



CELL GUIDE 2015

Theme	You Choose – Life Before & After
Topic	I Once Was Fearful, But Now Found Faith!
Speaker	Elder Lok Vi Ming
Date	19 th & 20 th December 2015

Message Summary

Spiritual Objective: To put our trust in God

The speaker begins by reminding us that everyone has fears and phobias. The challenge of trusting God is not unique to us alone, but it is something that everyone has to face and overcome.

At the heart of our fears is an insecurity that God is not on our side; that we are far from God and He is far from us. Conversely, faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). That we trust that God is for us, even though we may not see it (yet).

In this message, the speaker reminds us of the many times when God has reminded us not to be afraid, of the many times that God has stepped in to prove the faith that has been placed in Him, and urges us to respond by trusting in God in all that we do.

Fear Not, Have Faith, and Trust God

- 1) There are two kinds of fear, and both speak of the fear that God is not on our side.
 - a. Fears that come from sins of a guilty conscience – The first mention of fear in the bible was after Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge. When God called out to Adam, he answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid; so I hid.” (Gen 3:10) Adam was afraid because of his guilty conscience. He had done something which God had very specifically told him not to do, and he was now afraid that God would no longer be on his side, that God would be against him, and so he was afraid and hid from God.
 - b. Fears that come from a lack of faith – The other kind of fear can be found in the New Testament, when Jesus and his disciples were in a boat that met with a storm (Mark 4:35-40). While Jesus was sleeping peacefully through the storm, the disciples were terrified and woke him up asking, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” After calming the wind and the waves, Jesus turned and asked the disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” Jesus’ simple response to them clearly contrasts the two main topics in today’s message. Fear and Faith.



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Jesus' response was also interesting because of a single word, "**still**". "Do you **still** have no faith?" Jesus clearly expected His disciples to have faith and not be afraid, and a reading of the text shows why Jesus had such an expectation. Firstly, it was Jesus Himself who suggested going over to the other side (v35). Secondly, Jesus was personally with them (v36) and was clearly at peace even in the midst of the storm (v38).

When we fear, it is important for us to remember that God is on our side, even though we may not always see it. Often, we have a certain expectation for how God is to act. In the case of the disciples, it is clear that they expected God to clear the storm for them and when it did not clear, they assumed that God was not with them. However, while **God may sometimes calm the storms in our lives**, at other times **God calms us to face the storms in our lives**. Sometimes, those who struggle are being prepared by the Lord, and their strengths and values grow in the midst of struggles.

When the angel appeared to Joseph, husband of Mary, and told him not to be afraid (Matthew 1:20, 24-25), the storm of marrying a pregnant Mary was not removed from him. However, he was given wisdom and assurance that all was part of God's plan, that he might make the godly decision in his storm.

When the angel appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26-38), her response to the angel's greeting was to be troubled and afraid. Her storm of carrying a child while a virgin was not removed from her, but she was given to understand how she would be a part of God's great purposes. Indeed, she was given wisdom to understand that joy in the Lord is found not in achieving our own purposes through God, but by allowing God to fulfil His purposes through us.

Finally, when God came to Abram in a vision and told him not to be afraid (Genesis 15:1-6), God did indeed calm Abram's storm of not having an heir. Yet from the promise of God, until the fulfilment of that promise in Isaac, Abraham had to wait 25 years! God did calm Abraham's storm eventually, but he also calmed Abraham to face his storm for 25 years before it was finally taken away from him.

- 2) Just as we spoke of two kinds of fear, we will now also speak of two kinds of faith.
 - a. Abraham's un-staggering faith – Just as we saw how God calmed Abraham's storm of wanting an heir, we also see Abraham's faith in God. In the intermediate 25 years, Abraham was not focused on the promise of God and constantly looking out for when it would happen. He was content in walking with God himself, that it was God alone and not God's promise that was enough for Abraham, even to the point of being willing to sacrifice God's promise (Isaac), because he knew that God would provide.



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- b. Jacob's struggling faith – In contrast, Jacob was constantly struggling between being afraid and having faith in God. Even after Jacob had seen God work for him in his dealings with Laban, Jacob continued to be fearful of Esau in Genesis 32. Yet Jacob brought his fears before God, pleading with God for His protection and claiming the promises that God had made to Jacob, struggling between fear and faith until he overcame (Gen 32:26-28). Despite his fear, Jacob chose to have faith in God and continued to meet with his brother Esau.

In different ways, both men showed what the essence of faith was. Firstly, faith means we focus on God and not our problems. Secondly, faith meant trusting in God's timing, not ours. Thirdly, faith grows by believing in God because of our circumstances. And finally, faith is all about obeying God one step at a time.

Though both men had a different kind of faith, both showed that they made their final decisions based on what they knew of God and His power, and not on their storms and their fears. Both trusted God to work on the storms they are facing in His own time and in His own way. Both believed in God because they knew that there was simply no way that they would be able to face their own storms without God's help. And finally, both just determined to take one step at a time in obedience to God.

- 3) Knowing our fears and knowing our faith, what then is our response? **Trust God.**

We trust God because with God in our lives, there is no one and nothing that we should fear (Psalm 27:1). We trust God because the Spirit that God has given us does not make us afraid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7). We trust God not because we do not fear, but we trust God precisely when we **do** fear (Psalm 56:3).

So long as God is in control of our lives, there is nothing for us to fear. Look ahead to the finished work of God that He was planned for you in your life and live your life with love, self-discipline and power that God might favour you and that His purposes may be achieved through you.



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Questions

There are two types of fears - fear that comes from a guilty conscience and fear that comes from a lack of faith. What is the difference between them? Share a time in which you experienced one of these two types.

(Fill In Answer Here)

How has God worked before to calm some of the storms in your life or to calm you so that you might weather the storms?

(Fill In Answer Here)

What are some active ways you would like to take to trust in God more as you face the fears and storms in your life?

(Fill In Answer Here)
