

Not Afraid and Getting A Good Night's Sleep

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being fearless in the face of trials and opponents, showcasing the confidence and trust in God's protection and sovereignty. It highlights the powerful impact of fearless conduct as a clear sign of genuine salvation and a warning to those on a path of destruction. The message encourages believers to trust in God's control, seek rest in Him, and be bold witnesses for Christ, even in the midst of fear and anxiety.

Scripture: Philippians 1:28, Psalms 139:23, Mark 9:24, John 14:27, Proverbs 3:24, Psalms 127:2, Hebrews 6:19, Matthew 11:28, 2 Corinthians 3:12

Topics: "Fearlessness in Trials", "Trusting God's Sovereignty"

Description

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Transcript

Alright. Go ahead and open your Bible. Then we've got another matter to mention for prayer.

But open to Philippians. You're going to find my message apparently is going to go with a theme that was not planned for today, but the Lord plans things, right? So turn to Philippians. We're going to look at chapter 1. But before that, brethren, someone pointed out that HeartCry just this morning, they put up this update, so it's a matter for prayer.

It said, urgent prayer request. After some medical tests these past weeks, it has been established that brother Paul Washer will need heart bypass surgery. We covet your prayers.

He is being operated on tomorrow at 6 a.m. Eastern Standard Time. We at HeartCry and Brother Paul's family are trusting and resting in Christ and covet your prayers as we lift Him before the throne of grace. They're going to keep putting updates on I guess their Instagram or something.

But yeah, brethren, something to pray for is about six years ago in 2017 when Paul basically died from heart attacks, was unconscious, lifeless for a little while, and they brought him back. It's amazing the stability he had in his mind. The Lord even brought him to the Denton Conference a few years back to

share.

I think his wife had told Brother Mack, make sure Paul's in bed every night by 11 a.m. so he doesn't kill himself. And he was up to about 2 a.m. or 11 p.m. He was up to about 2 a.m. fellowshiping. And I was looking back at that when he had that first heart attack, the notable quote from Paul was, if it makes you feel any better, I didn't go to the third heaven and I won't be writing any books about it.

But yeah, let's pray for Brother Paul Washer and something to put in your calendar to remember to pray for him tomorrow. Obviously, that is a pretty intense surgery. There's a lot that could go wrong.

And well, Father, Lord, we think of, as Craig already prayed, Father, for Hans Schmidt, who I imagine has had different surgeries. Lord, we don't know where the bullet hit him in the head and how critical he is. And Lord, he's not a known person.

Yet in the other hand, You've got this man who is well known in our churches. And Lord, we stand here today knowing that You know both of these people better than we do. And Lord, both are Your children and You care for them.

And so, Father, we do pray for Brother Paul Washer tomorrow that whatever surgeons and doctors are going to be involved in this heart bypass surgery, that You would just be with them, Lord. That You would protect from complications. And Lord, give our brother Paul some more years to lead there at heartcry and keep advancing the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, we know, Lord, He's mentioned how You've used these physical ailments in his life to humble him. Lord, even at times to take him out of preaching for a year. And so, Lord, You delight in weakness.

And Lord, no doubt this is a pretty weak situation he's facing. And so Lord, be with him. Be with his family.

Lord, I don't know where all of his children are at, but Father, if there's some who do not yet know You, they don't profess You, Lord, would You even give their dad just open doors with his kids tonight? Lord, whatever family time they have, that You would just meet with them and draw near and draw His children to Christ. So Father, here we are today. I pray You'd be with me as I seek to feed the sheep right now and use this message for good.

Lord, give us this truth that might not be applicable right now in our lives in some way. But Lord, You know, there's a time where so much of the truth we've heard that we've read in books, that we've heard from the pulpit, Lord, we want to be able to pull it to mind at the exact point when we need to apply it in our own lives and in the situations we face. And so Lord, would You strengthen the body right now? In Christ's name, Amen.

Alright, well, Philippians 1. I want to consider one aspect of a passage I previously taught on eight years ago when I went through the whole book of Philippians. And it kind of got danced around earlier today at multiple points. But Philippians 1.28 I want to look at this statement Paul makes.

Not frightened in anything by your opponents. But let's read starting in v. 27 and we're going to get to that section. V. 27, only let your manner of life be worthy, and as you heard in the first hour, behave as citizens of heaven, right? This is not being frightened by your opponents.

It's a characteristic that someone has a heavenly passport. As Hunter was hitting on in the first hour. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and I see you or I am absent, I may hear of you that you're standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel.

So they're unified for the faith of the Gospel. And v. 28, not frightened, not intimidated, not fearful in anything, anything... that's an incredible statement right there, by your opponents. So we have opponents as Christians.

