

A close-up photograph of a lion's face, showing its eye, ear, and nose. The lion's fur is a rich golden-brown color. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Fear Not, Only Believe

David DePra

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By David A. DePra

During a time of crisis, whether personal, or worldwide, God's continual exhortation is found in the simple words, "Fear not, only believe." (Mark 5:36) But these words are so simple that it is easy to quickly skip by them – before we see the great Truth they carry. For example, in these few words, God is actually telling us HOW to, "fear not." He is saying that we are able to, "fear not," BY believing. Can we see that? He is telling us that to the extent that we trust God, we will, "fear not." To the extent that we believe God we will not believe fear. In the final analysis, we are going to do one or the other.

Now, among many other things, that ought to tell us something about God Himself. It ought to tell us that God is faithful – in fact, it ought to tell us that if we would really come into a realization and knowledge of God that fear would no longer be able to govern us. If we know God – if we begin to experience Him – the Truth about God will set us free from the LIE of fear. We will believe and rest IN HIM. Whether a person is governed by fear, or governed by God; governed by love – these are the results of a person's relationship with God through His Son.

Fear is a SPIRIT – the Bible says, "God has not given us a SPIRIT of fear." (II Tim. 1:7) But God has given us His own spirit – the spirit of God. Therefore, we see the two spiritual realms, each of which carries their own dynamic or spiritual atmosphere. The SPIRIT OF FEAR governs the fallen creation – including man's own

fallen nature. Fear is the condition and experience of humanity in its independence from God. Thus, if a person does not believe God – which is unbelief -- they will be governed by some form of fear. But if a person does believe God, they will FEAR NOT. In short, unbelief opens us to fear. Faith shuts the door to fear, and opens us to God, who is love.

Psalm 27

If we could summarize the book of Psalms in a few words, we might say the book of Psalms is a proclamation of the faithfulness of God. All through Psalms, God assures us of His unchanging faithfulness. And if we believe what God says about Himself, we will FEAR NOT.

The first Psalm that I want to turn to is Psalm 27. Let's begin in verse 1:

The Lord IS my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord IS the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps. 27:1)

Note that this verse does NOT say that the Lord, "gives me light," or, gives me a THING called, "salvation," or gives me strength. It does not say that, does it? No. What it does say is that, "the Lord IS my light, my salvation, and my strength." The very Person of the Lord IS our light, salvation, and strength – He is the great I AM – He is the Alpha and Omega. He IS all of those realities – to us and in us.

The Truth behind what is being stated here is the fact that if we are believers, we have been,

“joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him.” (I Cor. 6:17) Christ is IN US. (Col. 1:27) “Christ in you” – that is the definition of Christianity. And the definition of a Christian is a, “Christ one;” one in whom Christ dwells. This means that you are joined to the One who said, “I am the light.” You are joined to the One who said, “I am the life.” Thus, for example, since you are joined to LIFE HIMSELF, you are alive with HIS LIFE -- in other words, He is your salvation. Thus, rather than continually ask God, during a time of crisis, to give us light, to give us life, or to give us a THING called strength, we need, by faith, to recognize that we are already one with Him. Thus, we ought to ask the Lord to reveal HIMSELF to us -- in ways where we will realize Him as our light, as our salvation and as our strength.

This is a whole new ballgame, isn't it? It is a whole new ballgame when we realize that light, life and strength are NOT THINGS; where we stop thinking that we need to get God to go, 'zap,' and paste on us some kind of a strength or a power. It is a whole new ballgame when we realize that Jesus Christ within us IS that. He IS all those things for us as believers -- and we already have all of that IN Him.

What we need to do is ask God to do whatever it takes to bring us into an inward realization of Jesus Christ -- to where we will know Him as our life, light and strength. Now, what will it take? Well, it is going to take, in the first pass, a work of the cross -- wherein OUR strength is broken and where we no longer walk in the light of our own minds. A time of crisis in a personal life –

and a worldwide time of crisis that affects everyone – these trials are often used of God as a work of the cross – whereby we learn by experience that God alone is our strength and our life.

