

**FEAR SERIES TWO  
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CHOOSING FAITH  
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Intro

**Jos 1:9a**      *This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged...*

That's a bold statement – God is speaking with Joshua...

**Story**

It was a nice summer morning, I remember like it was yesterday...it happened when I was about 6 yrs old. - playing with my friends baseball with one of those long skinny bats and a wiffle ball -- when all of the sudden it came out of no where on a kamikaze mission for me. It was this giant bumblebee! It was at least this BIG, I'm sure...It circled me once just to tease me – I contemplated hitting it with the bat – but quickly realized that wasn't full of a lot of common sense since it was around my head...so I did the spin cycle/swat dance – we've all done it when a bee is circling us looking to devour...then went in for the kill – targeting my ear...it stung me right on the ear lobe. Man did it hurt – I ran the whole 2 blks home with my earlobe feeling like it was on fire – but the worst of it was the sound – the deafening sound of buzzing that was sting ringing in my ear...from that moment onward thru my journey of life – I would fear the bee. Any bee. It was like war flashbacks anytime a bee would travel within my personal bubble...that sound would instantly trigger the hairs on my neck to stand up –

→ I was a young lad when I visited the Desert Museum – we toured the hummingbird exhibit with my family – hummingbirds are so sweet and innocent. 'til one humming bird flew up by my ear – then suddenly I was transformed back to my six year old mind – the buzzing – make it stop and my hand flew upward in an instant Chuck Norris karate move to protect myself...hitting the hummingbird and sending it sailing threw the air – it was ...I obviously still feared the bee – feared the buzzing sound...

→ that fear stayed with me for awhile (I'm still skittish – I watch the people that cover themselves with bees and I just squirm inside...)

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We all have childhood fears – as we age there are others...some of you wrote in about fearing

- Being trapped in elevators
- Falling
- Grasshoppers / petting zoo goats
- Gecko lizard on their kitchen floor – being stuck in Tucson the rest of their lives

→ fears can take us on an emotional ride → even a literal ride: check out this guy (who's chair got stuck in grill of a semi-truck for 4 miles/50mph)

→ fear is just a natural part of life – isn't it?

Glenn mentioned last week that fear is universal...that sometimes these looming fears aren't even reality – but they begin to impact the reality of how we live...they can consume and handicap us – keep us from being able to face or handle the truth.

Let me ask you:

Q      what is the most common command given in scripture? (*pause*)

--not to be more loving – although that is highly crucial essential

--not to be more sexually moral, though that is certainly expressed  
 --not even to be more forgiving – although you’ll see that a lot  
**→ it is: FEAR NOT -- why?** Why does God say that to humanity more than any other command?

The number of verses in Scriptures speak of fear as it is most commonly experienced by the human race is not a good thing. It is fear that threatens to keep people from truly living and following God in faith.

→ Scriptures seem to indicate two different mindsets as it comes to facing fears - **1 based on faith**, You can trust God - trust that God’s power and goodness are sufficient for life and live in a relaxed confidence in him  
**–OR–**

I can live in mindset of fear and I’m on my own! If I’m not careful and cautious, than something might happen to me and I might NOT be able to handle it...

God knows that the biggest thing that will hold people back from experiencing life with Him – is FEAR!

→ We (IN OUR HUMANITY) seem to think that its the circumstances & situations we face that produces the fear within us...**but I don’t believe that to be true:**

**Q** Have you ever noticed how **2 people can see the exact same thing** – and yet have two totally different reactions to it? There are different perspectives at work within them.

(ie: the glass is half full or half empty)

(the extreme pessimist would dump it out and say: water is all gone, we live in the desert and now there’s no hope now)

EX: (funny example of this) “I know this is an stereotype – but I thought it was good:  
 Men and women and how their perspective toward shopping shapes how they engage and approach the Mall (show picture)

→ Same thing- two diff. viewpts!

...Our perspective on situations will affect us – our mindset has a way of shaping how we see things...

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Over and over again you see this pattern throughout life – and woven throughout scripture that two sets of people will see the same thing and there are two different responses...

- **Story of David and Goliath** → Israel’s army see’s goliath and is frozen in fear, david sees goliath and goes out armed in faith...to face this giant... (they see the giant and say ‘he’s too big, we’ll never win – David says: He’s huge, there is no way I can miss)

2 sets of people see the same thing: it’s not the situation, it’s not the circumstances – it’s the perspective...  
 b/c Perspective is a powerful thing...