And then he explains why we should be fearless. And I would argue why we should be unified. I think he's hitting on both of these things.

This is a clear sign. It's a clear signal. So there's conduct that you and I can have that signals something, right? It's turning the lights on when you're driving in this dark world.

You're putting the brights on. And people can see your presence on the road, so to speak. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction.

Of their destruction. And I believe he's referring to, in context, an eternal destruction, meaning this not destruction right now, but the ultimate destruction. And it's also a clear sign to them of something in your life, believer.

Of your salvation. And then he says where this all comes from. And that from God.

So our salvation is from God. And then Jeff just quoted this verse. Verse 29, he explains that... he's just made a statement that your salvation is from God.

Then he goes on to explain, for it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in Him. Because he just made that statement that salvation is from God. It's granted from God that you believe in Him.

And so he's reiterating that. And then he says, also, it's graciously given by God that you will suffer for His sake. And to make us not feel like we're left... Paul is putting us in a situation that he can't relate.

He says in verse 30, you are engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had, and now you hear that I still have this conflict, this suffering, this is all still happening in the Apostle Paul's life. So, this is one to look at, brethren. Specifically, this reality of not being frightened in anything by your opponents.

I mean, if you read on the Internet about this young street preacher getting shot in the head, Friday at 4 p.m., right before you're going to go downtown to street preach. That would kind of change. If that was me, wouldn't that change how you approach it, Chris? I mean, not approach it, but that would make you realize this could happen to me.

Right? If someone in Phoenix pulls out a gun and shoots, that could happen to me right downtown in San Antonio. It definitely brings home the reality there are things we could be frightened of. There are things we could absolutely be scared of and fears that we've got to overcome.

And in overcoming those fears, there is a signal being broadcasted to the world of their destruction and of our salvation. And so this really matters that we be fearless Christians who are not living in fear as we walk in this world. Well, the first thing that matters to Paul here if we're going to have this clear sign as he says

in v. 28 to them, the first thing that he brings up is in v. 27, and that is this unity.

And so I want to think about that just for a moment. We could have a whole message on this. But he mentions he wants us standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving side-by-side for the faith of the Gospel.

So he wants unity first. Paul doesn't want there to be disagreements that we can't resolve that affect our ability to advance the Gospel. Paul doesn't want you over there working independently and not being unified with the other brethren.

He wants you side-by-side. We're somewhere where we see in this very letter Paul's jealousy for people to be unified for the sake of the Gospel. What chapter? Chapter 4, right? He's entreating Iodias and Syntyche to agree and have the same mind in the Lord.

That's how jealous Paul is for this reality of unity. And obviously, brethren, Christ died on that cross that we might be unified in Him with brothers and sisters, and by this all people will know that You are my disciples if you have love for one another. So you can be out there and you're not afraid of anything, but you can't get along with other Christians, you're not going to have a clear sign.

There's a lot of bold people who are willing to go get killed supposedly for the Lord, but they have no ability to love other Christians. That's not going to be a clear sign to them of their destruction and of your salvation. So part of what Paul wants us to have in our lives is this unity.

But secondly, the main thing I want to consider in verse 28 is this aspect of not being frightened in anything, but being fearless. Does our unwavering posture when confronted by adversaries convey a distinct message to them suggesting that we hold the truth while they don't hold the truth? Yeah. Paul's saying it does.

Is the absence of intimidation and hesitation a resounding confirmation that we've got genuine truth? It does. And Paul is living this out. Look at chapter 1, verse 14, just a little earlier.

Paul's living this very reality out. Verse 14, most of the brothers, and as Hunter mentioned, he's in prison, and you see that in verse 14, most of the brothers have become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment. And what did that lead to? Paul being fearless led to what in their lives? They're much more bold to speak the Word without fear.

So Paul being fearless, not only is it a sign to the unbelievers of their destruction and of Paul's salvation, but it's also an indicator and an encouragement to the other Christians that they shouldn't be afraid and that's exactly what happened. Your boldness, you being in a trial and not being afraid can rub off on other Christians in this church. You see, it can be an encouragement to them to make them be all the more bold when they face that trial.

There's some of you going through trials right now in your life that no one else is, but we're watching you endure that trial and the boldness and confidence you have in Christ in that trial, guess what's going to happen? When others enter that trial a year down the road or two years down the road, they're going to remember the confidence you had and that's going to help remove their fear in that situation. That's Paul's conduct here. It mattered for these other Christians.

And we have opponents. And you look at chapter 2, verse 15, where he mentions not grumbling or disputing and he says, verse 15, that you might be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation. And look at this goal Paul has.

