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FAITH AND FEAR - posted by Joyful_Heart, on: 2012/1/4 11:27

FAITH AND FEAR

Storms often bring out our true spiritual condition. Jesus was in the boat but the disciples still feared for their lives. He chastised them for their fear and their little faith! Thus our greatest need is not for the storm to end but to be freed from fear and have faith in Him while the storm rages.

At an SSTS seminar in Central Asia, our translator looked at us at the close of our three-day session and commented, "Thank you for teaching us how to stand strong. God spoke to me a lot through this seminar. I was afraid to die but not anymore. I have peace to go and spread God's Word." She is now serving the Lord in a dangerous but strategic mission in her region.

A middle aged man in North Korea was arrested after the police found a Bible in his home. He was terribly beaten and certain he would die. A Christian friend said, "When he came to faith, he made the decision that one day he would die for Christ. Every Christian in North Korea has made that choice. Every Christian in the country has the spirit of martyrdom in him. If you lose that spirit for one second, you cannot carry the burden of being a follower of Jesus."

A significant factor in dealing with fear—especially fear of dying—is realizing that we are already dead in Christ (Galatians 2:20). Former Open Doors colleague, Hector Tamez, says that this concept is clearly seen in the lives of Christians living in war zones of Latin America. The Christians who were caught in the civil war between the government and Shining Path guerrillas in Peru, are a classic example for us. Here is how Hector expresses their commitment:

They know that they are going to be killed. And they say, "In order to be a Christian here, you have to recognize that you are already dead in Christ. Once you recognize this, then any day that passes by in your life is a gain."

In some countries, surviving one day or one year means that you have one God-given day or year to testify not only with your words but with your deeds. Fear should not control your life! Christ should control your life!

RESPONSE

When storms come my way, I will let them help me assess my own spiritual condition. I will affirm God's power to overcome fear and live by faith in Him.

PRAYER

Ask God to forgive you for your times of fearfulness and lack of faith. Pray that all members of the persecuted church would have faith in Jesus like these Peruvian believers.

<http://www.opendoorsusa.org/pray/standing-strong-through-the-storm>

(This link is where you can register to have these powerful daily devotionals come in your email daily) Praying for our brothers and sisters and learning and getting greater faith by their testimonies. May we all continue to pray for them as if it were us that were being persecuted.)