**ILL:**

I came across this note from a college girl sent to her parents:

**Dear mom and dad,**

I have so much to tell you!

Because of the fire’s set of by the student riots I experienced some temporary lung damage, so I had to go to the hospital. There I met an attendant and we fell in love. We have moved in together. I dropped out of school after we found out we were pregnant. He got fired b/c of his drinking. So we have decided to move to Alaska to start over, where we might get married after the birth of the baby.

Signed,

Your loving daughter

PS: none of that happened: but, I did flunk my chemistry class and I wanted you to keep it in perspective.  
(SMART GIRL – she understands power of perspective)

Unhealthy fear (that looming fear, that Glenn spoke of) – is a result of an out of kilter perspective, a mindset stuck staring at the present troubles and blinded to the past provision and promises of God...

*The Question seems to be:* Will you live with perspective fear – or will you live with perspective of faith?

### **Number 13:1**

→ Spies sent to scope out the land that God is going to give to his people – the promised land! Key word here is promise – God is a God who seems to be one that keeps his promises – he’s just led them out of Egypt like he said he would – performed all these miraculous signs/wonders to demonstrate he can be trusted – now they stand on the brink of the land that he has been promising to give them for – stemming back to Abraham’s lifetime...

So they send in 12 spies (one from each tribe of Israel)

10 come back and say: no way!

2 come back and say: with God’s help we can totally do this!!

→ Caleb and Joshua!

10 came back with a perspective of FEAR

- It’s too much – we haven’t seen this situation before – WE can’t do this – it’s too scary

2 came back in a perspective of FAITH

- It’s a lot – but man is it sweet this land – God has proven himself to be trustworthy and we can totally do this – we can face this fear – grounded in faith and do it!!!

→ it becomes this battle b/t a perspective of anxiety versus trust – a position of fear versus faith!

**And that same battle – gets played out in your life today – and mine...**

Will I live with an overwhelming perspective of fear – or will I choose to ground myself in a perspective of faith?

→ when we get caught up staring through the binoculars of life – starring at our fears → it creates blind spots – limits our scope – we become blinded to all that God has done and said he would do...all his past provision, power and promises get crowded out by our focus on the fears – it feeds this perspective of fear and those fears just keep piling on til we lose hope...get stuck

→ a mindset stuck staring at the present troubles and blinded to the past provision and promises of God...is the perspective that led these 10 spies – the nation of Israel – and us at times to miss out and leads us away from what God desires for our lives...

The rest of Numbers 13-14 → ...and the story unfolds that the people cling to their fears – side with these 10 spies and they walk away – they even begin complaining that they were better off in Egypt as slaves...neglect their faith and God sends them wandering around the desert for another 40 yrs ‘til that generation dies off – before he gives them another opportunity to enter the land again...

### **Jos 1:9**

→ we see that a little later in Joshua’s life – he no longer is simply a spy – he’s now Moses’ right hand man – who has been entrusted with leading the people

→ it's 40 yrs later now and they have returned to the same historical spot – to the same hinge point of standing outside the promised land – and the same question is being weighed – will we choose to cling to our fears and forgo this life God is calling us into – or will we ground ourselves in a position of faith and trust Him?

God is telling Joshua – don't be afraid – trust me! You can trust me! I will not fail you – don't be afraid – step out and go in faith!!!

The single most imp command in scripture is to FEAR NOT! Why?

When God says this in scripture – very rarely is it to spare them anxiety...(Joshua has a huge challenge and adventure ahead of him)

God is usually asking people to respond or take a risk in life. He's calling them to an adventurous faith. And it all generally comes down to: will they go with their fears or faith? God says: trust me! He does that so often.

There are a lot of fears in present day life, huh?! There are many that humanity has wrestled with for centuries and that you and I still wrestle with today...

- Fear of failure
- Fear of loss
- Fear of rejection, abandonment, disapproval, death, the future, the unknown)

It seems to me that there is an underlying fear that flows within a lot of others... it's this fear of trust!  
Can I trust in you – or am I left to only trust myself?

Think about the times TRUST gets tested in life...

- Time you stand at the edge of the pool and your parent is telling you to jump (*no floaties*)
- Time you as a parent hand over the keys of the car for the 1<sup>st</sup> time to your teenager
- 1<sup>st</sup> trip (or maybe every trip) to the dentist
- With every surgery/treatment you undergo
- Dating – getting to know one another – *you're searching out...*

Can I truly trust you?