Among whom you shine is lights in the world. And how do you do that? Holding fast to the Word of life. So Paul wants us to have a clear sign to the world, an indicator that we have the truth.

Paul wants us to shine as lights in the midst of the world. These are things that Paul himself was doing. He wants the church at Philippi to have this as a reality.

An essential part of you and I having a witness that proves we have the truth is us not being a fearful people. Not being intimidated. Not being those who shrink back in tough situations that we face.

This is a sign. And so in other words, you know what Paul's telling you and me? Paul is saying there's a way to tell someone they're on a path to hell and they're on a path to destruction without even opening your mouth. Right, look at that.

Isn't that what it says, verse 28? Don't be frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction. You not being fearful is communicating an incredibly loud message.

You walking in unity with other Christians and not being fearful, it's communicating a very powerful message. This is a clear, not a foggy sign, not an unclear sign, it's a clear sign to others who don't have what you have, that they're perishing and that you have something that they do not have, right? And that's one thing, I think all of us want to be a better witness to those around us, to our children, to family members, especially with Thanksgiving, just around the corner, we wanna be a good witness. How fearful are you when you face opponents and when you face very trying situations where there's a lot of reasons to be terrified and what is driven to their heart, that they're on a path of destruction? I mean, they see the hope that you have and they recognize, I do not have that hope.

Okay, so you see what Paul's point is here. You see the importance of you and I not being fearful, not being frightened by our opponents. Well, and obviously if you reverse this, what does that mean if you're afraid? What's that communicating? It's communicating, you could even argue the opposite and I think I've got a verse here, we'll look at that in a minute, that's communicating the opposite reality.

But where does all this come from? What in the text, if I wanna be unified and I wanna not be afraid and not be frightened in anything by my opponents, where does all of this come from? Verse 28, don't miss the end of this verse. This is really important to understand this because we're gonna find that good theology is really what's gonna help you and I not be afraid in the different trials that we face. But he says right here, from God, at the end of verse 28, they'll realize but of your salvation and that which is from God.

So if you find it clearly our salvation is from God, he says it in verse 28, it's graciously given to you to believe, but what also does verse 29 indicate is from God? Our suffering. Our suffering. Okay, so the opponents that you and I face, their origin of being allowed to be our opponents and to disturb us, who was involved in bringing that about? God.

And that's very important for us to be gripped with that reality. So in the midst of a trial, in the midst of a fearful situation, it's not our salvation is from the Lord, well, how am I even not gonna be fearful? It's from the Lord. And look at chapter two.

Paul basically gives us another, a clearer place to find comfort in, in verse 12 of chapter two. He's saying, therefore my beloved, as you've always obeyed, now not only is in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Now you could say, wait a minute, James, you just said not to be frightened by anything and here Paul says to be fearful and trembling.

If you look up this phrase, fear and trembling, what it's really getting at is a fear of God and a reliance on the Lord because he goes on to say, verse 13, for, so he's explaining why to have fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. And so in the midst of a trial, there's a lot of reasons I could be afraid. I really have to actually have a fear and a trembling of the Lord, a fear of God in that situation.

That's going to lead to me to rely upon Christ and He's going to work in me both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Now, if you look up that phrase, it says they received Titus with fear and trembling. The exact same phrase.

What's that mean? They received Titus with fear and trembling. It's a reverence. You have a fear and a trembling of the Lord because it is He who works in your heart to will and to work for His good pleasure.

And so this is a little sloppy right in this section. This is what I'm trying to say right here. The component of salvation, who brought that about? God.

Who's even working in you in order to not be fearful to will and to work for His good pleasure? The Lord. Who's allowing the opponents to be there? God, graciously given to suffer. So in order to have a clear sign of their destruction in our salvation, we've got to be unified and not frightened.

And guess where all the components come from? The three batteries, you could say, that are necessary. God gives you the opponents. He providentially puts you in the situation where you're facing them.

And then He actually has given you the salvation. And then He's actually working in you to will and to work for His good pleasure. And so what that means for you and I, Christian, whatever we're facing, whatever trial, God is intricately involved in every aspect of that in bringing it about and in helping you in the midst of it.

And so where's there the place to go in the midst of a trial for confidence? It's to the Lord. It's to the Lord and He will help us and He will deliver us and we cannot be afraid when we recognize this. So another way to look at this is you can have boldness in a trial if you have proper theology, right? Good doctrine will lead you and I to be bold in the midst of a trial.

If you realize, well, my salvation is from God and that He's at work in me and that my trials are graciously given by the Lord, then all of a sudden you can have boldness because you see God's hands are over all of it. And listen to this. Paul says this elsewhere.

2 Corinthians 3, verse 12. He says, since we have such a hope in the new covenant, he says, we are very bold. See that? So Paul has a logic here.