There are many professing Christian people that will tell you that if you, “fear not, only believe,” that God will spare you all suffering. No. That is not the Truth. Rather, we must, “fear not, only believe,” even if God allows us to suffer. Our suffering does not mean God is unfaithful. Indeed, if we yield to Him despite our suffering, we will discover that He allowed us to suffer because He IS faithful – He intended to use it to build our faith and reveal Christ in us.

God Has Purposes In What He Allows

There is another Psalm that contains a promise of God that ought to provide comfort to those who are suffering WITHIN the will of God.

***Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee:
the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.
(Ps. 76:10)***

This is a promise from God: He will spare us UNNECESSARY suffering. He will allow only that which He intends to use – if we would believe and seek His face.

Suffering is not a thing unto itself. God allows it for a purpose – a spiritual and eternal purpose. Now, of course, we can abort that purpose through unbelief. But God’s intention is to allow only suffering which – if we would by faith pick

up our cross – will accomplish His purpose in His people through Christ.

Jesus Christ IS Our Strength

One reason that God often allows His people to suffer -- alongside of those who are of this world – is that He wants to break the blindness, the unbelief, and the delusion of our self-strength. He wants to do so in order that we might see the Truth about ourselves – that we are nothing – and see the Truth about Christ – that He is everything. And if we will allow God to bring us to this point, we will stop trusting in ourselves and our merits, and put our faith in Christ.

Note that: God will never make US strong. We can stop asking Him to, “give us strength.” Rather, God wants to show us we are utterly weak. There is perceived strength in our soul man; our natural man. But it is really a delusion. We have always been weak. We have never had anything we could do to help ourselves. Much of the work of the cross is to open our eyes to the fact that we have always been weak – but that Jesus Christ must be the object of our faith. In short, God simply wants to open our eyes to the Truth.

Paul said, when he talked about his thorn in the flesh, “When I am weak then He is strong” (II Cor. 12:10) – in short, because Paul was weak the Lord could be His strength. He said he rejoiced in the fact that he was brought to utter and complete weakness.

Trust God, Not Our Understanding

How does God show us the Truth about ourselves? Well, for one thing, if we continue to try to walk in the strength of our own wills and minds, God will bring us to the place of utter perplexity. If you try to walk in the light of your own mind with the Lord, He is going to bring you into situations where your mind will not be able to get you through. You will not understand -- and won't ever be able to -- and at times like that you will have to learn not lean upon your own understanding, and not trust in your own ability -- to even understand God. The only way through is to put our own mind aside and believe and trust Jesus Christ anyway. Yes. Trust the Lord even though we cannot understand -- because we know HE understands. Somebody once said that we may not understand but our faith needs to be in the One who does. This is a walk of faith which we will have to face again and again. So don't trust in your ability to figure things out or to understand God. You will come to a dead end. But when you do, trust in the Lord.

We need to see this: An inability to understand the Lord is normal. Indeed, it may be ordained of God. Why? To push us to the very place of NOT trusting in ourselves; in our understanding; in our own strength. Are we so foolish to assume that God will only work within the bounds of our human understanding? Do we think that God is no bigger than our understanding? We are dealing here with spiritual issues -- many of which are far beyond what we can presently grasp. But God has us fully in His hands. Again -- we may

not be able to understand God. But God understands us.

This ought to be encouraging. Many believers assume that if they cannot understand or explain God that there must be something wrong with them. No. Everything may be exactly as it is supposed to be. But we can, "fear not, only believe." Believe God regardless of whether we can understand.

Faith is something that is beyond understanding. We might understand that we must have faith – but not much more. Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we understand..." In other words, if there is nothing else we understand, we understand that we need to trust God, and we understand that He is faithful.

You could ask over and over again, "Lord, give me light and give me understanding." Your vocabulary and choice of words are NOT the issue here. It is your heart. But I think a lot of us believe that God gives us those as THINGS or abilities. But no. God wants to bring us to a place where we realize that THE LIGHT – the ONLY Light -- is a Person. All understanding comes out from Him. You and I cannot discern anything unless it is a by-product of knowing Jesus Christ. Oh, we can discern that it is raining outside, or that something is blue instead of red. I am not talking about stuff like that in the natural world. I am saying that we can't know the Truth; we can't know what God is doing -- we really cannot know how to walk with God unless we know HIM.

