

Frontier Living

Conversations About Fear



Christ Church East Bay
Moms Group
Spring 2019

Judy Hanawalt

I began to realize that the only place where things were actually real was at this frontier between what you think is you and what you think is not you; that whatever you desire of the world will not come to pass exactly as you will like it.

But the other mercy is that whatever the world desires of you will also not come to pass. And what actually occurs is this meeting, this frontier. But it's astonishing how much time human beings spend away from that frontier, abstracting themselves out of their bodies, out of their direct experience, and out of a deeper, broader, and wider possible future that's waiting for them if they hold the conversation at that frontier level.

*David Whyte
From a conversation with Krista Tippett, On Being podcast*

Contents

Study 1: Eating Like Birds and Dressing Like Flowers

Study 2: Out of the Deep Blue

Study 3: Hurry Up, Jesus!

Study 4: Against the Wind

Study 5: Smooth Sailing?

Study 6: Cloud Burst

Study 7: Earthquake Country

Study 8: On the Right Path

Introduction

The only choice we have as we mature is how we inhabit our vulnerability, how we become larger and more courageous and more compassionate through our intimacy with disappearance, our choice is to inhabit vulnerability as generous citizens of loss, robustly and fully, or conversely, as misers and complainers, reluctant and fearful, always at the gates of existence, but never bravely and completely attempting to enter, never wanting to risk ourselves, never walking fully through the door.

From Consolations by David Whyte

To be alive is to be vulnerable to pain and heartbreak. We'd like to think that we can protect ourselves, that we can plan carefully enough to keep loss away from us, or that we can pray the right prayer in the right way to enlist God to make our lives go the way we want them to.

It's so cozy and inviting, this Hallmark Channel life we imagine--and I'm not saying I wouldn't take it if it was possible. It is not real though. It is actually a smaller, thinner, more weary place than we'd like to admit. We find real life--an enlarging, exhilarating, purposeful life--in a riskier, darker place. David Whyte calls this place "the frontier," that juncture of what we think should happen and what actually does happen. It is the front line of life, where all the action is.

We spend a lot of time trying to avoid that place, fearing loss and pain. If we are not there, engaging with reality, though, we are hiding away, trying to keep ourselves safe. We are missing our life.

Jesus invites us to live at this "frontier." He tells us not to worry about what we have and how we will get what we need--we can simply live, trusting that the one who loves us and values us will care for us, believing that there is a way forward even if we don't see it. He tells us not to be afraid.

In this study, we will look at several situations in the New Testament where Jesus said, "Do not be afraid." In each passage, we will try to understand why the people in the story were afraid, and how they could release that fear and trust that there is reason to be confident and calm in Jesus's presence.

Study 1

Eating Like Birds and Dressing Like Flowers

Our fears run the gamut from small to large, ranging from getting daily bread to walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Jesus encourages us to stay in the present, not letting our minds race to the needs of the future, and not leaving our hearts mired in past loss. He wants us to “give [our] entire attention to what God is doing right now, and [not] get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.” (Matt 6:34, The Message)



Easier said than done.

It comes down to our sense of who we are. Are we lone pioneers of the frontier, dependant on our own bravery and wits? Or are we traveling the uncertain ground of our lives with full provisions and a guide? If we believe we are truly in God's care, and that God has good intentions for us, we can lean into what comes, knowing we are safe.

Question for Reflection

Do you enter into your life from a place of scarcity, or a place of abundance? Do you believe that you are taken care of? Or do you fear that you don't have enough--physically or emotionally--and may run short?

Scripture

Matthew 6:25-34 (ESV)

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Matthew 10:29-31 (ESV)

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Questions for Reflection

What is it about life that is more than food?

What is it about the body that is more than clothing?

Should we stop "reaping and gathering into barns?" Is a 401k necessary?

We know we can't change anything by worrying. Why does anxiety keep us coming back for more?

How do we know God cares about and for us?

It is realistic to "let tomorrow be anxious for itself?" How can we keep our hearts and minds in the present?

How are fear and anxiety related?

Frontier Provisions

What fears are pushing in on you on your frontier?

Do you see any provisions coming into your situation, in the form of physical, emotional or spiritual help?

Ask God to show you how he is meeting you here

Study 2

Out of the Deep Blue



Sometimes, it's a matter of being in the right place at the right time. Unexpected encounters or changes that happen without warning to thwart our planning can be a challenging frontier. For the first disciples, it is a strange request for a boat ride on the beach after a long night of work.

A crowd of people gather at the lake shore to listen to the words of the new teacher, Jesus. As he speaks, fishermen come in after a night of fishing to clean their nets. Simon had not had a good catch and is tired.