The good theology, this truth of this new covenant, this truth of Him putting His fear within our heart, this truth of being regenerated, this truth of my sins being blotted out and being forgiven, since we have such a hope like this, the result is we're going to be bold. We're not going to be scared. We're not going to be intimidated.

And so we see this play out in church history. Martyrs often experience during persecution some inexplicable, unexplainable, direct supernatural support and assurance and joy from the Lord in those times of need. And that shouldn't surprise us because the very martyrdom they're facing in God's providence, it was graciously given to them to suffer in that way.

So what about you and I? Right? I don't know what trials you're going through, what opponents you're facing. What is an opponent in your life? And it might not be someone trying to physically hurt you. It could be some internal turmoil.

It could be a thorn in the flesh, so to speak, like Paul had. What are you afraid of right now, Christian? What are you terrified? What makes you anxious in your life? I mean, when he says not to be frightened in anything, fear and anxiety go right there together, right? In this same letter, Paul says, do not be anxious about anything. So what are you fearful? What are you anxious about? If you really look and dissect what's happening in your life, you should actually come away realizing I have every reason to be bold in the midst of what I'm facing because the Lord is in control.

So when we're fearful, I think Deuteronomy 20, verse 8 is a good verse to think about. Let me just read this. And the officers shall speak further to the people and say, so they're going to go to war, is there any man who's fearful and fainthearted? Let him go back to his house, lest he make the heart of his fellows melt like his own.

So it's interesting. You and I are facing a trial. Two things could happen here.

My conduct could make your hearts melt and you'd be terrified because I'm terrified. Or, Philippians 1.28, I could not be frightened and what's it do to my opponent's hearts? They see their destruction and they recognize that you have the truth. I mean, do you guys see what's at stake with your anxiety and your fear? When you face that, a lot's being communicated without words in that initial response.

I remember a while back, we had a Bible study at a house, at church, and a couple was leaving. He didn't know he had some unresolved warrant from when he was lost. And they got pulled over.

He got arrested on the way home from the Bible study. And the wife came back to the house. And she later realized she was so terrified.

She was so frightened. She saw how it affected her kids. And she apologized to the children.

She said, guys, I didn't handle that in a God-honoring way. I mean, you see, stuff like that is an opportunity to show your children that your salvation is real. And if we fail, praise God, He's gracious.

You go apologize to those kids. You tell them, I did not honor the Lord right here. There wasn't a reason to be terrified as I was.

So whether it's onlookers, lost coworkers, your children, people are watching. And we want to be a church full of people who are humble, we're unified, we're bold, we're fearless, heavenly citizens. And that conduct in itself, kind of like the conduct of the wife that Peter says with her respectful and pure conduct, she can win her husband without even a word, right? That's the same principle here.

Our conduct can show, Paul says right there, it can be a clear sign to them of their destruction. It can be a clear sign to them that you have some salvation that's real. That's what's at stake.

So I want to, it's kind of a halfway point right here. Now, I thought of a specific aspect of this that struck me, a specific place for this to be applied in our lives, and it deals with having a good night's sleep. And so bear with me while I'm going to try to say all this in a balanced way.

You guys realize the Bible talks a lot about sleep? And a lot of us, I mean, sleep is a big part of our lives. Is anyone engaged in the activity of sleep or attempted to this week? Right. Every one of us, I hope.

If not, you're engaging in it right now, probably. Proverbs 3, he speaks about keeping sound wisdom. Remember I mentioned good theology leads to boldness? Listen to this.

Proverbs 3, 24, if you lie down, you will not be afraid when you lie down. Your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes, for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

A lot of verses that talk about your sleep will be sweet. Psalm 4, David cries out, you've given me relief when I was in distress. And he says in verse eight, in peace I will both lie down and sleep.

For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. A lot of verses, it connects getting a good night's sleep with having confidence in the Lord. Because what's one of the things that in the spiritual realm, what's something that can keep you up at night? Anxieties and fears.

Well, they can keep you awake on the bed at night. I realize there's a lot of physical aspects that some of you all, you know, sleep apnea, chronic pain, restless leg syndrome, uncontrollable urges to move your leg. There's physical stuff like that, digestive issues, all manner of stuff.

A newborn baby who's screaming, a husband who snores really loud, a horrible mattress and your husband's not allowing you to buy a better mattress so you keep getting a bad night's sleep. There's physical things like that that keep you from getting sleep. That's not what I'm talking about.

I mean, maybe one of you or some of us, we didn't have a good night's sleep this week. It wasn't because of our mattress. It wasn't because of the crying kid.

It's because we were afraid. We had a fear. We had an anxiety.

