside by the workmen has become the most important stone in the building.” The leaders knew these words. The

book of Psalms are words from songs that the Jewish people sang for hundreds of years. These leaders had probably sung this psalm (song) many times. But Peter used these words against them. He told them *they* were the workmen who set aside the most important stone. Jesus was that stone. They had rejected Jesus, the Chosen One of God.

But Peter did more than just tell the leaders *about* their sin. He told them how to be saved *from* their sins. The only way to be saved from paying for sin is through Jesus. He healed the man in the Temple, and He would heal the souls of these leaders. “There is no way to be saved from the punishment of sin through anyone else. For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we can be saved” (4:12).

Jesus heals our lives and sets us free from sin today. Just like those leaders, we must believe that Jesus is God’s Son, that He died on the cross for our sins, and that He was raised from the dead.

No Fear of Threats (Acts 4:18-22)

Everyone could see the changes in the man who could not walk—because he was walking now! The leaders knew they could not say Peter and John were wrong for healing the man and for preaching the Good News of Jesus. They knew the people loved the Good News of Jesus.

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever been afraid to tell the Good News?
2. How can you be ready to share the Good News?
3. Is it easy to see that you have spent time with Jesus?

How to Not be Afraid to Tell the Good News

- Write about how you came to know Jesus. This is the most powerful story you have. How has Jesus changed your life?
- Memorize these verses: Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Romans 10:9, 10, 13
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give you courage and power. Pray for God’s love in you to spread to people without Christ.
- Trust God to work in the hearts of those to whom you speak. Live like Christ would live so that others can see Jesus in you.

Sadly, the leaders rejected the Good News of Jesus again. They decided to use **threats** to scare Peter and John. But Peter was not afraid of their threats: “We must tell what we have seen and heard.” Jesus had changed his life. He was not afraid now!

Things to Remember

Today, believers in Jesus must get past fear to share the Good News. We cannot be afraid of people with power. We cannot be afraid that we will fail our Lord. We are made strong and wise by the power of the Holy Spirit. The angry world cannot stop the Good News. We may tell some people who will reject Jesus like the leaders did. But we should not be afraid because, “The whole world needs this message of Jesus.”

Acts 4:1-5, 7-14, 18-22

1 The religious leaders and the leader of the house of God and some of the religious group who believe no one will be raised from the dead came to Peter and John while they were talking to the people.
 2 They were angry because Peter and John had been teaching the people and preaching that Jesus had been raised from the dead.
 3 So they took them and put them in prison until the next day because it was evening.
 4 But many of those who heard what Peter and John said put their trust in Christ. The group of followers was now about 5,000 men.
 5 The next day the leaders of the court and the leaders of the people and the teachers of the Law came together in Jerusalem.

...7 They put the missionaries in front of them and asked, “By what power or in whose name have you done this?”

8 Then Peter, having been filled with the Holy Spirit, said, “You who are leaders of the people,
 9 are you asking us today about the good work we did to a man who needed help? Are you asking how he was healed?”

10 You and all the Jews must know that it was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the One you nailed to a cross and God raised from the dead. It is through Him that this man stands in front of you well and strong.

11 Christ is the Stone that was put aside by you workmen. But He has become the most important Stone in the building.

12 There is no way to be saved from the punishment of sin through anyone else. For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we can be saved.”

13 They were surprised and wondered how easy it was for Peter and John to speak. They could tell they were men who had not gone to school. But they knew they had been with Jesus.

14 They were not able to argue about what Peter and John had said because the man who had been healed was standing with them.

...18 Then they called them in and told them they must not speak or teach anymore in the name of Jesus.

19 Peter and John said, “If it is right to listen to you more than to God, you decide about that.

20 For we must tell what we have seen and heard.”

21 After they had spoken more sharp words to them, they let them go. They could not beat them because the people were giving thanks to God for what had happened.

22 The man on whom this powerful work of healing had been done was more than forty years old.