-It's a question we ask of the people around us – it's a question we wrestle asking God?... God, can I trust you?

Often we determine that it's too high a risk...so we attempt to navigate life on our own. When things get difficult, storms in life arise we are at that crossroads of choice again:

<p>Will I <b>sweat it out</b> – attempt to get thru this on my own skills, abilities, strength and know how... Or will I <b>surrender</b> to dependence in someone else...?</p>
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T one of my favorite stories in the NT – speaks of this dilemma...centers around a boating trip...

Mark 4

--unpack the story

- Some of you when you think of being out on the lake (cooler, fishing pole, ski, pillow)

In this story:

-jesus is fully God and fully human – and he's asleep in the boat

-these are trained, experienced, skilled fisherman – who are very familiar with this sea, it's their livelihood

-the trip starts off just fine, cool evening, calm water...

-Sea of Galilee is located 700 ft below sea level, in a valley surrounded by mtns. – it's known to experience some troubled, swirling water in storms...

-all of the sudden – w/out warning huge storm comes up....(start CD/Lights)

-the water starts lapping

-the original greek word (megasismos) you don't (sismos = ) (mega = huge)

-the wind is blowing, waves are crashing, lighting is flashing, rain is pounding,

-the disciples are trying to paddle through it – 'til they simply can't seem to make thru it –

-the disciples come to a point where they have to choose: are we going to continue to sweat this out? – work at this from the way we know and surely fail – b/c we're going down...

**OR** are we going to surrender ourselves to trusting in Jesus for help?

- and in THAT moment – they decided we need Jesus! they go to Jesus (stressed and anxious – we've been working hard and it isn't getting us anywhere) Jesus don't you care that we're going to die – we've been trying all we can...don't you care?

God, don't you even care?

-God, who's going to hire someone in this late stage of life?

-God, when I walk into my wife's room, I've got to reintroduce myself every time, as the Alzheimer's has taken me out of her memory?

-I'm all alone trying to raise and provide for my kids?

-I've been battling this habit for so many years and it's destroying all I love...?

God, don't you care?

We all have those moments – where we're asking God, don't you care?

They get Jesus, perhaps he's carrying his pillow, he's looking the storm, the fear in the disciples' eyes, the waves crashing over the boat...AND HE SAYS TWO WORDS

**...BE STILL!** (and it became just this still)

Just like that it stopped – just like that the water became like glass...

FRIENDS,

The miracle isn't that the storm died down – b/c eventually all storms die down. The miracle is that fact that it happened instantly...

The issue is always God with me!!!

As Jesus is walking back in the Jesus says:

- why are you so afraid? Do you have no faith?

Same circumstances, same situation: 2 different reactions

1 group clinging to their paddles and life vests – scared to death

Another sleeping on His pillow

→ when it was all over: the disciples who were so terrified by the storm, are now awed

**Mark 4:45** (it's there 2<sup>nd</sup> question in this story)

WHO IS THIS? EVEN THE WINDS AND WAVES OBEY HIM!

That is a great question? And it is one of the most important questions you'll ever wrestle with in your life...Who is this man? And what makes him greater than the storms in life – the things I fear the most?

*Here's what Apostle Paul writes about Jesus:*

**Colossians 1:15-17**

Who is this man?

He is the ONE who holds all things together – he is mighty and powerful!

He's God incarnate...

He is the ONE who can say to Joshua – the last part of the verse we started with...

**Jos 1:9b**

→ you can b/c God says over and over again in scripture – **I will be the God who is with you!**

Truth is: without God Joshua and Israelites - get squished in Promised Land

Truth is: without Jesus the storm overwhelms the disciples

BUT, when God is WITH you – you can go thru any storm, you can face any fear – b/c you can lean into his promise and provision: he said: **“we're going to make it to the other side...”**

Some of you might need to have a conversation today with God: you've been holding back portions of your life – not wanting to totally trust him with that area – or that decision -- and today he's again saying to you: don't be afraid – for I am with you...

Some of you might be here today and you have never come to a place where you've trusted Jesus with your life...

→ you're busy sweating it out – trying to manage on your own – you're tired, worn out – you're asking:  
-- God don't you care?

Who are you going to trust? Are you trusting in their skill, training, equipment – for most pp in the world is the things I can control – the things I know → are the disc going to give up what they can trust in and take their fears to someone else –

--And all Jesus has been waiting for – is for you is exercise faith in Him! To Trust Him!