We had something that we were wrestling with trusting the Lord about. Does that describe you? Now turn even, let's just look real fast at Mark 4. Go to your Bible to Mark 4. Getting a good night's sleep can be a way to even show this clear sign of our rest in the Lord. Mark 4, 38, but he was in the stern.

Christ. Asleep on the cushion. That's good.

You can get a pillow. Pillows are okay, right? Oh, I don't know what it was made out of. They woke Him and they said to Him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? Verse 39, And He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Peace be still.

And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. And He said to them, Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him? Now, was there a real danger in this situation? Yeah, there's a real danger. Just because there was a real danger, does Christ say it's okay to be terrified and doubt your confidence in His ability to preserve you? No.

He doesn't give them a way out. All of us are facing real dangers. That doesn't justify our anxiety or our fear.

And Christ deals with this being an issue of faith. Their fear and alarm should have been removed because Christ was there. Now, did they think because He was asleep, He just couldn't control the winds and the waves? If He was awake, would they have sounded the same alarm? And you know what? Christ's conduct indicates they could have been doing on that boat as well.

What could they have been doing on that boat? Sleeping. We've got Jesus on the boat. I'm going to take a nap.

Guys, you realize Christ is on your boat. He's right there. He knows everything in your life and my life.

We should be able to rest in that. He's graciously given us salvation and opponents. So He's going to give us the grace to not be scared in these situations.

And Christ, He tells them, it's a faith issue, implying if they would have faith, they wouldn't have been terrified. Now, they went from one fear to another. And that's a good thing, right? They were afraid of a storm, but what did they end up being terrified of? Who is this? Who is this? Who controls the wind and the waves? This is the God-man.

You know what? The little waves over there now seem pretty pathetic compared to this powerful God-man who had authority to stop the weather. And that's what will help us in the midst of our trial, brethren, when we look and see this is the God-man who has allowed this storm, figuratively speaking, in my life. This fill-in-the-blank.

This cancer that Paul washes heart surgery tomorrow. What purpose does God have in that? I don't know. But the Lord's allowing that to be brought about.

And God has a great purpose. And so He does for you too, Christian. And we want to have a greater fear.

A fear of God being gripped with His Person and who He is. And so I'm going to read an example of this that really hit me just weeks ago, and I think I shared it with a few of you. And it's going to show you the power of getting a good night's sleep and how an evangelistic tool it really is.

Right? This was the starting point on the mission field to tons of conversions with someone going to bed. And as I read this, see the link with Philippians 1. Not frightened in anything by your opponents is a clear sign to them. You and I want a signal.

We want the brights on. Not just these little dimmers. We want it really loud and clear.

We have something that's true. We really are citizens of Heaven. We really aren't living for this life.

So this example, it stunned me. Christian Henry Ranch. Let me read this.

Was distinguished as the missionary of the Moravian church who began its work among the northern American Indians. He arrived from Germany in 1740 at the age of 25 years old. He went to the areas in New York to a village inhabited by the Mohicans, the Wampawongs.

They were notorious for their evil ways, especially for their love of strong drink. Various other missionaries had attempted to convert them without success. Ranch, on his arrival, went into the hut of the worst savage of the whole clan.

Wasompa by name, commonly known as Chiskop. Seated himself at his side, and he told the worst of these natives of the Savior. And then saying that he was very tired and consequence of his long journey, he lay down by the fire and went to sleep.

So this Indian eventually gets converted and he writes about this or he shared about it and it was recorded. And so this is this Indian chief, the worst of the worst. Listen to what he said.

Listen to what struck him. Brethren, said Chiskop. I don't know how to say these names.

I've been a heathen and grown old among the heathens. Therefore, I know how the heathen think. Once a preacher came and began to explain that there was a God.

We answered, do you think we're ignorant? We know there's a God. Go to another place. Then again, another preacher came.

He began to teach us and to say, you must not steal, you must not lie, don't get drunk, and so forth. We said, are you a fool? Do you think we do not know that? Learn first yourself and then you can come and teach us to leave off of these things. For you steal just as we steal.

You guys are more drunken than we are. But Ranch came with a different message. It wasn't a focus on moral reform.

He told us of a Mighty One, the Lord of earth and sky, who left His glory in the heavens for men to bleed and die, who loved poor Indian sinners still and longed to gain their love and be their Savior here and in His Father's house above. When His tale was ended, My friends, He gently said, I am weary with My journey and would like to lay down My head. So beside Our spears and arrows, He lay down to rest and slept as sweetly as the babe upon its mother's breast.

Then we looked upon each other and whispered, this is new. Yes, we've heard glad tidings, but that sleeper truly knows them true. He knows He has a friend above, or He would not sleep here with men of war around Him and the war hoop in His ear.

