

Encouragement for Fearful Believers

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Acts 18:9-11

We often think of the Apostle Paul as a fearless missionary. In reality, he struggled with his own insecurities, flaws, and fears, and needed to be encouraged with the truth that Christ himself was with him. Our text reveals that we, like Paul, can find encouragement in (1) Christ’s presence, (2) Christ’s protection, and (3) Christ’s election.

After listening to Dr. Pate’s sermon on this passage, consider the following questions to help deepen your understanding and practical application of these truths:

1. Discuss fears that you tend to feel. What effect do these fears have on your life, and what do they reveal about what you value?
2. Jesus’ words to Paul were “do not be afraid” (Acts 18:9). What does this tell us about Jesus’ heart for fearful people?
3. In what circumstances do you find it especially difficult to believe that Jesus is with you?
4. How would you respond to someone who objects that your belief that Jesus is with you is just an imaginary way of coping with life’s difficulties?
5. In view of the fears you experience, what difference does it make that Jesus died and rose again?
6. Explain why “election motivates evangelism.”
7. Suppose you woke up tomorrow morning, really believing that Christ was with you, protecting you. Name at least two things about your day that would be different.

Be encouraged, fearful believer. Jesus wants to come alongside you today and say, “I am with you. I will take care of you. And I will use you in ministry. Press on!”