

More About Jesus, Week 20: Jesus was not afraid (Mark 10:32-34) by Paul Hammons

The most repeated command in the gospel accounts is “Do not be afraid.” Jesus was constantly telling his disciples not to fear the storms, the Jewish leaders, even his own power and glory when it was revealed to them.

Maybe that’s because so much of human behavior is driven by fear! In fact, the gospel accounts are filled with examples of fearful action or inaction.

Herod was afraid of the people in dealing with John the Baptist (**Mat. 14:5**). The Jews were afraid to arrest Jesus in public because of the people (**Mat. 21:46**). Many Jewish leaders believed but did not confess because they were afraid of the Pharisees (**John 12:42**).

But Jesus constantly modeled the behavior of someone who never allowed fear to impact his decisions or his work. That was shown most clearly in the final weeks of his life. Jesus had in many cases withdrawn from the region of Judea when resistance by the Jewish leaders became more heated, but when the time came for him to give his life on the cross, he “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (**Luke 9:51 - ESV**).

And having told his disciples on two occasions of his impending death, his determination and boldness must have been remarkable to watch.

*And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.” - **Mark 10:32–34***

Jesus’ courage must have been inspiring, even if the disciples continued to be afraid. In **John 11**, we read that Jesus and the disciples received word that their friend Lazarus was dying, and when Jesus prepared to go help, the apostles responded, “*Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?*” (**John 11:8**) When he persisted, Thomas told the other apostles, “*Let us also go, that we may die with him*” (**John 11:16**).

The courage of Jesus teaches us about where true bravery comes from, and how it manifests itself. Jesus’ bravery wasn’t evidence that he was impervious to pain, or that he simply didn’t care about suffering - we see that clearly in the garden when he prayed, “*Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will*” (**Mk 14:36**). It showed

instead that Jesus' purpose in life was to do God's will, and that overrode any thought of suffering or hardship, or even death.

But ultimately, his willingness to go boldly to his death reflected his certainty that God would deliver him - that his death would result not only in his resurrection, but in the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. Knowing the power of the Father, Jesus perfectly modeled the attitude he taught his disciples:

"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!" - Luke 12:4-5

And so, when the mobs came for Jesus, he stood before them, boldly pointing out their own cowardice: *"Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me" (Mark 14:48-49).*

Jesus boldly went to the cross, leaving us an example to take courage in the face of any obstacles to our own faith, putting our trust in God, who delivered him. As David wrote in **Psalm 27**, *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"*