We need to know Him because He is THE LIGHT. All discernment in the Christian life is the by-product of knowing Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 1 it states this very clearly:

Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may KNOW..... (Eph. 1:16-18)

Paul states directly that to KNOW the purpose and plan of God you must have a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of HIMSELF. Only then will the, "eyes of your understanding be enlightened." Only then will we be able to KNOW. The entire plan of God is outlined in the subsequent verses. So – as Psalm 27 says -- the Lord Himself has got to be our light.

Suffering

Psalm 27 says, "The Lord is the strength of my life...my salvation." This agrees with what the Lord Himself said, "I am the resurrection and the LIFE." (John 11:25) And it agrees with what Paul wrote, "Christ, who IS our life." (Col. 3:4) But of course, in order for us to actually experience the Lord as our life, we must lose OUR lives. Jesus said:

If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall

lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)

We must make this commitment by faith. We have to ask God, "to do whatever it takes to get His purpose in our lives." What will it take? A work of the cross. The specifics of this work of the cross will vary according to the wisdom of God. But it's work will bring us to a relinquishment our self-ownership – in favor of an unconditional faith in Christ.

One aspect of a believer losing their life to Christ is that a believer must lose all claims to self-righteousness. Of course, this is something to which it is easy to agree – but once we relinquish our lives to Christ, a work will begin to expose any self-righteousness for what it is – a lie based in unbelief. It will be God's intent to bring us to where we will know Christ is our only righteousness.

Here we see that suffering in the life of a Christian is more than external circumstances. It involves the crucifixion of what makes fallen humanity tick. Indeed, it gets to the core of human religiosity.

Regardless of the form, God has never promised to spare Christian people suffering. In fact, He guaranteed that Christian will suffer. Indeed, the nature of things demands it. If I am in Christ I am automatically at variance with not only the world, and not only Satan – but I am at variance with my own fallen nature. There is going to be conflict, upheaval, and trauma. There is going to

be suffering. And often God will lead His people directly into it.

God has often led His people directly into suffering. As quoted, Jesus stated directly, "If anyone would follow Me -- let him pick up His cross daily." That is as clear as it could be: Following Christ will lead to suffering. Look where He led His Son - right to the cross. Look where He led Paul, Peter and all the apostles. The idea that it is not the will of God for Christians to suffer is diametrically opposed to scripture, and to the will and purpose of God.

Tribulation is normal for a believer. It is normal for this present age. But what we do know is this: God has promised that if we will trust Him and believe Him, He will get His will through any time of trouble and will do a work of the cross in our lives through it. We will then come into a greater realization of Jesus Christ, if we will open ourselves for that.

Faith Destroys Fear

Now, how do we practically do that? How do we open ourselves to God's work of the Cross in our lives? Psalm 27:1 hints at it. If I believe that, "the Lord is my light and my salvation," – and if I believe that, "the Lord is the strength of my life," – then what the Psalm says will automatically follow – I will NOT be afraid; I will NOT fear. Believe the Truth about Jesus Christ and trust Him -- and fear will not be able to control you. In other words, if you believe, you will, "fear not." That is what we read the exhortation, "Fear not, only Believe."

Ultimately, what we believe is going to govern us. What we believe is going to also greatly impact our emotions. But human beings do not believe with emotions. Rather, emotions react to what we believe.

Can we see this? Emotions are not, "believing faculties." No. They are, "reacting faculties." What I believe to be true will BE TRUE – i.e., will FEEL TRUE -- to my emotions – whether what I believe is true or not. Thus, emotions tend to be governed by what I believe – whether what I believe is the Truth or not.

Read that last statement again: Emotions will be governed by what we believe whether what we believe is the Truth or not. But have you ever noticed what happens when our emotions react to what we believe? Those emotions tend to SEAL what we believe – affirm what we believe. And then we easily believe our emotions.

Many of us seem to, "just react," emotionally to what happens in life. We do not necessarily stop to determine what we believe. We just react to something. But even though there is no rational evaluation going on, we are believing SOMETHING to be true – which is why we are reacting emotionally.

There are many professing Christian people who LIVE IN their emotions, thinking that what they feel is the spirit of God. One essential to sorting this out is to see the Truth of the separation between soul and spirit in each believer. This would make us to know that it is possible to

believe with our spirit and mind, all the while our emotions may run amuck.

