



## Faith Greater than Fear

### Fear and What God Has to Say about It

#### Lesson #5 – The Fear of the Unknown

### The Fear of the Unknown – A Silly or Serious Fear

Do you suffer or have you ever suffered from fear of the unknown? At some point in all of our lives, each of us has faced the fear of the unknown—the unknown of what’s to come, the unknown of consequences, the unknown of success or failure, the unknown of future reality, the unknown of... Sound familiar? The fear of the unknown is a fear that shows itself inside your head from the monsters you thought were lurking under your childhood bed to the tricks that darkness can play in even the most familiar of settings. These negative feelings and thoughts create mental blocks. It is these mental blocks that influence the way in which we live our life. When we choose to live with our fear of the unknown, the choices and decisions we make do not serve us well. Any decision we make based from this fear will not be a decision that will move us forward in life.

Fear of the unknown is not our friend. Yet it still manages to worm its way into our heads. So what are we supposed to do? The notable South African leader, Nelson Mandela, is quoted as saying, “I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.” For the Christian such courage is found through faith in the One who lives to conquer all our fears. Through faith in Jesus we are connected to his courage, courage greater even than fear of the unknown. Let’s explore how and apply what this means.

### Jesus Deals with the Fear of the Unknown

- As with any and every other type of fear, our God in his gracious love has a response. In today’s case, we see how Jesus himself confronted the fear of the unknown. Jesus identifies and surfaces the fear in the hearts of his disciples and a grieving mother, yet he brings joy to overcome their fear with his gospel of grace. Let’s look at and learn from the following accounts: **Luke 7:11-17 and Matthew 14:22-33.**

***Luke 7: <sup>11</sup> Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. <sup>12</sup> As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”***

***<sup>14</sup> Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” <sup>15</sup> The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.***

***<sup>16</sup> They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” <sup>17</sup> This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.***

1. How does fear of the unknown show up in this account?
2. What are the cause(s) of the fear of the unknown in the account?
3. How did the Lord transform fear into worship?
4. What encouragement do you draw from this account for facing fear of the unknown?

**Matthew 14: <sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>23</sup> After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.**

**<sup>25</sup> Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.**

**<sup>27</sup> But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."**

**<sup>28</sup> "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."**

**<sup>29</sup> "Come," he said.**

**Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"**

**<sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"**

**<sup>32</sup> And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."**

5. How does fear of the unknown show up in this account?
6. What are the cause(s) of the fear of the unknown in the account?
7. How did the Lord transform fear into worship?
8. What encouragement do you draw from this account for facing fear of the unknown?
9. Consider the following examples. The fear of the unknown is prevalent in such situations. In light of things we learned tonight, how might you help a person face and fight their fear of the unknown in such a situation?
  - A single parent finds out they have contracted a potentially deadly disease. They are the sole provider and caregiver to their young children.
  - An employee finds out that the company is shuttering their department. Unemployment is high.
  - Meteorological models indicate that a hurricane may impact the northeastern coast of Florida.
  - A ministry is struggling financially due to unexpected losses in revenue and a dip in offerings due to coronavirus.
10. Identify one way that a brother or sister in Christ could encourage you with Christ's confident love in your own fears of the unknown.