

Why are ye so fearful (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[0 : 0 0] May the Lord help us return to his word and with his help I will speak from the Gospel according to Mark the fourth chapter reading the fortieth verse and he said unto them why are ye so fearful how is it that ye have no faith the Gospel according to Mark the fourth chapter the fortieth verse and he said unto them why are ye so fearful how is it that ye have no faith these words of the Lord Jesus Christ to the disciples seem to me to be partly in the nature of an inquiry partly in the nature of a reproach and partly in the nature of an expostulation he said unto them why are ye so fearful what is this reason and the cause why you are in such a state of fearful agitation how is it that you have no faith we might have supposed that if anyone would have been expected to have had faith in Jesus Christ it would have been those disciples for they were very near to him they were personally and expressly called by him to follow him and in some respects they had already manifested their faith in him by following him they were true disciples the Lord acknowledged them as such and yet he said why are you so fearful how is it that you have no faith so we are not to understand this expression how is it that you have no faith as employing that they were in an unbelieving state that they had faith was very evident and yet notwithstanding they were in a very fearful and agitated state of mind which was not really consistent as far as far as that went with true faith in Jesus Christ if you have faith why are ye so fearful but the disciples I apprehend in the storm on the sea that night are not the only ones who come into this state of mind of being so fearful and to whom this question might be asked how is it that you have no faith

I remember in my very early days of preaching here after one service old Mr. Matthew Hyder whom some of you will remember most of you will not said to me you have been preaching to unbelieving believers and at first I thought that was rather an odd remark but on consideration I saw what he meant unbelieving believers well now that is exactly descriptive of the state of mind of the disciples on this particular occasion they were unbelieving believers they were unbelieving believers how is it that you have no faith but how can anyone be an unbelieving believer well you must understand with regard to faith these two things that make a distinction there is faith in the sense of the saving principle of it in the heart and there is faith with regard to the supporting power of it in the mind now a person may have faith and there are many in that case as a saving principle in their heart that when they come into certain conditions of distress or anxiety they have not faith as a supporting power in their mind now that was exactly the case with these disciples they were true believers that when the storm came and the ship filled with the water and they were in eminent peril they had not faith to support their minds and to calm them in such circumstances they certainly had faith in Jesus Christ because they said master care if they're not that we perish but they had not that faith that enabled them to feel well he will never let us perish we can never sit with him in the boat they had not that faith who is it that you have no faith for as i sometimes said to you when things go fairly smooth and quiet comfortable we may feel we have a good deal of faith when actually we have not as much faith as we think we have and when it comes into the trial we prove it so that when we are in real trials and may seem as though to ourselves we have no faith then we have more faith than we feel we have that's very often the case when we feel we have faith we have not so much faith when we feel we have none that's when we have more anyway these disciples had faith enough to appeal to Jesus Christ and faith enough to believe that certainly he could save them from their eminent peril but not faith enough to be quiet and to calm about and he said unto them why are ye so fearful how is it that you have no faith well in what i have to say from these words that the lord will direct my thought and utterance this morning it's not to um um commend the state of mind that the lord here expostulates them about but if i might be favored so to do to speak a word in season to any who may be in that state of mind and i wonder whether already the word has struck someone spirit as being a word applicable to them some fearful heart here this morning

someone feeling that they're in such a case as they seem not to have taste of comfort and support and calm their mind and uh uh uh yet we do come into these conditions of heart and mind or at least some of us do and uh perhaps if um you knew uh what a man of a fearful heart i am myself you might say well who are you to preach to us about being fearful and having no faith but still that may not be altogether and hindrance behold a stranger to this state of mind i should not be best able to speak to others who are conscious of it say unto them that are a fearful heart be strong fear not for he will come and save you that's the word for a fearful heart this morning now to open up this subject that's some orderly way of expounding it i won't divide my text this morning but give it one or two different applications although there are two expressions in the text why are ye so fearful and how is it that you have no faith they constitute one point really why are we so fearful it's because we have no faith the two go together if we had more faith we should not be so fearful our fearfulness implies a lack of faith and the circumstances in which this text occurs is very suggestive i won't dwell long on that the disciples with the lord himself had entered into a ship after a long day's preaching with jesus christ and passing over to the other side of the lake there arose a great storm of wind and the waves beat into the ship so that it was now so that it was now pulled first then uh this question arises when adverse conditions come on us conditions we can't control and conditions that we hardly seem able to stand up to there's something there's something expressive i think in every word in this context there arose a great storm of wind that's very representative of adverse conditions in life and we know that the sea of galilee partly by reason of the mountains around was very much subject to sudden and very strong winds because the mountains pummeled the wind and concentrated on the surface of the sea sometimes very suddenly and very violently and the ship was now full if there'd been about a comparative a small amount of water that was shipped into the boat they could have coped a little bathing of the water act would have met the necessity but the ship was now full now full so full that it seemed to them then indeed as though think they must the condition they were in was entirely out of their control we may be fairly sure that those of them who had been fishermen were not strangers to storms on the lake in the course of their fishing mostly perhaps they have been able to control these conditions