When a believer is saved they are, "joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him." (I Cor. 6:17) Note that the believer is made one SPIRIT with Christ – but not one body or soul. The emotions are a dimension of the soul. Christ is revealed to us in our spirit, which renews our mind, and births the possibility of faith. Thus, we are able to believe with our mind – based on revelation – but our emotions are separate. They can only react. They are not the source of, or proof of, the Truth.

It is possible for our soul life – our natural man – to seem to have a mind of its own – but for a believer to ignore that and nevertheless believe and trust Christ. Christ is not US. He is OTHER than us. And He is never moved. Thus, faith in Him need not be moved.

Thus, when Jesus says, "Fear not, only believe," he is not talking about getting rid of some emotion. Rather, he is saying NOT to believe our emotions, but to believe HIM. He is saying that despite any emotions one way or another, we have enough revelation of Him to believe Him, and to be governed by Him. In short, if we believe we will fear not. If we fear not it is because we believe. Faith in Christ – based on true revelation – will eventually leave no room for fear to govern.

The Spirit of Fear

It is not only a fact that fear is NOT an emotion, but fear is, in fact, a spirit. Paul wrote, "God has not given us the SPIRIT of fear...." The SPIRIT of fear can be a strong influence. And if it does influence us, then our emotions will react and paralyze us.

The spirit of fear will play upon our ignorance, and certainly upon our self-reliance. In short, to the extent that we do not trust Christ, fear can impact us. God says, "Fear not, only believe." Satan would say, "Believe not, but fear and be afraid."

Thus, the solution to fear is FAITH. Faith in a God who is LOVE. Perfect love CASTS OUT fear – and God is perfect love. Thus, there is nothing about God – if we know Him – that can incite fear in humanity. Knowing God and believing Him will dissipate fear.

You will note that the solution to fear is not to FIGHT fear. No. That will not work. It will simply focus us on fear. Neither is the solution to try to FEEL better. No. Since fear is a lie the solution is to refuse to believe it. Instead, believe the Truth – and refuse all else. So rather than fight the lie of fear -- we must simply refuse to believe it and instead believe Christ.

Most of us are so used to operating in and from out of our emotions that we have little frame of reference for anything else. But if Christ is in us, He will bring us to where our knowledge of Him, and the faith that emerges, will become stronger

– and we will see how it is possible to bypass our emotions and live in and out from HIM.

Every solution to what ails a believer is found in the Person of Jesus Christ. But I am not saying that the solution, “is found in Jesus Christ,” in some kind of an abstract way that cannot be experienced. No. I am saying that if we can come into an experience of Jesus Christ, we will actually experience His love – and that His love will cast out fear. Fear will lose its grip on us.

Will our freedom be perfect? Will we never be afraid again? No, because we are forever going to be encumbered by the flesh. We may often still FEEL afraid. But if we know the Truth, we will be able to treat how we FEEL according to the Truth – our feelings are lying – and we can then believe God.

What you have to do with fear is destroy it by neglect. If you knew someone, who at every opportunity lied to you, and you had no way of shutting them up, what would you do? Well, the first thing you would do would be to stop believing them. Eventually it would get to the place where you would just tune them out. This is what you have to do with the spirit of fear and the emotions that rise up. Destroy them by neglect. In other words, “fear not,” by believing the truth -- refuse to believe fear by believing God.

This is not just some psychological exercise. It is what we do because it is the TRUTH. It is the outcome of faith. We fear not because we believe God.

So, the Psalmist asks, "Whom shall I fear, of whom shall I be afraid?" The answer is that if we believe and trust God – NO ONE.

Believing God, Despite Suffering

Now, we must be clear. Even though God tells us to fear not, this does NOT mean that nothing will happen to us to cause suffering. That may seem like a contradiction. We would probably say, using our natural mind, "Well, if there is a possibility that something terrible could happen to me then how could I not be afraid?"

There is only one way that you can accept the possibility of suffering and yet not fear: Know and believe that God loves you and will not allow anything to happen that He is not going to use for your eternal good. Psalms also says, "Surely the wrath of man will praise You, but the remainder, God will restrain." (Ps. 76:10) God Almighty is not going to allow anything in the life of a believer -- except that He intends to use it. Sometimes, what He does allow can be very difficult. You can suffer loss as a Christian. All of us are going to die one day. You can go to your grave saying that God will never let anything happen to you -- but sooner or later it is going to. But if we know Him and surrender to Him we can, "Fear not, only believe," despite it all.

