

LOVING LIFE, PART 25 • Facing Our Fear

Pastor Matt Heard, Read: John 6:16-24
February 23/24, 2008

All of us have fears. Each day we face many different fears. Some fears are mild, while others can be physically or emotionally crippling. Many places in the Scriptures, Jesus encourages us to not be afraid. How can we apply Jesus' exhortation to our daily lives?

Three Realities in the Midst of Our Fear:

1. He Sees us in the Dark
2. He Tests us in the Storm
 - ... regarding who we are becoming
 - ... regarding Who He is
3. He Accompanies us in the Call

Questions

1. There are many popular fears in our culture: bugs/spiders/snakes, heights, health, water, storms, closed spaces, tunnels/bridges, crowds, and public speaking are some of the most prominent. Take a few moments to share one of your fears, and why this is a fear?
2. God is both omnipresent (present everywhere) and omniscient (all-knowing). Meditate on both God's omnipresence and God's omniscience for a few moments. How can understanding and internalizing these truths help us if we apply them on a daily basis? Explain.
3. God's people, the Israelites, spent 40 years in the desert – 40 years! Yet in Deuteronomy 2, we read that God was still watching over His people.

"The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything." Deuteronomy 2:7

Discuss a time on your journey of faith when you were like the Israelites in the desert. You were struggling, yet you also knew that God was watching over you. How did this make you feel toward God? How did you respond to the Father? What did you learn from this experience?

4. Matt reminded us that each time we do any sort of weight training or physical activity we tear the muscle fibers in our body. This tearing ultimately makes the muscle stronger. This is one way that our spiritual lives mirror our physical lives. Tough lessons are painful, yet they make us stronger on our journey. There is purpose in our storm! Think back to a particular storm in your life. In hindsight, discuss how you were made stronger:

... regarding who you are becoming?
... regarding Who He is?

"... By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; don't be afraid.'" John 6:17-19

5. In John 6:17-19, the disciples became terrified. Yet in the midst of their fear, Jesus showed up! He accompanied the disciples. Jesus continues to accompany His followers on their call. Thus, we are never truly lost. What does this mean for you on your daily journey of faith?
6. Create a prayer to God thanking Him for seeing you in the midst of your darkness, for testing you and making you stronger in your storm, and for accompanying you in your calling. Go to a silent location and share your heart with God through the words of your personal prayer.

Return to your group. If you feel comfortable, discuss your prayer and your prayer time with the others in your group.

Loving
Life
Journey
through
the Gospel of John