Jesus needs a place to sit where the people can see him, so he climbs into Simon's empty boat and asks him to row him out in front of the crowd. An interruption, but also an honor. When Jesus finishes teaching, he has an odd request. He wants Simon to do some more fishing. An experienced fisherman, he probably thinks it is crazy, but not wanting to disrespect the teacher, he consents. He is about to come to the edge of the frontier.

He does what Jesus asks, and the result was astonishing and terrifying: a net-busting, boat-sinking catch that defies reason. Simon is alarmed. Jesus tells him not to be afraid, because there is a new plan: follow him. Simon and two of his friends drop everything and go.

Question for Reflection

When the unexpected happens, what is your response?

Scripture

Luke 5:5-11 (ESV)

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Questions for Reflection

Jesus knows he is going to challenge Simon to come with him. Why does he come into his boat and take him out fishing to do it?

What is Simon afraid of?

What are the parallels and differences between fishing with Jesus for fish and fishing with Jesus for men?

What makes Simon, James and John forget their fear and follow Jesus?

Frontier Provisions

Do you ever feel like Jesus asks you do something uncomfortable, or that doesn't make sense?

What is your response--Do you run from the edge of the frontier? Do you proceed with caution? Or do you lean into the unknown?

What are you afraid of? Ask Jesus how he will meet you in the fear.

Study 3

Hurry Up, Jesus!

When things feel desperate, we want to plead with God to *do something* or *hurry up*. The sense that he's not paying close enough attention to our plight and that the worst may happen makes us feel like life is careening out of control with no one to stop it. The frontier at the edge of life and death is particularly distressing.

Jairus, a powerful man accustomed to having his requests promptly attended to, may have felt like saying this to Jesus, but he doesn't. He comes to Jesus with an urgent request to heal his daughter, who is very sick, and then goes along with Jesus as he takes the long way to see the girl, through crowds, stopping to talk and heal others, and seemingly forgetting about Jairus's precious girl who lies on the edge of death.

When the news comes that the girl has died, the anxious father must have had a flood of thoughts and emotions. If only Jesus had gone to his daughter first! Why wasn't his need important enough? Anger. Grief. It seems like the fear would be gone now that the worst has happened, but Jesus simply tells him not to be afraid, but to believe. It's confusing.

It all clears up, though, when Jesus takes the girl by the hand and pulls her back into life. Then rejoicing replaces the fear, the anguish, the regret and the grief.



Question for Reflection

Have you ever felt like God was delaying, or not paying attention to your need?

Scripture

Mark 5:22-24, 35-43 (ESV)

Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live." And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him.

...

While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Questions for Reflection

How do you think Jairus feels while Jesus takes his time with the masses of needy people crushing around them?

What is Jairus afraid of?

Why does Jesus take only a few disciples with him to go to Jairus's house? Why doesn't he break away sooner?

Why does Jesus address the mourners, who only laugh at him? Do you think Jairus is discouraged by their response?

Why does Jesus do this miracle in private?

Frontier Provisions

Do you struggle with fear of losing someone you love? Or your own death?

How do Jesus's words spoken to the shocked and grieving father--"Do not fear, only believe"--sound to you?

The separation between life and death seems so thin and insubstantial to Jesus, but is impenetrable and crushing to us. This is the frontier we fear most. Ask Jesus what to do with your fears when he doesn't raise the dead in front of us, and when we don't get Jairus's happy ending.

Study 4 Against the Wind

Being with Jesus must have been constantly befuddling. The disciples live on the very edge between our world of natural phenomenon and the supernatural world that Jesus opens up before their wide eyes. The overlap always seems to come as a surprise to them; they never get used to it or expect it. The people who flock to Jesus can not get enough of it.

It sounds almost like a game of hide and seek. After teaching and healing, Jesus escapes to be alone, only to be followed into the countryside by masses of needy, hungry people. The disciples try to help Jesus manage the workload, suggesting he send the crowd away to eat. Instead, he breaks with the laws of nature again, stretched molecules to feed everyone with almost nothing, and sends the disciples away on the boat. He takes care of sending the people away himself, and then goes off to be alone again.

The disciples battle the wind and waves on the lake, working hard but making little progress while subject to nature's blasts and currents. They must wonder if they are dreaming or mistaken when they see a figure coming toward them in the mist. In their fright, their minds go first to the unknown, the terrible, and the threatening, not to Jesus, even though they had seen him bend the laws of nature just hours before.

"It's a ghost," they hiss to each other, terrified of what it might do to them. "No," Jesus says, "it's me. Have courage. Don't be afraid."



Question for Reflection

What is your first thought when you see something you don't understand, or that doesn't fit into your worldview? Do you tend to jump to conclusions that include God or not?