On this matter, we have to step away from human thinking and into the Truth of God in Jesus Christ. Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." That is faith, to the disregard of my agenda and even my life. Even though, to the

natural mind, this might seem ridiculous -- to one who knows Jesus Christ, this is something we have to come to terms with. We have to be brought to the place where we trust God even if it costs our lives.

God allows a crisis in the personal life so that He can bring a person to the place of trusting Him. But most of us think that only if God allows blessing in our lives would our faith in Him be built. No. Blessings go only so far in building faith because blessings do not challenge faith. It is when faith is challenged that faith is built.

It is easy to believe and obey God when it PAYS us to obey Him – when we are being blessed. But when blessing is absent and we seem to be cursed – despite our faith – our hearts will be exposed. Our faith will be exposed for what it is. The trial of faith is exactly what the term states – a trial of our FAITH. It is then that our faith – and the Truth upon which it is based – are proven.

It is only when Truth is PROVEN that it becomes part of us. Of course, we are really saying that Jesus Christ is PROVEN – not theologically – but in experience. The trial of faith divides between ourselves and Christ – and proves that Christ is faithful despite us. That requires a great trial of faith.

How many times it says in the Psalms that there can be many, many calamities all around the believer – but, “he that trusts in the Lord will not be moved?” The psalmist says that right here: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom

shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes...(and you can take that to mean THE Enemy)...came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." God promises that the enemy will not be able to accomplish the spiritual destruction he intends – in fact, God will accomplish HIS purpose through what the enemy intends for destruction.

The Psalm goes on to say, "Though a host should encamp against me..." In other words, you could have an entire host surrounding you, and may feel afraid, but your heart shall not fear. "Though war should arise against me, in this shall I be confident. One thing I have desired of the Lord and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." How many understand that Jesus Christ is the house of the Lord? He is our abiding place. We are in Him. The Psalm continues, "To behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple, for in a time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion." That is Christ. "In the secret of His tabernacle, shall He hide me. He shall set me upon a rock." Who is the rock, upon which God will set us as our foundation and the object of our faith? Jesus Christ.

The Rock

Turn to Psalm 61, where it says, "Hear my cry, oh Lord, attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto You." This is a person who is continually crying out to the Lord. He is not giving up on God. He continues, "When my heart

is overwhelmed, lead me to the ROCK that is higher than I."

This is a person who is overwhelmed by the reactions of their natural man and not able to handle life. Yet it is possible to be overwhelmed in that way and yet none of it can touch Jesus Christ in you. No trial can touch our spiritual union with Him. That is why we can bypass the trial and put our faith solely in Christ.

Jesus Christ is the ROCK that is higher than we are. Picture that. He is not only ABOVE all else, including our own deficiencies, but He is the ROCK. Nothing can pull Him down. Thus, put your faith in Him. You may not immediately be delivered from out of the trouble, but when you put your faith in Him, rather than be dragged down into the trial, you will be raised ABOVE it. He is the rock that is higher than we are, or ever could be, in our natural man.

Psalm 62 says a similar thing. It says there, beginning in verse 1: "Truly my soul waits upon God. From HIM -- certainly not from any other source and certainly not from ourselves -- comes my salvation." If you look at the King James, that word, "comes," is italicized, which means it is not in the original. What it ought to say is, "Truly my soul waits upon God, from Him my salvation." It is really saying that God IS my salvation, i.e., and I am waiting upon Him, Who IS my salvation. I am waiting upon Christ unto knowing and realizing Him in a way that will save me from the wiles of the enemy -- from that which would pull me down to a lower place.

It says of the Lord, "He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense. I shall not be greatly moved." In other words, because a person KNOWS these things about the Lord – that person cannot be moved from faith in Him. Again – knowing Christ will result in faith. We will believe because we know, and that will dissipate fear.

In contrast, if you put your faith in anything BUT Jesus, you are going to BE moved. That is because only Christ is the ROCK. Nothing but Jesus is trustworthy or stable.

