



LENTEN STUDY FOR 2011

Facing our Fears:

*Living as followers of Christ in a
Fear-Driven Culture*

Week 5: Overcoming our Fear

Romans 8:38-39 [Paul writes] "... I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Remember that Jesus has said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34) Of all the potential dangers of the first century, the threat of crucifixion was perhaps the most dreaded. Jesus knew the danger involved in following God's will. He even prayed that God would save him from the painful and humiliating death he faced (Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:32) Yet in spite of his very human fear, Jesus was committed to following God's purpose.

If we are following our Lord Jesus Christ, our road will not be an easy one. For some of us, standing with our Lord may mean loss or even physical danger. We remember the founder of the Moravian Church, Jan Hus, who was willing to face a fiery death for holding to his convictions and daring to defy the established church. More recently, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was willing to risk death in his stand against racism and oppression.

Anyone who takes a radical stand against earthly powers, as Jesus did, will risk derision, loss, and danger. It is too easy to let our fears of what might happen keep us from doing the job God has called us to accomplish.

Overcoming our fear requires two things. First, we have to have faith. We must believe with certainty that our God loves us and is with us in whatever challenges we face. Second, we must have passion. Since fear is a powerful, gut-level emotion, our passion for the work God requires of us must override the fear that keeps us from breaking out of our comfort zone.

Read II Corinthians 4:4-18. Consider the following:

- What are some times of darkness or uncertainty that you have experienced in your own life? _____

- How has God helped you through these times? _____

- What challenges is God placing before you now, and how will you respond? _____

God places us in a community of faithful souls to help us through times of trouble. Through constant prayer, and by supporting each other we can overcome any challenge.

Prayer:

God, our strength and shield, we are weak and fearful creatures, but we do not ask to be removed from the challenge of living as your followers in this world. We ask instead that you increase our faith, and grant us the passion to accomplish the work you have for us.

In Jesus' name – Amen.

Next Week: Living at Peace in Jesus