

A Trustworthy God – 2: We Can Count on God’s Care

(Learning the Let Go of Fear)

INTRODUCTION:

1. I want to continue our study of things about how God is trustworthy, and we can count on Him.
2. Today I want to talk about how we can count on **God’s care**.
3. I want to talk about this because as Christians we need *to know and appreciate His care* so that we can *learn to let go of fear*.
 - A. Letting go of fear is important because it is constantly affecting our lives in a negative way.
 - B. That is because fear is **fiercely logical!**
 - i. I mean there are a lot of things on earth that we can think of that can cause us to fear.
 - ii. We can fear for our children’s future, where the nation is going, natural phenomena like tornados and hurricanes, financial problems, death, sickness leading to death, etc.
 - C. As a result, we are constantly seeking **logical solutions** such as better schools, better lawmakers, storm shelters, eating right, exercising more, getting the best medicine, stockpiling weapons and food, driving safer cars, etc.
 - D. God is not satisfied with these solutions because they allow our **fears** to *remain* and *grow* as we *stress over every possible contingency* and *how we are going to fix it*.
4. So, lets focus on how we can trust **God’s constant care** and how that must lead us to **let go of fear** and live with confidence.
5. And I want to say that I am indebted to Jacob Hudgins and his book “**The School of Christ: Learning Character from Jesus**” for the general direction of this lesson. I hope it helps you as it has me.

BODY:

I. “Why are you afraid?”

- A. Jesus asked His disciples that question (Mk. 4:35-41 – “On that day, when evening came, He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.”³⁶ Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him.³⁷ And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up.³⁸ Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”³⁹ And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.⁴⁰ And He said to them, “**Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?**”⁴¹ They became very much afraid and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”).
 1. The combination of the storm and Jesus’ slumber caused the disciples to wake and *rebuke Jesus* saying, “Teacher, **do You not care** that we are perishing?” (Mk. 4:38).
 - a. I do not know if faith or desperation caused this and what they wanted Jesus to do.
 - b. But what Jesus did was far greater than they expected and astounded them. For, with a simple rebuke the wind and the sea became calm (Mk.4:39).
 - c. All the power of men could not accomplish what Jesus did with three words!
 2. But Jesus rebuked His disciples also saying, “**Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?**” (Mk. 4:40).
 - a. Jesus was saying that His disciples had no reason to react this way, which is hard to grasp seeing these were seasoned fishermen and knew real danger when they saw it!
 - b. But what they learned, and what we must learn, was their fear was totally **misplaced**. For after seeing Jesus’ power Mark 4:41 says, “They became **very much afraid** and said to one another, “**Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?**”
 - c. Disciples need to fear Jesus far more than the storms!
- B. This is why Jesus wants His disciples to examine and question their fears!
 1. From a purely worldly standpoint, we can easily justify our fear.
 - a. Is not my fear **natural**? Surely! It does not take any effort at all to fear the possibility of pain, suffering, and hardship the evil things of this world can bring upon **me**!
 - b. Is not my fear **logical**? Absolutely!

- i. There are things in this world that can affect **me**, hurt **me**, cause **my** life to become very unpleasant, sorrowful, and painful.
 - ii. And do I not fear the storm, like the disciples in the boat, because it is **bigger** than I am, and **I** cannot control or manipulate it?
- 2. Yet, Jesus says “No!” and rebukes and challenges His disciples saying, “**Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?**” (Mk. 4:40). Jesus does so because...
 - a. He wants His disciples to know who their Lord and Savior is and how that must affect their fears.
 - b. He wants His disciples to move from fearing **things of the world** to fearing **the One who holds the power to create and control the world.**
 - c. He wants His disciples to know that such fears are **incompatible with faith** in their God.

II. Fear and God

A. Our fears assume certain things about God!

- 1. Fear assumes **God does not care!**
 - a. We balk at this, but if I believe God truly cares about me, why do I fear so much?
 - b. We claim we know God cares, but at the same time we look around and see how bad things happen, even to good people, and God lets it happen! (i.e., Job! Jesus! Stephen! James! Paul! Isaac! Josh! Erin! Sawyer!, etc.)
 - c. So, we fear because what we see does not fit with what we think **God’s care should provide.** He does not stop it all as we want Him to.
 - d. So, we end up feeling like Gideon in Judges 6:13 who asked, “O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?”
- 2. Fear assumes **God cannot, or will not, help me.**
 - a. I may not want to see it this way, but if I believe God will do what is the very best thing for me, why do I fear?
 - b. My fear says **I cannot rely on God** to address the problem or calm the storm adequately.
 - c. Now, I believe God helped people and did great things in the Bible.
 - i. But I reason that things were different then.
 - ii. I reason that if I had Jesus here with me to calm the storms, I would not fear.
 - iii. I reason that I have observed that God does not always come through by **ending the problem and preventing the pain**, so my fears are justified, and I must fix it.
- 3. Fear assumes **God is not at work during the storms like He is in the calm.**
 - a. My recurring or lingering fear says that I view life’s troubles, dangers, and pain as proof of God’s failure to do what could have been done.
 - b. We wonder why He did not care enough to do something, to stop it. We asked!
 - c. That is because fear keeps us from seeing any further purpose, any further good, in God’s care than ending our trouble and restoring our comfort.
 - i. But must God fit the mold we make for Him?
 - ii. Has not Job and Jesus showed us the folly is such thinking?