but now they couldn't control this one the ship was now full now full now that it could carry no more water now that the next wave breaking over the ship would cause the ship to plow as though they just couldn't face one more breaking water over their boat the ship was now full now my friend here's a trial of faith when adversities in different ways seem to come on us smaller difficulties we could cope with you might have wisdom or ability to deal with them but when it seems as though our ship is now full full of anxiety perhaps full of sorrow full of temptation and we feel we just can't hear anymore lord do appear do appear well it's quite right that we should pray that he would appear it didn't that that he reproved but it was their panicky spirit their fearfulness their lack of that faith in him that he would bring them through why are ye so fearful we might say lord there's good reason for it there's good reason for it i just feel afraid i shall go down in my spirit or in my mind i feel as though i shall slounder why are ye so fearful but this will apply in different ways why are ye so fearful and you very fearful about your spiritual state now let us begin with this is there faith to believe in jesus in the heart if there is no faith to believe in him at all there's every reason to be afraid because in that case of course there is no spiritual life where there's spiritual life there's faith in jesus christ essentially in that life it's a believing life to believe in jesus christ if it is in the heart to believe in jesus christ is no mysterious matter not something as joseph heart says something strange something that's not discovered to us yet to believe in jesus christ is just simply to trust him to trust him as the son of god to trust him as having power to save to trust his precious blood as atoning for sin and cleansing from it to trust his gracious word and gospel to lean hard and to lean holy and to lean solely on jesus christ that's believing now if it's in your heart to believe in jesus christ why are you so fearful about your spiritual state whether you're right or wrong if there's faith to believe in jesus in a certain sense it seems to me that we need faith in two ways as i mentioned this morning we need faith to believe and then we need faith to believe that we shall be saved because we believe through jesus christ it is good my friends to cling to jesus christ a good man once said we haven't any faith in jesus christ as long as we've got any faith in ourselves and that's very true as long as anyone has faith in themselves as such faith in their own religion as such or what not or faith in their own power as such to cope with matters and temptations and sins and lust and pride and jealousy and all this flood of evil as long as they've got faith to believe in their own power to cope with these things they have any real faith in jesus christ i've been to see dear old mr bartlett this week

and um i just take a moment to express the affection for us here at forest road that we know he felt and which he seems to feel as tenderly as ever he asked me after several of you personally and uh wish me to convey his love to you all and say that although he's not able to visit us now he feels the same affection for us all he's very deaf difficult rather to converse with him and a little repetitive for he's about 95 or 96 years old but he said two or three times to me this he said none but jesus can do helpless sinners good none but jesus can do helpless sinners good but the difficulty is in being brought really into that state of mind to feel that one is so utterly helpless that none but jesus can do them any good they can't do themselves any good no one else can do them any good no ministers can do them any good godly people can't do them any good it's none but jesus can do helpless sinners good jesus can do helpless sinners good well that's where the old gentleman is after his long years of preaching and experience he's been there now at the end of his days to come back to that spot none but jesus he kept saying can do helpless sinners good well then if jesus can do helpless sinners good and if you feel no one else that he can do you good and if you believe in his precious name why are you so fearful how is it that you have no faith if you believe in jesus christ there's two alternatives both of which are very unprofitable with regard to our state of mind about our house towels the worst is to be satisfied with an unsound confidence with a false confidence there is such a thing as a false confidence but the alternative to a false confidence is not a fearfulness of spirit that's the other alternative if anyone will say well what is a false confidence well a false confidence is a confidence without good spiritual and gracious reason and a false confidence is life easy and lacks that depth soberness and dependence on jesus christ for everything but as i was saying the alternative to a false and easy and buoyant confidence is not fearfulness and doubt uh those uh lines of joseph heart uh touch the mark exactly let no false comfort lift us up to confidence that's vain nor let their faith and courage droop for whom the lamb was slain that's the way my brethren not to be lifted up with false confidence and not to be always drooping with fearfulness and lack of faith but to have a sustained confidence sustained by the grace of god uh the frequent renewing of the holy spirit to sustain it i wouldn't give anything for anybody's confidence that they can maintain of themselves i feel certain that a right confidence needs the frequent renewings of the holy spirit's influence and power in the soul

