

Overcoming the fear of Death/Loss – Bible Study

Objective

In today's bible study, we will discover God's desire for us to live life without the fear of death or loss because in God's economy life begins after death.

Introduction

Matthew 16: 21-23 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

In Matthew 16, Peter had just had a brilliant moment, where he recognised Jesus as the messiah and Jesus tells him he will now be called Peter, and that he has been given the keys of the kingdom. That must have been a moment!

However, in the next few verses of the same chapter Peter hears Jesus saying I MUST GO, BE KILLED AND RAISED. Still feeling empowered by his revelation from God that Jesus was the Messiah, Peter senses unbelief in the masters mouth...so he called him to one side and began to rebuke JESUS saying...far be it from you! Jesus turned around and called HIM SATAN! Here is what Jesus understood:

"Your next level will be birthed by your next resurrection.

"Your next resurrection will only happen because of your next death!"

Jesus had a thriving ministry. He had raised the dead, opened blind eyes and deaf ears, challenged the government of the day, preached amazing sermons, however He understood that His next level demanded His death on this level. He knew there was another level where ministry reaches beyond Galilee, Samaria, Jerusalem. A level of life

where He will be exalted above every other name, therefore He understood that He MUST GO to JERUSALEM, BE KILLED AND BE RAISED UP into that life. He knew that He will need to die on this level to live that life on the next level. Because your next level is on the other side of your death!

Many of us are like Peter, we hear about death and our natural response is far be it from you, and this is because even though it sounds like we are speaking in faith, the reality is that we are scared of death. Death is separation from life. Loss is separation from something. In the natural, death is often the worst-case scenario. From a young age we are groomed in the natural to fear death. For the most part we apply the same logic to loss. We live life terrified of death and loss.

Jesus understood that regardless of how brilliant His life was, **He needed to be ok with being separated from it, in order to get hold of a more brilliant life.** This why He literally called him Satan, because any suggestion that Jesus should not talk about his death is a suggestion that is influence by Satan! It is a stumbling block to the to the advancement of Jesus! Jesus' respond to Peter was really a response to the enemy who was trying to influence the destiny of Jesus and indeed the destiny of the whole world through that suggestion that death should be far from Jesus.

I want to suggest to you, that to be a believer, a follower of Jesus and live life fearful of death, fearful of loss is to live life as an offence, a stumbling block, a scandal to your advancement as a replica of Jesus in the earth! The advancement of God's will in your life will require your separation from something. It is not ok to live life afraid of death and loss!

When I talk about death, I am not talking about you dying on the cross, get off the cross, you can't help anyone one the cross! I am not talking about a religious activity you do to get God's attention or approval. I am speaking about death in every sense, separation from life that is motivated by the truth that **YOU HAVE GOD'S APPROVAL!** BECAUSE

YOU HAVE HEAVEN'S ATTENTION. When you receive the abundant grace of God, we don't do anything to get God's attention, we do what we do because we have God's attention and approval. I am suggesting that we need not fear death or loss, BECAUSE WE HAVE GOD'S ATTENTION! WE HAVE GOD'S POWER WORKING IN & FOR US!

Going from SEED to SEEDS

John 12:24 says unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. God in His grace has set us up to become people who produce many seeds, not because of how brilliant we are, but because of how amazing Jesus is. When we believe in Jesus, we will bear fruit, fruit that abounds. But when a seed wants to demonstrate that it has faith in the God that made it fruitful, it does this by willing to fall to the ground and die. Because the process of going from SEED to SEEDS is falling to the ground and Dying. God's grace which makes the seed fruitful, does not exempt the seed from that process, God's grace enables the seed to go through the process!

So, if a seed is fearful of death or loss, it seeks preservation and says "far be it from me" to the thought of falling to the ground or dying. In doing this, it is "preserved" for a season, but it is permanently denied of the opportunity to go from SEED to MANY SEEDS.

He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. John 12:25

Just in case you didn't know, just like Jesus, you are a seed of a dream that God had upon the earth! Just like Jesus, you were born for greatness! Just like Jesus, you showed up here on earth because purpose placed a demand on you. You need to understand that as great as your life has been, there is another level to reach for! There could be illegitimate parents, but there are no illegitimate children! God knit you together in your

mother's womb, and at just the right time, purpose called you forth...don't camp on this level, you were born for more!

