

Overcoming Fear with Obedience and Trust



DESERT CALL MINISTRIES

The Rev'd Joseph K. Acton
*Executive Director, **Desert Call Ministries***
Rector, Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church, Yuma

Power Pamphlet

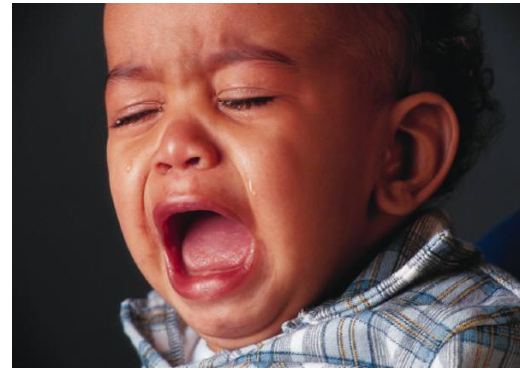
DESERT CALL MINISTRIES

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Christian Life Includes Negative Feelings

It's a mistake to assume we Christians have somehow arrived at some spiritual plateau where we no longer feel painful emotions. I know Christians who feel guilty for feeling afraid...and then, for that matter, guilty for feeling guilty! Our Christian faith generally does not allow us to hop, skip and jump over the everyday discomforts, anxieties and frustrations of living. What our faith does do is enable us to walk through negative feelings and experiences with *Someone else*. Jesus is with us, he says in

that last chapter of Matthew, always, “even unto the end of the ages,” even through the darkest moments, even through loneliness, rejection, doubts and fears.

Let’s reflect on the Biblical teaching as it relates to fear.

There Are No Great Biblical Figures That Were Fearless

One of the most powerful of all the prophets was Elijah. He faced down kings and prophets of Baal, alike. He was bold, courageous and supernaturally effective. Yet, he too, was afraid and tried to run away from his conflicts.

1 Kings 19:9-18

At Horeb, the mount of God, Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

“Why are you hiding here, Elijah? God wants to know. I called you! I back you! All of Heaven is on your side! Why are you running away?” The Lord is always calling us out of our favorite hiding places. He can run a powerful intervention on our attempts to escape Him. Some of us live our whole lives as one long, elaborate escape from God. That’s why Paul says to pray, “that we may be found by Him.”

(Elijah) answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your

prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

Lord, Elijah is saying, I feel like I am out here all alone. I had hoped for and expected some support, some affirmation that I was indeed on the right track. Now I feel totally, utterly alone.” Imagine a quarterback who sees the defensive linemen coming toward him and suddenly the offensive line disappeared! That is how Elijah feels. There is no one but me to face these awful people who are out to kill me and dishonor God.

Not long ago before I put my 4 year old Isaac to bed and there was a storm raging outside. He said he wanted it to stop because he was frightened. I explained to him that thunder was the sound of the clouds crashing, trying to be scientifically accurate in a way he could understand.

Later that night, Isaac awoke to the sound of thunder and called out to me. I went in his room and he said, “Daddy, the clouds are crashing.” I said, “Don’t worry. Jesus is right here with you. He is in control of the clouds too.” He cried out later as the thunder boomed and I went into his room...He said, ”Daddy, Jesus is making loud noises again!”

When we are afraid we want someone with us. In the Biblical story Elijah is afraid, too. He wants God with him but is beginning to doubt his presence.

Elijah responds to God’s question with a complaint: “I have been really obedient, but your own people have betrayed you and perverted the Holy Life you have called

them to live. They have thrown down your altars and blasphemed. Now they are trying to take my life! After all I have done for you God why are you letting these things happen to me?"

(God) said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

"You cannot see or hear Me as long as you stay hiding in this cave." The very thing that gives you security in this life may be the very thing that keeps you from seeing and hearing God. Am I hiding behind people, position, work, sex, addictions, greed, compulsive church or humanitarian works, or any number of things as a way of avoiding an encounter with the God who has been seeking me out? God is saying to Elijah ... "Get up and get out of that cave. As long as self preservation is the main concern of your life you will miss Me when I come near."

God is Not Like Cecille B. DeMille

Don't look for God to provide a "Big Production" when He speaks to you.

Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind;

I was in a tornado in Desoto, Texas in 1994. My wife, daughter and I hid in the closet. I have never heard a sound like that before. The next day my neighbor's VW Bug was on top of the local recreation center! Elijah is in the midst

of an even more powerful wind. Imagine a wind that breaks rocks! God was not in it.

and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire;

When I was a kid we lived in the high desert hills of Southern California and a fire broke out. It came within a hundred yards of our house. My twin brother and I spent the summer avoiding pulling weeds and shrubs that had grown close to the house. When the fire moved quickly down the hillside we immediately began weeding frantically, trying to do a whole summer's work in a few moments. There's nothing like a crisis to get you to do what you ought to be doing anyway! My brother Jaime and I were sprayed red by borade bombers, those big planes that carry the thick pink liquid that extinguishes flames...terrifying and awesome is the power of fire! Elijah felt the intense heat of those mighty flames all around him! God was not in it.

and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.



Let the Silence Speak

Transcendent silence leads him to presence of God...he hides his face in shame for having doubted the God who called him. As someone said, sometimes the Lord calms the storm and sometimes he instead lets the storm rage and calms his child.

Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; ... I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Hearing Must Lead to Obedient Action

Some people don't really want to hear God because they have no intention of doing what God says. Listening requires a willingness to act on what you hear from Him.

Return to the place of your fear. Go and fight. You are not alone. There are more with you than you know.

Simply put, God says, go back to the place, the situation, the circumstances you are running from. God will meet you there. You can never be alone. In Christ, being "truly alone," is an absolute impossibility. When you obey you find others making that same journey with you...there is nothing lonelier than a soldier gone AWOL. Return to battle and I will fight for you! If you avoid the battle you

will miss the victory I have prepared for you. That's God's answer to Elijah! It could very well be his answer for you, too.