B. We must believe God to let go of fear.

- 1. To let go of fear we must believe that **God is with us during the storms.**
 - a. It is amazing how much comfort we get when people are with us during trouble!
 - b. This is why God promises to be with His people (Matt. 28:18-20 – “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**”¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and **lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**”).
 - i. I have no real problem accepting this passage’s teaching concerning Jesus’ complete authority and right to command and rule my life.
 - ii. Where I/we struggle is accepting His promise of “**I am with you always.**” For, if I truly believe this, **why do I fear!**

- c. I struggle is because I want God's presence and care to mean He will **prevent** hardships, trials, suffering, and loss. Yet, He never promised that.
 - i. God promises to be constantly **with us** (Heb. 13:5-6 – "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, **"I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,"**⁶ so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, **I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"**).
 - 1) God cares and has promised to be with us through thick and thin.
 - 2) But "I will not be afraid. What will/can man do to me?" is the part I do not like.
 - 3) Men can and do a lot of bad things to God's people. Otherwise, there would be no reason to be afraid.
 - 4) Yet, it says I have no need to fear because God is with me! Do I grasp this?
 - ii. God promises **His constant love** (Rom. 8:31-37).
 - 1) I love the positive side (Romans 8:31-34 – "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."). Yes!!
 - 2) The practical application is another matter (Rom. 8:35-37 – "**Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** ³⁶ Just as it is written, "For your sake **we are being put to death all day long;** we were considered as sheep to be **slaughtered.**" ³⁷ But in all these things **we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.**").
 - a) Wait! Did not God say He was for us and the world cannot stand against us?
 - b) Yes, He did. But the practical application does not fit our mold.
 - c) For, what God promised is that His love remains and brings victory even though we can face tribulation, peril, persecution, want, and death!
 - iii. Do I, do we, grasp this?
- 2. To let go of fear we must believe that **God cares for us during the storms.**
 - a. That was the problem the disciples in the boat had when they questioned Jesus saying, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mk. 4:38).
 - i. Jesus being asleep in the storm meant to them that He did not care, which is absurd!
 - ii. But is that not what we do in storms? We panic, we cry out, we want to know where God is, what He is doing, why He is not stopping this, why does He not care?
 - b. The fear of the moment tends to make us to forget Jesus' tears at Lazarus' death (Jn. 11:35), His compassion for the widow who lost her only son (Luke 7:13), His weeping over the destruction facing Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41-44), and His very evident care for us!
 - c. Jesus did not heal them all, raise them all. People were sick and died around Jesus! But He still cared!
- 3. To let go of fear we must believe that **God can bring good out of the storms.**
 - a. After Jesus' disciples faced the storm and witnessed His great power, it states, "They became **very much afraid** and said to one another, "**Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?**" (Mk. 4:41).
 - i. What before seemed like, and very well could have been, a great tragedy from an earthly standpoint, was now seen as a lesson in faith.
 - ii. This does not mean that if we trust Jesus there will be no suffering or loss for His disciples. But it does mean that God can bring good from the storm.
 - 1) We see this in Joseph who suffered greatly through no fault of his own (Gen. 50:18-20 – "Then his brothers [who sold him into slavery] also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants."¹⁹ But Joseph said to

them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? ²⁰ As for you, **you meant evil against me**, but **God meant it for good** in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”).

- 2) We see this in the life of Paul who faced injustice, mistreatment, beatings, shipwreck, and imprisonment (Phil. 1:12-14 – “Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴ and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.”).
- b. What God can do is why we must learn to look at trials differently (Jas. 1:2-4 – “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the **testing of your faith produces endurance**. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be **perfect and complete, lacking in nothing**.”).
- c. If I can tell you anything, it is that I now know that the storms of my life, though leaving gaping holes in my heart, have helped me to fear and trust the One who has **saved them** and can and will **save me!** For, that I cannot complain!

III. Trust God’s care and let go of fear!

A. Look inside yourself and ask, “Why am I afraid?”

1. It will likely reveal an inadequate view of God, His love, and His care.
 - a. It will likely reveal that though I trust that God is in control, His control is **just a little too loose for my liking**.
 - b. It will likely reveal that we feel God does not share our definition of what a good life is!
2. That is inadequate faith and why I will continue to fear and act as though I must provide what is lacking from God!
3. We must learn and live the lesson Paul learned from his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:8-10 – “Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. ⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with **weaknesses**, with **insults**, with **distresses**, with **persecutions**, with **difficulties**, for Christ’s sake; for when **I am weak, then I am strong**.”).

B. Pray for God’s help (Phil. 4:6-7 – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”).

1. Channel that anxious energy into prayer!
2. Let God know what you need, how you are feeling, what your concerns are, so that you might gain His help instead of facing things on your own!

C. Think about the storms.

1. Think about the past storms and what you thought at the time, your mistakes, as well as about what God did, and His presence with you before, during, and after the storm.
2. Remember the goal of the storms—that we might learn to fear the One who created the earth and controls our destiny rather than the things of the earth (Matt. 10:28).

D. Choose faith:

1. Matt. 6:31-33 – “**Do not worry** then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for **your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things**. ³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”).
2. Rev. 2:10 – “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

CONCLUSION:

1. I hope God’s word presented in this lesson will help you to see that you need to let go of fear.

2. For, God is a trustworthy God, and we can always count on His care.
3. Will you trust God and give your life into His hands? Salvation awaits in F-R-C-B-Lf!