The bible makes it very clear: we all have to answer the question: Who is this man, Jesus, // will I trust him? Scripture makes it clear how to do this...

→ it's changing your perspective – it's choosing to trust in someone other than yourself....

There are some of you here – you believe in God – you come to church from time and time – and today is your chance to ....

**Jn 1:12**

Taking that step of faith thru prayer – surrendering yourself to be rescued:

Rescued from the sin, your brokenness, your past

Rescue From the fears in your life

Rescued from mere self-reliance that isn't leading you to experience the life you truly desire...

I want to invite you to pray with me through a prayer which is that step of faith in 3 minutes – that next step that the disciples did – **they turned to Jesus** step of faith ...

But first, I want you to meditate on this song → imagine the stress disc were feeling –maybe that’s the feelings you can identify to your life recently– and then their discovery of this profound promise – truth was: the answer to their struggle was **with** them all along...

Song (kutless) (Promise of a Lifetime)

→that’s the promise the Scriptures speak of

That’s the promise that Jesus fulfilled on the Cross

This promise of never being abandoned – that this is nothing that can separate us from Us with Him and Him with us

Invite them to pray through the prayer –

Prayer

Rescue angle prayer:

God, I’ve been facing storms alone ...i choose to trust in your goodness and power - I yield my heart and my life to you – I believe in Jesus, sent to rescue me – Jesus I receive you as my Savior and friend – who’s never going to leave me ...God, thank you for being with me NOW and forever more...

If you prayed that prayer –I just want you to take a deep breath – you just took your first breath as a follower of Jesus – that’s a big deal – that little step you just took – that step of faith, just changed your destiny, your eternity, your today’s and tomorrow’s

→ if you did that would you just raise your hand just so I can see it and celebrate with you, pray for you?

I’m going to ask you to do something more daring and I want to share something else with you – this community wants to share with you – I know that’s scary – I’ll walk out from where I’m at – if you’re feeling afraid then grab a friend – you just took the most important step spiritually – and I’m going to

If you took this step a long time ago – you be praying for the people that just took this step.

If there is time – you celebrate them a little bit → get the congregation to celebrate a bit.

Invite them back to -- if you’re legs froze – just follow us back – we want

Sharing in the backstage:

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Can I trust you God? You said yes to God today → and you’ll never regret it. There isn’t one person in Scripture or one follower of Jesus I know who has ever regretted doing what you just did. I am so proud to be in the family of God with you!

1 Peter 5:7 tells us about God’s character...

We just wanted to celebrate with you – rejoice with you. I want to encourage you any way I can! We as a church really believe in this calling of following Jesus isn’t meant to be a solo pursuit – so we eat, sleep and breath community here! I want so much to be able to encourage you and you encourage me, together. So here’s what I’m going to ask:

- 1 – I want to write you a note this week (so I’m going to need some info from you)

- 2 – starting in July (July 1) we're going to have a NEXT STEP class – with all of you who just made this commitment to God – it's a few wks long and will help answer questions, journey together in following Jesus...get you to know one another and connected here at Casas so we can journey life with you!

Turn it over to Ray and Carol!.... pray for them together in the back room!

Random stuff:

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When God says don't be afraid – it's not fear avoidance (Glenn talked about that 1st week)  
It's not fear avoidance – it's where do we go with our fears – God wants us to go to HIM

I want to invite you to really invite God to be with you (Jn 12:) As Paul said in Romans 6 to all who believe  
→

What do they recognize right now:

Maybe they need to recognize I'm the person who is hanging on to the paddles and life vest – I'm trying to manage the fears/storms of life – you're looking at the storms you're facing (you've got blisters and my hands are soar – and I have to surrender that I can't manage this storm – this fear all on my own)

What do you do with this truth – that I can't handle the truth ( I can't handle the truth)  
→ you can be like the 10 spies who simply run – avoiding it got them nowhere in life

Or you can be like the disciples who took their fear to the right person!!

I can do what is taught in scriptures – when you're afraid – who do you

The crossing of the Jordan river (metaphor) is a step of faith (it's a picture of Christ) it's a step of faith

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Maybe today finds you in a season of life – a day where you're facing the fear of trusting...can I totally trust God with the leadership of my life – can I count on him? Can I totally turn over the driver seat of life to him?