So again, if you don't want to be greatly moved by world events, or by personal trouble, you have to put your faith in the One who is never moved. I kind of like the wording here where it says, "I shall not be greatly moved," because God is leaving room there for our humanity. We might be moved a little because of emotionalism over what is taking place. We tend to be shaky, don't we? But we are never going to be greatly moved if our faith is in the One who is never moved. He is the ROCK. Government isn't the rock. Money is not the rock. None of it is. It is so easy to get caught up in life. It is easy to inadvertently, not on purpose, to take security in things that are not God. To do so is exactly what Jesus warned against. But don't put your faith or build your house on sand. How many understand that if you saw a house built on sand next to one built on rock, you would not be able to see beneath the ground level in order to know which is which. They would both look stable. They would look equally stable to the eye, but what exposes the truth? The storm.

So again, God allows these things very often to expose the fact that our life may be built upon the sand. Maybe even our Christianity is built upon the sand of our own righteousness; the sand of our own merits; the sand of error. Times like this may expose us as being fake – as being those who really don't believe. Now, being exposed as a person whose faith is fake is not in itself good news. But it is good news in the sense that when God exposes fake faith – when He blows down the structures which are built upon the sand -- it always give us an opportunity to let Him build us up again in Christ – built up upon the Rock.

There is great encouragement here. Put your trust in the Lord because He only is the Rock -- the salvation and the defense. This is an exhortation that is all through the Bible. There is nothing God wants more than for us to trust Him in Christ. Therefore, if we also want that, we cannot go wrong. God will do whatever it takes to bring us there. A lot of us pray every day, "God, do whatever it takes." How do we not know that our present crisis is not an answer to that prayer?

A Journey Upward

Beginning with Psalm 120, and going all the way through Psalm 134, we have what are called, "Psalms of degrees." If you are not familiar with what that means, these were songs which were sung as people journeyed up to Jerusalem -- which is higher than the surrounding country. As they ascended toward Jerusalem, they sang these

songs, which is why they are called songs of degrees or ascent. So these Psalms stand as a type and shadow of a journey that is spiritually upward.

Psalms 121 is the second of these. It says, beginning in verse 1: "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills. Does my help come from there?" This is the rhetorical question being posed here – the answer being NO. In other words, am I going to lift up my eyes to the hills and look to the Holy City for help? Am I going to look to anything or anybody as the place from which my help comes? No. "My help comes from the Lord!" In short, spiritual ascension is not about ME becoming bigger, greater, or more spiritual. Neither is it about me discovering a thing or technique or group that is a source of help. No. I will not look unto any of those, "hills." Rather, spiritual ascension is about me coming into the realization that Jesus Christ is all – and that I am nothing. This is about HIM. I will leave myself, and all else behind, and experience the Lord alone as my light and my life.

A lot of us have looked to the, "hills." We have looked to some, "high place," that we think exists – that if we could only achieve – that would put us in good stead with God. Then, we think, we will, "have arrived." There are many leaders in Christianity that give the impression, either directly or indirectly, that they have found such a place – and that you need to look to THEM in order to find it. Sometimes the, "hill," to which we lift up our eyes is our own righteousness. We think that because we have obeyed God that our obedience is our, "help" – that is -- God is so

pleased with us that He would never allow anything negative to happen to us. There are entire ministries based upon such false teaching.

If there is one Truth upon which God wants to build our lives it is the Truth that Jesus Christ ALONE is the source of all for the believer. God has FREELY given us ALL THINGS in His Son. (see Rom. 8:32) Jesus Christ is THE LIFE – and all is in His life. Jesus Christ is THE Way, THE Truth, and THE life. These are not merely words. They represent spiritual life and reality – God wants us to experience Jesus Christ as ALL in every way possible. But in order to achieve this in us, there must likewise come a forsaking of ourselves – a lifting up of our spiritual eyes AWAY from self, and AWAY from all else as the source for us. This is achieved by showing us the Truth about ourselves – by the work of the Cross. We have to see that Jesus Christ is ALL to us, and that nothing else must become to us the object of our faith.

There are many seasons of crisis in the life of a believer wherein God does this work. These are the trials wherein God shows us that we have had our eyes on the hills. We may have been expecting an army to come charging down from the hills to save us. But God is not going to send help down from the hills to us. Rather, He is going to draw us UP to HIMSELF.

