**“Why are you so afraid?”**

In my studies this is a question from Jesus that sticks in my head. And it struck me hard again in preparation for this message. Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? This question asked of his disciples, those men that were closest to Him. Was it their fear, or was it their faith that concerns God.

In the reading this morning from Mark 4:35-41 entitled “Jesus Calms the Storm”

Jesus is tired, he has been teaching for many days and the people still do not understand everything he has to say. He suggests to his apostles that they get away from the crowds and go out on a boat, a relatively small boat. Jesus is at peace and falls asleep in the back of the boat and the seas become rough.

It is at this point I am reminded of my granddaughter Emily. I was freshly retired and now have no excuse to watch the grand kids. The older children leave on the school bus and I am alone with Emily and I place her in the Jolly Jumper. If you think about it a very violent ride. The moment you think it has ended and you’re feet are on the ground, you are once more lifted into the air. Emily loved this ride she had adapted to it and it was a comfort to her. Gradually she grows tired and nods off only to be wakened again when it lifts her up again. She wakes and nods off again. This goes on for a while, she appears to enjoy the ride and seems to sleep comfortable. I think that this would scare me to death, similarly to how the disciples must have felt in that small boat when the storm is ragging all about them.

Eventually my granddaughter is caught up by sleep, and she sleeps the very sound sleep of an innocent child. Even while the jumper raises her up and down. I found it amazing the comfort that she has trusting in her surroundings knowing that she is loved and grampa will protect her.

We might define the same ride as tariffing, we are not in control. Repeatedly being lifted up and down and we are unable to stop its motion. Who will protect us and watch over us. We long for the control that does not exist for us.

I know the picture of me bouncing up and down in a giant jolly Jumper might seem ridicules to you. But it is terrifying to me. Why is it that in our lives we do not exhibit enough faith to know that we are protected and we are loved.

The message that I present today targets biblical faith through my eyes.

Before I go on with my daydreaming imaginations, I wish to declare a disclaimer. I am not trained in church doctrine. UMC or any other church affiliation, I give any credit that I might, --------- might deserve to the Holy Spirit and the Bible. Hear me, but understand that I am human and am influenced by the world and I am a sinner and I may misconstrue Gods messages. Any understandings that we might gain are individual and personal, but guided by the holy spirit, GOD. My personal belief is that we must reach out to our God with complete honesty. Fearful and trembling at his authority that overwhelms me. But we must reach out to him to try and comprehend all of his teachings. I do not believe that we can ever hope to comprehend His plan for us, individually by simply agreeing with the teachers of our faith. There are many disagreements among theologians. Only God understands the absolute truth and his plans for us. No matter where we might be in our development with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I am convinced that the Lord wants for us to seek his truth and develop our faith in a realm of humility and trust. Open to his word.

Please do not use any of what I say as evidence of any kind. They are the honest thinking of a mediocre man and I present them as food to ponder. I pray that they are inspired by God, creator, mentor and Holy Spirit. And I depend on the mercy of God, if they are not.

In Deuteronomy 20:1 “When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.”

When we are in a righteous conflict pleasing to God, He is there with us and we need not fear.

In [Leviticus 19:34](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%2019%3A34&version=NIV)

The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God. The words and teachings of God are not always easy to comprehend because they go against the wisdom of man. The pride of man.

In the next book of the Tora, the fifth book of the Old Testament and the last book of the Tora, [Deuteronomy 6:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%206%3A5&version=NIV)

It says we must; Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. This was foundational to the chosen people of God. A prayer recited often and known in the Hebrew language as the Shema. (Listen – understand, comprehend).

In Matthew 22:37-40 the good news, Jesus repeats both of these; This time written in Greek “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.  And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” They are foundational to the Bible, the Logos (word) of God.

[Deuteronomy 10:12-22](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy%2010%3A12-22&version=NIV)

And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the Lord’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good? To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. ...

During a conversation at the old Coffee Wall in Williamson, where we gathered for coffee and Christian discussion at times. I remember stating that we need to get back in the practice of fearing God as is stated here.

I was severely warned that you must never say that because you will frighten people away from church. So, I dropped it.

