

Fear

This world isn't exactly a safe place. Just turn on the news and you'll find new reasons to be afraid. It seems like there's always some kind of virus going around or another natural disaster. Remember the Coronavirus quarantine?

Despite all of this craziness, however, God assures us that He'll always be there. He says we don't need to be afraid. But does He realize how bad things can get around here?

Sometimes it sure doesn't seem like it. Occasionally I wonder how much worse things could get and I ask God why He doesn't step in and do something. There are so many things out of our control, I'd like to know that the One who is in control is actually doing something about it. But that's my doubt and fear talking. If I tuck back into God's word and remember what He tells me, my faith is renewed and I realize that He is in fact still in control and that He's still working. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow, He's always there and He's not going anywhere.

“Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, ‘For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.’) No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow — not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.” (Romans 8:35-38)

That's a lot to take in, so let's unpack those verses a bit.

Start with verse 37. It tells us “overwhelming victory is ours,” and that's a pretty powerful thing. If you think about it, the worst thing that could happen is death. That's probably one of the biggest fears we all have. But even then, even though we worry about when or how we or the people we love will die, as followers of Christ we know that's not the end. Because of Jesus, we still have victory — even over death. Because Jesus died and rose again, we too will live again in Heaven with Him and everyone else in the family of God. We can be confident in that.

Next, I want to look at the beginning of those verses: “Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?” Basically, that is just asking, even when we go through tough stuff, is God still there? It goes back to that question of *if God is a good God, why do bad things still happen?*

God never promises our lives will be easy when we follow Him. His own Son lived a really hard life that ultimately ended in His crucifixion. And while that’s not a very encouraging thing to think about, it shows us just how much God really does love us. He promises He’ll never leave, and He’s still got a good plan. Even through Christ’s death, goodness abounded and we can still feel the positive effects of it to this day. The same goes for us: God will take our brokenness, our messy issues, and our struggles and use it for something good. A few verses earlier in chapter 8 of Romans says, “Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory He will reveal to us later.” (Romans 8:18)

So while our lives might not always be easy and things will be tough, we know that as God’s children, He’s got something better in store for us. Bad things still might happen, but we can find hope in God’s goodness and His love for us, and nothing can separate us from that. God promises you that in His Word, and when God makes a promise, you can count on it.

“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love.” (Romans 8:38)

When you’re going through a hard time, it usually feels like you’re out of control. It can feel like all of these things are happening to you and you want them to stop or you want to fix it all, but you can’t. That makes it so much worse. But the one thing you can control is choosing to turn to God for help.

Nothing you’ve done or have gone through is too messy for God to handle. Run to Him and find safety. Whatever you’re going through right now, God’s right there with you and if you turn to Him, He’ll help you through it. And for all of those fears and worries you have about your future, give those to God. Tell Him what you’re worried about and ask Him to share the plans He has with you. Ask Him to remind you that everything’s going to be okay.

“Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to Him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?” (Matthew 6:26-27)

You’re in His hands, no matter where you’re at or what you’re going through. Nothing can take you away from Him. Don’t be afraid.

Read:

“I prayed to the Lord, and He answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to Him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; He saved me from all my troubles.” Psalm 34:4-6

Study questions:

1. What would you say is your natural reaction to trouble? Do you start to fear right away? Do you pray? Do you try to fix it on your own?

2. Think about a time of uncertainty. What was that like? How did you feel? What did you do?

3. And how did God intervene during that time? What happened?