So we told Him in the morning that He not need journey on, but stay and tell us further of that loving, dying One. And thus we heard of Jesus first and felt the wondrous power which makes His people willing in His accepted hour. Isn't that amazing? Many missionaries had come.

This missionary was so trusting God to be His protector, he didn't feel like he needed to leave the village that night. He laid down in the tent of the wickedest one of all those Indians. And it wasn't like he's opening an eye all night.

They're standing around this Christian missionary watching him have a nice night's sleep. And God used that to show them His salvation is real. What this guy has, it's real.

It's real. You see, brethren, you think of a little act like that can have such a powerful influence upon people that what we have is the truth. He won their confidence.

It was a sign to them, His laying down and sleeping with their war cries in the background. I mean, put yourself there. And I was thinking of this even.

What if I went down to evangelize? I've been to Haven for Hope to evangelize with the brethren on Saturday night. What if we all stayed there and spent the night? Right? We hung around. Or back in the day, we'd go downtown under the highway.

We'd evangelize those people there. And where would we go? We'd hop back in our cars and go home to our beds. What if I brought down a sleeping bag and laid under that bridge? I mean, what's more dangerous? A bunch of people maybe on drugs under the bridge? Or these Indians who would scalp people and were brutal? The Mohicans at that time? I mean, imagine doing that.

Can you imagine doing that? Going down and sleeping under the bridge tonight with a bunch of people around you who could kill you in the middle of the night? That's exactly what this man did. And God used it in a powerful way. Are you safer in your own bed at home or by faith doing something that God wants you to do? I could have phrased that in a better way.

It's kind of like the Rosalind Goforth illustration, right? They were called to move in China to a place where all these sicknesses were and she didn't want to go. And when they finally went there, one of her kids died before going. Then when she went there, her kids never got severely sick all the years they were there.

The point is, you're safer in the will of God and the duty of serving the Lord if that's going to bed in a chief's tent up north in Ohio. You're safer there than in a hotel. That's my point.

You see what I'm saying? Just be where God wants you to be. And if God puts you there, then you can trust Him that the angel of the Lord will encamp around you. You've got one person to fear at that moment.

God. You've got one person to fear. Him who can control the waves and the wind.

And in that moment, you fear more than the danger from opponents, you fear God disciplining you for disobeying Him in that moment. That's the greater fear. It's the fear of your father and not wanting to disappoint and fail him and have unbelief.

And brethren, these new converts, they needed this example from their missionary. They needed that example. Years later, during the American Revolutionary War, there was now over 90 converts in this tribe and in this area who had been converted and come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the starting points right there was Ranch, and then Zeisberger came along later. And Ranch went to Jamaica as a missionary. But listen to what history recorded them.

These people, they needed this confidence. They needed this fearlessness that they saw from this missionary, and they had it. Most of them.

And they needed it. As the Christian Indians of Gnod Hutton in Ohio were engaged one day in tilling the soil, American troops of Colonel Williamson appeared upon the scene. They asked for quarters, were comfortably lodged, and then disarming the innocent victims, accused them of siding with the British.

For that accusation, the only ground was that the Indians had shown hospitality to everyone. But this defense was not accepted, and Colonel Williamson decided to put the whole congregation to death in 1782. The Moravians asked their captors to be allowed to pray and worship on the night before their

execution.

They spent the night before their death praying as well as singing Christian hymns and psalms. The log huts were turned into shambles. Then in couples, they were summoned to their doom.

And in cold blood, the soldiers with tomahawks, mallets, clubs, spears, and scalping knives began the work of their butchery. As they were killed, the Moravians sang hymns and spoke words of encouragement and consolation one to another until they were all slain. At the end of the performance, 90 corpses lay dabbled with blood on the ground.

Among the victims were six national assistants, a lady who could speak English and German, 24 other women, 11 boys, and 11 girls. The bloodbath of Ganod Hutton was a hideous crime. It shattered the Indian mission.

The grand plans of Zeisberger collapsed into ruin. As the war raged on, this brutal process continued for 20 more years. Those Christians, they didn't expect to face such a death.

But here they had a missionary. And he wasn't afraid because he knew God is there. And in their hour of trial, when they faced these American soldiers butchering them, they were able, for the most part, one of them, history recorded, was terrified and he had known sin in his life.

And he was causing disunity in the church. And he repented to all of them the day before he was killed. But brethren, their lives were changed.

A German missionary lays down to sleep and is a clear sign to these natives that his God is the living God. And then these natives, when they're being martyred years later, they have that same confidence because they have the same God who is seated in heaven. And you can go to sleep knowing that the Lord rules and He reigns.