But we've got to get rid of the fear of death, the fear of loss. God has called you into business, but you are fearful of losing money. You want to be truly loved, but you are fearful of giving up your time and space or fearful of losing yourself! You want to do great things, but you are fearful of losing your reputation, your fear of loss is keeping you stuck on this level!

Our collective fear of death & loss keeps us in bondage and limits our impact! When a seed fears death, it remains alone. Could it be that you have settled for being a grateful, kind-hearted, loving lone seed, when the grace of God has already destined you to produce many seeds? Is your fear of death, your fear of loss hindering your productivity?

Revelation 12:10

"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."

Revelation 12:10-11 NKJV

The kingdom of darkness will be defeated, not just by people who know how to plead the blood and testify, but by people who love not their lives into death! People who are no longer fearful of death & loss!

Reasons why we fear death/loss

Remember that we are not just talking about death in the natural sense. We are talking about loss. We are talking about separation from life as you currently know it.

Inordinate amount of affection for the wrong thing

When something is inordinate, it means it is disproportionate, excessive. A disproportionate affection for the wrong thing can give rise to a fear of losing that thing.

In **Mark 10:17** The rich young ruler was desperate for eternal life, but his unwillingness to let go of his wealth made him walk away (at least temporarily) from eternal life. The life eternal life, which is life as God has it, is not without great wealth. But if your affection for wealth (or indeed anything), or life as you know it, is stronger than your desire for life as God has it, it fosters the fear of losing the thing you love.

A strong affection for the wrong thing can keep you stuck on this level! That's why it's important to watch who and what has your affection! Because sometimes, we struggle with the loss of something because we have strong affection for something you need to let go of!

God calls Abraham to go to the next level, but he brings Lot along! God called the children of Israel out of Egypt, but they had a strong affection for Egyptian food! God called Lot's wife out of Sodom, but her strong affection for the place got her to look back!

There is nothing wrong with having strong affections. However, we need to trust God's grace for the ability to do it in such a way that it does not hinder God's plan for our lives.

Our Hope and dreams.

Sometimes we fear the loss of something because of the hopes and dreams we have with these things. This is one of the truly devastating things about the death of a loved one. It seems that all of the hopes and dreams you had with them died with them. And

many of us live with the fear of dashed hopes. We will talk about God's remedy for this later on in this study.

Sometimes the reason why we can often be blindsided by the death of something like a relationship is the dreams we permit ourselves to have sometimes with people who still have the back door open! As pastor, I always got hurt whenever people left my church, and then I realised that the problem was not people leaving, the hope that people will never leave! Have you ever had a hope that was unrealistic? Unrealistic in the sense that God never promised you that? Sometimes we hold on to things we should let go of because we are hoping for results that God never promised us.

I have learnt how to dream with people, love the people that God has sent our way, I have learnt to trust God's people wholeheartedly, but also learnt how to release them and let them go without necessarily jeopardising the hopes and the dreams we had together!

The beauty of walking in this dispensation of Grace is that our hope is alive! We are never without hope. We can afford to let certain dreams and hopes go because we have a LIVING HOPE!

Our identity - in other words, who am I if I am separated from this thing/person! Sometimes we use things to validate our identity. So, when there is a threat of loss to that thing, we fight it because we feel our identity will be threatened

This is why a grown woman will still be happy for their 35-year-old son to keep bringing his washing home for her. She is unwilling to allow her relationship with her much younger son die, so that she can develop a fresh relationship with his older self.

When we draw our identity and value from the wrong things, those things become really difficult to separate with. Some people will not leave terrible relationships, or situations ;), simply because they don't know who they are without that them.

Conclusion

What are you worried about leaving behind? What is it in your life that gives you separation anxiety? What are you holding so tightly onto? Is it keeping you from the new thing that God has for you?

Imagine what would have happened if Jesus was enjoying his ministry on earth so much that He played down the need to die? What would have happened if the young boy did not give up His 5 loaves and 2 fish? In God's economy, life comes through death. In the natural, death and loss are the end, in the Kingdom, they are the beginning of a new thing.

God has such good things instore for you. His thoughts are perfect. His Grace is sufficient. What do you need to let go of, in order to get hold of God's best for you?

Discussions

- What other cause us to live life scared of death or loss?
- In what ways does living life, scared of death impact the quality of our lives?
- What will you attempt if you were not afraid of loss or death?