Scripture

Matthew 14:13-27 (ESV)

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

Questions for Reflection

The disciples are the closest to Jesus. Why don't they learn to expect the unexpected?

What do you imagine they are thinking while they pass out food, and then collect leftovers?

What do we learn about Jesus from his ordinary, human need for time alone to pray juxtaposed with his extraordinary ability to bypass the laws of science and nature?

What are the men in the boat afraid of?

Why does Jesus join them in such a dramatic manner? Why does he wait until it is almost dawn to go out to them?

Jesus must have gotten close to the boat if they are able to hear him speak over the wind and waves. Why don't his friends recognize Jesus?

Frontier Provisions

Are you afraid to venture past the known and the explainable?

Are you comfortable getting away and spending time alone, as Jesus did, to pray?

Jesus comforts the disciples by assuring them that it is him. Ask Jesus to help you recognize him when you are in the middle of a storm

Study 5 Smooth Sailing?

When life is sailing along smoothly, we settle into an expectation that it will continue; our hopes for a happy, healthy family, a growing and challenging career, and resources to meet our needs are reasonable projections. It feels like solid ground. It doesn't take much to rock the boat, though. When circumstances become threatening and we don't sense God's understanding or intervention, it can seem like he's asleep on the job.



After a long day of teaching in parables and engaging with the crowds, Jesus is ready to leave and get some rest. They all pile into boats, including Jesus this time. As they sail across the Sea of Galilee, a storm blows in and makes navigating impossible. The waves crash into the boat, and it fills with water. Bobbing on the roiling lake in a small boat, the disciples fear they will sink--and with no life jackets or radio to call for help, this will be the end.

Jesus, seemingly oblivious to their plight, sleeps peacefully in the back of the boat on a cushion. Is this how it ends? Not only their lives, but their hopes for a leader to save their people? From the time Jesus calls them to follow him, their hopes that he was the one--the savior promised by the prophets--has grown. Now it is all going under.

They wake him, afraid of the storm, afraid of the water, and afraid that Jesus doesn't care what is happening to them--and maybe worse, cannot help. Jesus gets up, tells the storm to stop, and then asks them what they are worried about. At this, they are even more terrified--not of physical danger anymore, but of this person they have become so familiar and comfortable with. Their understanding of who he is has been much too small.

Question for Reflection

Have you had circumstances in your life that threaten your sense of stability, or your hopes and dreams for your future?

Scripture

Mark 4:35-41 (ESV)

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Questions for Reflection

What do you think it means that they take Jesus "just as he was?"

What are the disciples afraid of?

How can Jesus possibly sleep through all that commotion?

Will the boat really sink with Jesus in it?

Why do they complain that Jesus doesn't care, rather than just asking him to help?

Jesus first stops the storm, then addresses his friends. Is he irritated with their lack of understanding of him?

Why doesn't Jesus calm the disciples instead of calming the storm?

Why do they become more afraid?

Who is this, that commands even the elements?

Frontier Provisions

Do you think that any of your hopes, plans or dreams for your life have kept you from seeing what God is actually doing?

Do you ever feel like God isn't keeping you safe?

Ask Jesus to show you where you have underestimated who he is.

Study 6 Cloud Burst

Expectations, whether we put them on ourselves or feel them from others, tend to make us feel insecure, especially when we are in an unfamiliar situation.

After spending several days talking with his disciples about what was to come--his death and resurrection--Jesus takes three followers up a high mountain. Before their eyes, the barrier between heaven and earth melts, and Jesus becomes pure light, blinding them. Others appear, and they recognize them somehow--maybe because they are so purely themselves--as Moses and Elijah, two of the most revered forefathers in the Jewish tradition. Moses, the one who met with God face-to-face, carried God's Law down from his mountain meeting and led his people into the promised land, and Elijah, the miracle-working prophet and forerunner of Jesus who called down fire from heaven and did not die, but was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire.

The disciples must be overwhelmed in this holy company. I imagine they felt pressure to say and do the right thing, to live up to the expectations of the patriarchs. Peter is the only one to make a move, declaring that he will build a shelter so they can all stay there together. God's voice bursts out of a cloud, turning Peter's attention from his efforts to please and refocusing him on Jesus. The patriarchs are gone, and only Jesus remains. The law and the prophets had done their job, and now only Jesus is needed. At the sound of God's voice, the men are terrified.

Once again, Jesus brings them back to reality. He touches them--a physical presence, not a spirit--and reminds them that it is him, and they don't need to be afraid.



Question for Reflection

Is there a situation where you feel the weight of expectations?

Scripture

Matthew 17:1-9 (ESV)

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."

When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

Questions for Reflection

Why does Jesus allow these three disciples to see him in this glorious state?

What do you think Moses, Elijah and Jesus were talking about?