**14**To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. **15**Yet the Lord set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today. **16**Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. **17**For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. **18**He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. **19**And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. **20**Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. **21**He is the one you praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. **22**Your ancestors who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

You must never say to people that they must first fear the Lord for this is the beginning of all knowledge. ----------------------------------------------------- Not true, this is scripture and is repeated many times throughout the bible in scripture. When we contradict the Lord without good sound reason, we have begun on the path of destruction. When we do not recognize his authority, we may already be lost. Do not say that we must fear God because people will not want to attend our church. People that can put perimeter around God have no reason to attend and hold no value for growing the bride of Jesus, the church.

God is steadfast, you can trust him to be with you always. This is something that you can develop your faith on, a gift from God. With faith in the Lord, we have nothing to fear because He loves us and wants nothing but the best for us. Although we must honor his presence for, he is Holy and righteous.

I believe that too often we dumb down the message to make it more pleasing to the world. The bride of Christ is in jeopardy today. Why. Because we ignore the words of the Lord to make it more pleasing to the world. When we stop understanding the authority of God and place mankind in that authority of God, we eliminate the purpose of God and the church is doomed.

Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?

Where do we get our faith? I believe it comes from God and it is not something that we can create without Jesus.

One of the doctrines that we believe in is the Baptism. I could never understand the value of Baptism of a child when parents bring the child to the Alter and the Baptismal font resighting traditional words declaring allegiances to God. Too often these parents disappear soon after and it would appear that there is no follow-up on their vows. To me it seems to be a lie. Maybe my faith is weak and I should be afraid. As explained to me by pastors trained in doctrine, Baptism is always honored through our faith by God. The Holy Spirit has been sown and God will nourish it in His time. God’s actions are not dependent on ours.

Have you still no faith. This gets right to the crux of the problem that I believe Jesus was speaking of. We are asked to have more faith in God, the father who has such authority that we are not allowed to see Him except in the image of his son Jesus, the Messiah. In the baptism there is faith, the faith of what can not be seen and often is not understood. It is a sign of rebirth, repentance and trust.

In Matthew 21:25 The question of John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

You need to be baptized by water a sign of repentance. We are born in sin; original sin we are as humanity created in a sinful nature. We reject our creator in favor of our own attributes. We desire to be equal with God and cast our own judgements. Our desire is to be God, in control of all we do or think. It is Gods desire that we seek to emulate him. To become holy and righteous just as he is holy and righteous. We need to learn to serve the world just as Jesus serves the world in preparation of the coming kingdom. Jesus said; [Mark 10:45](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2010%3A45&version=NIV)

“For even the Son of Man did not **come** **to** be **serve**d, but **to** **serve**, and **to** give his life as a ransom for many.” This is the image that we should desire to repeat and be born again into.

Can you become baptized in the holy Spirit of God without baptism in the water. Perhaps, but you will still need to repent and be born again into a likeness of the justified Jesus.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

I have been told that in order to be saved we must profess our allegiance with God, Jesus the Messiah. Or we must repeat the sinner’s prayer to ask for forgiveness. I am not so sure that salvation is dependent on words or actions.

I have been tested by man, are you born again and on what day were you born again. Did you profess it before man? This is an attitude that puzzles and disturbs many of my pears. They say I don’t know when I was born again. I was raised in the church and have always believed. It is a guilt trip that we may or may not deserve. As I ponder over the faith that I have and the doubts that arise I go back to my baptism for I was baptized in the methodist church by the act of sprinkling water and receiving this sacrament blessing. During my life I have risen gloriously and I have fallen dramatically, but I have come to realize that no matter at what position we might be on those waves of life the Holy Spirit has always been there. He has blessed me when I am in glory and He has held me up as I swing toward hell. I question my faith and wonder why I am so afraid; I think maybe it is not about what I say or do, it is more about what I allow.

I am not special I have to ponder everything that I receive, maybe it is because I am weak when it comes to faith. And maybe it is because I live in fear of the Lord. His authority overwhelms me and I only wish to honor His presence that is Holy and Righteous. I only wish to honor His presence.

Let me leave you with this one last thought, when you are riding on the Jolly Jumper of Life and you fear drowning because your faith and trust are weak, know that you are loved and protected and God will never let you down. This is who our creator and messiah and spirit is!

PEACE BE WITH YOU!

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