And we saw in Mark 4, this fearlessness is entirely rooted in faith. This is all about trusting in the unseen God, being in control of our circumstances. Psalm 4a is already read, In peace I will lie down and sleep.

For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. It's not the rain security camera that makes you dwell in safety. It's not the gun that makes you dwell in safety.

I'm not saying those things are bad things. God uses means. But brethren, at the end of the day, the one Person who can take my fears away in whatever situation I'm in, whatever tent I'm in, whatever country I'm in, whatever dangerous things you and I face, it's the Lord.

That's the one Person at that moment. And that's why Psalm 127, it says, It's in vain you rise up early. It's in vain you go late to bed, eating the bread of anxious toil.

For He gives to His beloved sleep. He gives to His beloved sleep. And the point of that psalm is simple.

You can stay up all night watching the city. The efforts of man. But if the Lord is not watching the city, all of our efforts are worth absolutely nothing.

We can be anxious. We can be toiling away. And we need to toil away.

And we need to labor. But the Lord actually gives us sleep. He actually wants you to go to bed and trust Him with everything that's happening in your life and not to be anxious about it.

And I'm sure many of you kids, you've seen the torchlighter of John Wesley. And you saw this exact same principle in that little short film. The exact same principle.

John Wesley's on a voyage back from the mission field. It seems prior to him even really being a Christian. And then aboard the ship, what did the Lord use to convict him? People being not afraid.

People being fearless. History records the Moravians, he wrote, the gentlest and bravest folks he had ever met. Here the Moravians come up again, right? They helped without pay in the working of the ship.

They could even take a blow without losing their temper. So when the captain would whip them, they didn't lose their temper at that. When the ship was tossed in the storm, they were braver than the sailors themselves.

One Sunday, the gale was terrific. The sea poured in between the decks. The main sail was torn to tatters.

The English passengers screamed with terror. The brethren calmly saying to him, was not you afraid? said Wesley. Oh, I thank God, no, replied the brethren.

But were not the women and the children afraid? No, our women and children are not afraid to die. John Wesley was deeply stirred. For all his piety, he still lacked something these brethren possessed.

He lacked their triumphant confidence in God. He was still afraid to die. He said to himself, how is it that thou hast no faith? Christian life.

Back weeks ago, Craig's Sermon on Faith. We're all here today. We're living a life by faith, trusting God is on the throne.

God controls all things. God is working everything for His will, even for His glory, even my suffering. And it's exactly what the text in Philippians says right there at the end.

It's been granted for you for the sake of Christ. You should not only believe in Him, but also suffer for His namesake, right? It's about suffering for His namesake. Do you guys see this? Fearlessness of the Moravian on the ship.

Fearlessness of Christian ranch, the missionary, is a sign that the salvation he has is really a supernatural salvation from God. And it is a sign to them that they're on a path of destruction. It's exactly what Paul said.

And you and I can have that same sign light up bright as you're not afraid in whatever it is you're facing. That confidence that God will give you. If you ask Him for help, He will give you that confidence.

He'll take away the anxiety. You can think about what is true and holy and just. And you can face whatever it is and communicate and be an evangelistic gospel tract.

You and I not being afraid and anxious is a gospel tract. It is a powerful gospel tract. One other story that stood out to me from Paul Washer.

This was an illustration he gave in a sermon. Paul says this, one time in Peru, some of the police at the time were very corrupt and dangerous. So I went to a place to buy some Bibles.

When I came out there, a policeman was waiting. He said that my car was illegal. It wasn't.

And he accused me of many things. Then he told me to get into my car. He got in the car.

He was screaming at me and he told me to drive. Now I knew that I was in a very dangerous situation because he called some of the other policemen to meet us in a certain place. And I thought, they're going to beat me up and steal the car.

So he made me drive around and I was just praying and the Lord gave me peace. Then he was screaming at me. He said, stop the car.

Get out! So I thought, maybe he's just going to steal my car. But he got out and he got right in my face and he said, why are you so calm? Why don't you say anything? I said, because I'm very afraid. And he goes, ah, yeah, you should be afraid.

Thinking he is tough and flexing himself. I said, no. I am afraid for you.

And he said, why? Paul Washer said, well, because in any minute, you're going to die. He said, what? I said, yes, you're going to die. And then you're going to go to hell.

He said, why do you say that? I said, because the Bible says he who blesses me, God will bless. And he who curses me, God will curse. You're under a curse right now because you want to hurt me.

God is going to kill you and throw you into hell. Paul Washer said, I don't know why I said all of that. We know why he said all of that, Philippians 2. It's the Lord who works in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

And Paul said, I don't know why I said all of that. I guess it was the Holy Spirit. Anyways, he started shaking and crying.

