

OVERCOMING FEAR IN EVANGELISM

AG

Series I Session I

Standing in His Name

What is your greatest HOPE in evangelism?

Why would you want to share your faith with your friends?



What is your greatest FEAR in evangelism?

What prevents you from talking to your friends about Jesus?



When it comes to talking to non-Christians about Jesus, everyone experiences some level of fear. Take a look at the apostle Paul's reaction to evangelism, as he recounts his mission in Corinth in I Cor 2:1-5:

*"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I came to you in **weakness and fear, and with much trembling**. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."*

"Fear is a natural, normal and appropriate response to evangelism. Everyone is fearful of evangelism. The question is, "What are we going to do about it?"

We are going to look at the life of an Old Testament king, King Asa, to learn how to deal with fear. 2 Chronicles 14:2 says, "King Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord." He went around the land and tore down all the altars to false gods. The people who worshipped those gods didn't like that much. We pick up the story as King Asa's men come against the armies of those who worship the foreign gods"

2 Chronicles 14:8-11

"Asa had an army of three hundred thousand men from Judah, equipped with large shields and with spears, and two hundred and eighty thousand from Benjamin, armed with small shields and with bows. All these were brave fighting men.

Zerah the Cushite marched out against them with a **vast** army and three hundred chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. Asa went out to meet him, and they took up battle positions in the Valley of Zaphethah near Mareshah.

580,000 men is approximately equal to 20 full football stadiums! These are not just your trained warriors. They are your kebab shop vendors, sandal makers and second hand camel salesmen showing up to fight for what they believe in.

The word "vast" literally means "thousands upon thousands". We are led to believe that King Asa was greatly outnumbered. This was no small feud.

How would you feel if you were in King Asa's shoes?

Talk in pairs about the last time you experienced fear. How did you deal with it?



Now let's see what happened.

Read 2 Chronicles 14:11-12a

King Asa's reaction is incredible. Can you imagine his *fear*? Instead of giving up and legging it, or trying to convince himself that his army could win this battle, he turns in *faith* to God. Let's take a look at his prayer in more detail.

"There's no-one like you to help the powerless against the mighty"

Powerless is not the word I would use to describe 580,000 brave fighting men. But King Asa knew he was outnumbered and realised that they could not win that battle in their own strength.

"Help us, O Lord, for we rely on you..."

King Asa realised that the real battle was not between them and the Cushites. It was between God and the enemy. *God is fully able to win the battle.*

"...and in your name we have come against this vast army"

The reason for this confrontation was that Asa's men *stood in God's name*. They tore down the idols to false gods (2 Chron.. 14:2). When we stand in God's name we always come into Spiritual conflict. And when we do, it is God's responsibility to defeat the enemy, and not ours.

"Do not let man prevail against you"

I might have prayed, "Do not let man prevail against us!". King Asa had the faith to give the battle to God, and let Him win it.

Two Types of Fear

Many of us can identify with King Asa's *fear*. Especially when it comes to evangelism. There are two kinds of fear that people have about evangelism. This first is that our friends might reject us, that it might jeopardise the relationship. There's not much you can do about that. It doesn't happen as often as Satan would like us to believe, but it could happen. We have to weigh things up, and decide whether we are willing to risk the relationship for the sake of gaining it for eternity.

The other kind of fear is that we don't think we are up to the job. We might answer a question incorrectly. We might misrepresent Christ in some way. We do not have a right to own this fear. It is not our responsibility to have all the right answers.

Our Role

God did not choose us for this mission because of our amazing *skills and abilities* in saving the lost. There is not one thing that any of us can do to save the lost.

God's Role

We are utterly dependant on God to bring about new life in people's heart. It is *God's job* to use our mumbling words, our foolishness, to bring about new life in our friends. Our only job is to stand in His name; to put ourselves on the battle field.

"God is picking a spiritual battle, so we have no need to fear spiritual conflict - it's a normal part of our relationships with non-Christians and we should embrace it, standing in His name!"

What does it mean for us to stand in His name?



Standing in His name is not...	Standing in His name is...
Hoping that your silence will convince your friend to receive Jesus.	Being open and honest about our relationship with Jesus.
Hiding your relationship with Jesus to strengthen your friendship.	Being disciplined in your words, actions and behaviour.
Saying that you're a Christian, then avoiding any spiritual conversations for the rest of your 40 year friendship.	Taking a loving interest in your friend's beliefs and personal life.
Filling your schedule with so many prayer meetings that you don't have time to talk to your friends about Jesus.	Confronting your friend's dodgy beliefs and practices (often passively).
Only hanging out with committed Christians.	Communicating acceptance, despite spiritual conflict.
Being defensive about your faith.	Continually bringing up issues that they are avoiding talking about.

By standing in His name, we are able to overcome our fear and take part on the battlefield as God intends us to!