Thus, the answer to this rhetorical question is, "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills. Does my help come from the hills? No. My help comes from the Lord -- Who made heaven and earth. He will not suffer your foot to be moved. He will not

allow you to lose faith and slip into unbelief -- IF you hold to Him and open yourself to Him.”

Again, we MUST believe. Every day we are faced with this choice - who do we believe? Do we believe God -- or do we believe fear? Do we believe God -- or do we believe all these other thoughts that come to us? Even though we might be moved or shaken by world events, personal events, or even by our inward reactions – God is never moved. Thus, faith in God through Jesus Christ can never be moved.

If you find yourself in a whirlwind of emotion, and seemingly entangled is a spiritual dead-end, make the choice of will to put all of that aside and trust Christ ANYWAYS. You and I can do this RIGHT NOW. We don't have to feel like it. We don't have to try to fight any battle against these attacks. No. We need only dismiss everything about ourselves – dismiss how we feel and how we think. Step around these lies and BELIEVE. Faith will cut through all of these obstacles because if we really believe we will be drawing from Christ. We can believe Him solely based on His promise to be there – and if we do, we will be astounded at how all of the spiritual muddle dissipates. It will dissipate because resurrection power in Christ already has the victory over all of this stuff. Our faith is simply a matter of abiding in Christ as our life.

This does not mean we will never encounter the same attacks again. But in those cases, the solution is always the same – Christ. And God is not going to grab us and make this happen. He is not going to make us believe. We have to choose

to believe – and if we do not know how to do that, we can ask God to do whatever it takes to teach us how. He will answer that prayer.

Psalm 121 says that God will not suffer your foot to be moved -- because He that keeps you never slumbers. "Behold, He that keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." Of course, there are times when it seems like God does sleep – that He is asleep to your prayers, cries, and troubles. Yet Jesus gave a lesson in the gospels to answer that -- remember when the disciples were in the midst of that great storm and Jesus was asleep? Remember how they were scared to death, crying out? Finally, they awoke Him. Do you remember what He said to them? He said, "Why were you afraid, Oh ye of little faith?" The Truth here is inescapable. Yes, there will be time when we are in great travail – and it will SEEM like God is asleep. But He never is. Thus, we need to FEAR NOT, ONLY BELIEVE.

God's faithfulness is not determined by our ability to SEE it. His faithfulness is not conveyed to us through our emotions. No. God is faithful regardless. But as we walk on in Christ we ought to more and more be anchored in Christ as our ROCK – and realize that His faithfulness depends upon HIMSELF – not upon us, not upon our perception of it. In fact – and this may shock some folks – God's faithfulness to us is not even dependent upon our FAITH. No. God is faithful despite our faith or lack thereof. Yet is it only if we believe that we will be able to live and experience the Truth that God is faithful.

This applies to salvation and everything within salvation. Jesus Christ has already died for every human being who has ever lived or will live. That is an eternal reality whether even one person believes it or not. But it is only IF we believe that what Jesus did will be possible for us to experience. In short, believing means embracing. Believing means to surrender. Faith is not an emotion. Faith is not a FORCE. Faith is a trusting of, and an embracing of, and a surrender to, the One who is the object of our faith.

Do we believe God even though it seems like He is asleep? Or, do we believe the raging storm of our own emotions and fears? The raging storms can be the dangers which surround us in this world. Or those dangers can be more personal and immediate. The Psalmist answers, "God never slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil. He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever more."

The only way that this is true is when we are in Christ. God is going to preserve us from all evil as we abide in Jesus Christ even though our natural man may be exposed to evil. Read the Book of Job. Didn't He do that with Job? Job was exposed to the personification of all the evil in Satan -- and God let it happen -- because it was the only way to deliver Job from ultimate evil -- the ultimate evil of his own nature, which was Satan's true territory. Because of the work of God in Job, Job did not come under that evil, and

it did not get inside of him. Job was in turmoil, perplexity, and even fear – but ultimately that fear didn't get inside of him and come between him and God. We see at the end of the trial of Job, Job finally saw God. This is what God is after the entire time. You lift your eyes to the Lord, and even though you cannot seem to find Him or see Him – even though He seems asleep – you will eventually SEE HIM. You will eventually come into an inward realization of Him. That is Psalm 121.