He threw down my documents back at me and he said, pray for me. Pray for me. You see, brethren, there's nothing special about Christian Henry Ranch.

There's nothing special about Paul Washer. There's nothing special about the Apostle Paul apart from the Spirit of God at work in them in the midst of trials, in the midst of anxieties. They're able to trust the Lord, have confidence in Him, and it is a clear sign.

It is a signal. It is a massive sign saying to people what this person has is real. What you have is leading you to hell.

It's leading you to destruction. And I've got good news for you. Maybe you are that fearful, anxious person here today who's absolutely terrified of death.

Maybe Hebrews 6 describes some who are lifelong slaves to the fear of death. That might be you. You might be terrified of death.

Well, I've got good news for you. The Lord, He doesn't sleep and He doesn't slumber. And the Lord Jesus Christ, He says, come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

There is One who will give you rest. There's One who will take away the fears. I remember as a young kid, I thought I was a Christian since I was six years old.

I knew in my conscience I wasn't really saved. But I'd be terrified at night laying in bed. A bush was outside of one of my windows.

And whenever that bush would move, I was terrified. What if someone's out there and they're going to kill me? I mean, I had all this fear. I was a slave of the fear of death.

But Christ, He delivers us from those fears. And as was mentioned earlier, don't fear Him who can kill the body, but fear Him who can kill the body and throw both body and soul into hell. So brethren, may the Lord give us more boldness and make us fearless believers that our lives would be signs of our powerful salvation and that from God.

Amen. Lord, we're so grateful to have the words of Philippians 2 that You work these things in us, both to desire, so that desire, Lord, for these things that's from You, and to work for Your good pleasure. Lord, we want to be pleasing to You.

And I know, Father, there's some of us, we've felt the bitter tears of Peter when in fear we denied You. In some way, Lord, we were just afraid. Our pride got to us.

And Lord, thank You for Your mercy. Lord, we're so grateful that even in the times when we've denied You three times, Lord, You've told us, rise again and go strengthen the brethren. And so, Lord, I pray You'd help some Christians in this room right now.

They're in a trial. They're facing opponents. Lord, help them to not be afraid.

Help them to not be anxious. That for their kids and for all of us, it would be just a beacon of light, supernatural light of Your salvation in their lives. And Lord, we pray for those who witness our lives, that they would see us as a unified church who is fearless, and that they would be terrified, that they would see their destruction.

Lord, that You'd drive it home in their hearts. They don't have the true truth, and they're not in a good place. Lord, we thank You that You work that fear in people.

You make them uncomfortable. Lord, being uncomfortable is a blessing from You. And so, Lord, I pray You'd draw people into the Kingdom.

Lord, would You use even the sisters in this church who still have lost husbands, Father, that their life in respectful and pure conduct and being fearless, Lord, that it would lead to their husbands' conversion. And vice versa, the men with lost wives. And Father, we're just grateful to be Your people, Lord.

We don't know what we're going to face. Lord, it's sobering, this whole situation with this preacher in Phoenix. Lord, it's just a reminder.

Lord, we don't know. Lord, we don't know what trials we're going to face. And Lord, this is all easy for me to communicate right now, but Lord, I pray when the hour comes for me, for all of us, Lord, make us fearless.

Lord, give us boldness. We can say with Paul, it is our eager expectation and hope that we will not at all be ashamed. But with full courage now as always, Christ will be honored in our bodies.

And Lord, I guess lastly, Father, I think of, Lord, there are some here, Lord, a good night's sleep can't be had because of physical reasons. Lord, it's not some spiritual thing. It's physical.

And Lord, I think of some of the biographies I've read of people who spent three nights a week up all night in prayer for everyone they knew. Lord, I think of the sleepless nights that Paul had. Lord, You know, Father, what You put some of us in and the situations and Your purpose even behind that.

Lord, help us to be a church that suffers well. And so Lord, we just thank You, Lord, that You are a shepherd. You're going to allow us to lie down in green pastures.

And Lord, even though we go through the valley of the shadow of death, oh Lord, help us to not fear any evil. So Lord, we bless You today. Lord, we pray that those here who are terrified and their lives are full of anxiety, they come to You for rest.

Lord, like those Indians did. Lord, it's remarkable. That tribe You converted.

Lord, that is amazing. And we're thankful for testimonies like that. Lord, we think of those in Nepal, those in Nicaragua.

Lord, we think of these foreign lands and just pray. Lord, give those brethren such a fearlessness over there, Father, that it would be a clear sign to those Napalese people that what these people from Texas and other places in the world have, they've got something that's true. So Lord, we just pray.

Help us in Christ's name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/M9gUyNSGRgQ.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/james-jennings/not-afraid-and-getting-a-good-nights-sleep/>

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