Why does Peter interrupt with his offer to build some tents?

God spoke in this way at Jesus's baptism, too, saying that Jesus is his beloved son, and he is pleased with him. Why does God speak here? Why does he add that they should listen to him?

What are the disciples afraid of?

Why does Jesus want them to keep it a secret until after the resurrection? Is he suggesting that he wants them to talk about it then?

Frontier Provisions

Are you afraid you may not live up to expectations--God's, others' or your own?

Ask Jesus to show himself to you in his power and glory so that you can listen to him.

What do you hear Jesus saying when he touches you and tells you to rise?

Study 7 Earthquake Country

Living in the East Bay, we are aware that at any moment, the plates of the San Andreas fault may grind and slip, changing our landscape and shaking our homes and lives apart. Though we believe “the big one” is coming, it’s hard to connect with and prepare for life after such a cataclysmic event.



Jesus told his followers that an earthquake was coming: he would die and then return to life, an event that would change the landscape of their lives and the world. They hear Jesus but cannot make sense of it; it is outside their experience and ability to understand.

Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary, perhaps Jesus’s aunt, go to Jesus’s tomb in the dim predawn. All they know is that their fears have come true: Jesus is dead. They are sad but resolute; while the disciples worry and mourn, they are compelled to go and see where Jesus is. Maybe they can’t believe he’s really gone, or they want to say goodbye. Maybe they need to make sure that tomb is a good enough place for their beloved friend’s body. They are moving ahead as best they know how.

An earthquake shakes the ground and a brilliant angel comes and rolls away the stone sealing the tomb. The angel tells them not to be afraid; Jesus is not there, he is living again. Abruptly, they must adjust their plan to this shift in reality.

They rush to tell the despairing disciples what they saw and heard: the angel said that Jesus is alive again and they need to meet him in Galilee. As they run, they are excited and joyful, but also afraid--maybe they are trying to understand, trying to remember what Jesus said, replaying the events of his death and reassuring each other that these things really happened. Maybe they were afraid of what was going to happen next.

As they hurry away to tell the news, they almost bump into Jesus. They grab him--yes, he is real! They worship him. Then he tells them not to be afraid to go forward into life after this earth-shaking, pivotal event. He moves them along again to tell the disciples to go to Galilee where he will be with them again.

Question for Reflection

Have you experienced an abrupt life change or momentous change of plans? How do you deal with it?

Scripture

Matthew 28:1-10 (ESV)

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."

So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Questions for Reflection

Is the angel waiting for them to get there, or do they show up just in time?

Why are these women the first to see Jesus, and not the disciples? Why do the rest of the followers have to go to Galilee to see him?

What are the women afraid of when they see the angel?

What are they afraid of when they see Jesus?

Why do both the angel and Jesus come to them?

How do fear and joy coexist?

How do you imagine the women worship Jesus?

Frontier Provisions

Have you ever gotten caught up in dealing with pain or loss and been afraid to believe that God is doing something new?

Ask Jesus to give you direction when you don't know how to proceed or don't know where you will see him.

Study 8 On the Right Path



I love stories about time travel, where there is a chance to go back and re-do an event or even a whole life and get it right. As we move through life, we make choices that cause us to take some opportunities and miss others. We make mistakes. Our path will likely bring us to places we did not intend and could not have foreseen. We may look up one day and feel afraid that we missed the right path or botched an opportunity with no option to go back and do it again.

In this story from Acts, Paul is on the road, travelling and preaching the gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation to God through Jesus in synagogues. When his message is rejected, he leaves, moving on to another place where people will listen. One connection leads to another, and he finds himself in a strange situation: He is bringing the very Jewish story of Jesus's death and resurrection to a Gentile crowd. It is a move he probably felt uncertain about making. Has he gone the wrong direction?

One night Jesus comes to him in a dream and confirms that he is doing the right thing. He tells Paul not to be afraid, but to continue with his teaching in spite of opposition or uncertainty. This is exactly where Jesus wants him to be.

Question for Reflection

Have you ever looked at your life and wondered how you got here, or if you ended up in your circumstances by mistake?

Scripture

Acts 18:1-11 (ESV)

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. 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.

Questions for Reflection

Does it seem like Paul has a plan?

What was Paul's passion? Why was he so intense about convincing his listeners about Jesus?

What is Paul afraid of?

How can Jesus, who has already ascended into heaven, say that he is with Paul?

What does it mean that Jesus has "many in the city who are my people?"

Frontier Provisions

Do you fear that where you are in life is not the best place to be, or that what you are doing is not the right thing?

Are there regrets or memories that you need to release, believing that you can keep moving ahead and not be afraid?

Ask Jesus to reassure you that he is with you where you are and has a purpose for your exact circumstances.