[19 : 03] i would warn you against the confidence that is at your command and a confidence that you can maintain that the holy spirit's reviving and renewing in your spirit beware of it that's more likely to prove sinking sand than a solid foundation but i must come back to what i was saying if there is this faith to trust in jesus christ then why are you so fearful it's not a vain thing to trust in him and the lord knows our hearts in this matter if we've never said a word to anybody else perhaps we've sometimes said lord help me to believe in thee to trust thee to cleave to thee and to honor and praise thy holy name now how is it then that if that faith is in your heart you're so fearful about yourself there's no reason for this it's a temptation it's a lack of faith to comfort and support your mind you have faith to believe in jesus but not faith to feel that it is well with you spiritually well may the holy spirit help in this matter and relieve the mind but i just put it to you like that why are you so fearful take another consideration now sometimes when we fall into a state of mind of fear with regard to the future we don't know the future and uh... sometimes there are indications of perhaps coming trouble in one way or another and our heart sinks with regard to the thought of it and we tend to respond and say how shall i stand the trying day i think it's very significant in the account we have of the transfiguration we read and the disciples feared as they entered the cloud they were coming into something that didn't quite know what it was there was something in the cloud they couldn't see what it was and the cloud although it appears not to have been a threatening cloud but it was an obscuring cloud i think it is often the case that perhaps their heaviest trials come unexpected and the trials or difficulties that we foresee prove sometimes perhaps we must not say always but sometimes to fit in with cowper's hymns and william cowper knew a good deal about fearfulness and cloudiness of mind for he was subject from time to time of mental lapses and cowper said ye fearful saints quest courage take the clouds ye so much dread are big with mercy and shall break with blessings on your head now why are you so fearful about the future for surely we must say this that he has helped us hitherto and he that have helped us hitherto will help us all our journey through and give us daily cause to raise fresh Ebenezer to his praise well you believe that and i believe it but then why are we so fearful how is it that our faith in this that the law will help us in the future as it has in the past why does it not save our minds from such stinking fears why are ye so fearful let me give the point another term

why are you so fearful this doesn't of course come into the nature of the context but it comes within the scope of the word itself why are you so fearful if anyone is concerned about following the lord jesus christ openly and professively feeling that they have that faith and have that love and yet are afraid now why are you so fearful about this is it an unsafe path to walk it certainly is not it's safe but you may say yes but you may say yes but i have fears i fear whether i shall hold out to the end i fear that some temptation might astale me and i might fall by it and bring dishonor on the name of the lord jesus christ and grieve his people i feel so much in myself that causes me to be afraid and the enemy may work on the mind and say well the best thing is to say nothing at all and then you won't say the wrong thing the best thing is never to make a profession and then you won't be a hypocrite the best thing is to keep everything to yourself and then you won't cause anybody to be disappointed in you in the future now my friends this is the devil this is the devil the word of god doesn't speak like that the word of god encourages believers to embark on the public profession of his gracious name and if it's a question of being afraid why are you so fearful you surely don't feel that the lord jesus christ if you are faithful to him would not be faithful to you you surely don't feel that his grace is not sufficient to help to sustain and to bring you through you surely don't feel that such a pilot as jesus christ is can't guide you faith from the rocks and making shipwreck of faith why are you so fearful face up to the matter if you can and lay it to harm consider the voice and word of jesus christ to all who believe in him and yet is fearful of making the profession of their faith why are you so fearful for the lord is able to make all grace abound in every needful way to be afraid of ourselves is every word justifiable there's everything in ourselves to be afraid of but there's nothing in jesus christ to cause any fear at all we should not look on ourselves too long in this matter but to feel in jesus christ pity joined with power he can help the weakest through the very weakest yea and make his strength perfect in the weakness that they feel we never feel at all a bad mark but rather a good one when anyone enters tremblingly upon a profession of faith in jesus christ best way to enter upon it best way to enter upon it no one trembles too much with regard to themselves that we may tremble too much in not trusting jesus christ to help us through who is it that you have no faith now the time has gone this morning and i haven't brought this for you what was in my mind but i would just mention one more point and then close the discourse he said unto them why are ye so fearful how is it that you have no faith now why

is it we're so fearful sometimes about our age i know that to pass from time into eternity it's a very solemn experience and it is one that we can never have till we come there and it's one that those who have come there and pass through it can never tell us what this experience really is of dying and there is a reason for this fear because death is not natural to us man wasn't created mortal death came by sin and death is not natural to us and therefore it is that our nature tends to fear its dissolution but why are ye so fearful why so dread the thought of that solemn hour is jesus christ not to be trusted in and how often it has been the case that those who have been very fearful have found when this come into the experience that there was nothing to have feared so much i read the other day uh uh i was actually reading in a good mr coble's book christian and he was speaking about the departure of one of his good beacons and near to the end this good man said mr coble is this dying to think that i've been afraid of this all my days the things i've been afraid of this the things i've been afraid of this when it came to me now why are you so fearful why how is it that you have no faith but sometimes that which makes us more so is because the lord seems not to appear he was asleep in the ship that might have seemed very strange to them they would have thought perhaps as soon as the wind broke on the water and the ship started to fill he would have stood up sat up through asleep on the pillow and straight away calmed their fears now he let the wind blow let the billows break over the ship until it was no but the lord never let them drown and whoever has gone down in their troubles that have the lord jesus christ for their helper and their friend his help in time past to bid me to think he'll leave me at last we know that last will come but his love in time past that bids me to think he'll leave me at last in trouble to sting for each every measure i have in review confirms his good pleasure to help me right right through life right through the valley right through to glory so so so so so so so so so so