Psalm 125 is another song of degrees. It says, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mt. Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever." God may allow me to suffer great loss in this life but I am going to praise Him. I am going to give myself to Him for His purpose – by faith. Isn't that the difference between a believer and an unbeliever? Unbelievers suffer. Unbelievers catch COVID. Unbelievers die and suffer loss -- but they don't praise the Lord in the midst of it.

"Fear not, only believe," is not a religious formula. It is not a LAW to keep. Rather, it is only possible if we see the Truth. We cannot trust God despite fear if we do not believe God is faithful. Thus, we see again that all faith is based upon seeing Jesus Christ.

God allows crisis times in our lives and in the world so that we might be stripped of all of our fake faith – religious faith – and all faith that is based upon self confidence and self righteousness. This is His mercy so that we might see that there is nothing to trust in except God. Then, if we do, we begin to discover and to

realize Christ. In doing so, we cannot be removed from faith. God wants to get us to the place where, even if we tried (I am being a little bit facetious here) to disbelieve God, we could not do it because the Truth is too real to us.

The Psalm says, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people, from henceforth, even forever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous." In other words, you may be suffering the same thing as a wicked person does, but if you are, and God has allowed it, you are in His hands. You are in His hands and He has a purpose in it. So we have again, these greater promises that God has given to His people.

Faith is the Victory

Faith is our victory. But faith is not our victory as a THING unto itself. Faith is not our victory because we have somehow managed to muster it up out of ourselves. No. Faith is our victory solely because Jesus Christ is the victory and our faith is IN HIM. Faith is a relationship based upon Truth. Our faith is based on the Person whom we know is faithful.

Let's turn to 1 John 5:4:

For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith.

The first Truth we see in this verse is that real faith is BORN OF GOD. It is born of God in the believer. Now, this is not saying that God

implants in us a faith – such that we have no choice. No. It is really an agreement with Romans 10:17, which says that, “Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.”

Real faith must COME – which means it isn’t there to begin with. It must be BORN. God will bring light to a person, and if that person HEARS – which means to be open and willing to surrender – then the Truth God has brought will be born in that person. Faith will then emerge, based on the Truth. You and I cannot believe unless we have revelation. We cannot believe unless there is Truth TO believe. God must reveal Jesus Christ in a person – and only then can the faith OF Jesus Christ be possible.

What this means is that FAITH is a dimension of HIS LIFE – a dimension of HIS LIFE in which we can abide. Faith is not a thing, or a force, that we generate up to God. No. It is a dimension of His life that is born and evidenced as we come to realize HIM. And the way that we BELIEVE is by abiding in Him; by abiding in the Truth. That means surrender. It means to lose yourself to Him. Do that and you will eventually come to know, and thus, come to believe.

The Truth of Christ is a revelation of the Person of Jesus Christ. It is upon that revelation of the Person of Christ that all faith emerges; is built. And the faith that is built upon the inward revelation of Jesus Christ is VICTORY.

When John says that faith is the victory that overcomes the world, this does not refer to some government or to merely some trouble out here in

the world? It is talking about all that is earthly – all that is of the fallen realm -- including that which is in ourselves – the Adam nature. If we keep our faith in Christ and grow to know Him, all that is of the world which is within us is going to be exposed for what it is and it is going to lose its power over us.

Again – we must decide what we believe is the Truth. We must decide WHO we believe. We must either, “Believe not, only fear,” or we must, “Fear not, only believe.” Do we believe Jesus Christ – or do we believe our perceptions, our emotions, and our fears?

1 Corinthians 15 declares a great Truth. It asks, “Oh death, where is thy sting; oh grave, where is thy victory?” Then it answers, “Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Death is real. Danger is real. But Jesus Christ is the victory despite them, and over them. Victory over death happens when I can, by faith in Christ, walk in and pass through the things of death – but remain spiritually unharmed by them. I allow nothing to come between myself and Christ – THAT is victory. Victory over death means that even though things in my own nature rise up, such as fear, resentment, or panic, I will not be greatly moved because my trust is in the Lord.

God’s word to us is simple: “Fear not, only believe.” Fear not and put your faith in Jesus Christ. God will be working in all who are open to Him to reveal His Son. And as He does, we will more and more come to see the importance of

this exhortation – because we will more and more see HIM.

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