

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

P.O. BOX 9043 • KNOXVILLE, TN 37940

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Walk Before You Run

Dear Friend,

Here are some words and phrases you are hearing a lot these days: pandemic, quarantine, shelter in place, social distancing, incubation period, covid-19, corona virus, travel restrictions, and the list goes on. According to government and medical officials, the order of the day is to separate and protect yourself from this unseen threat.

We find ourselves in the midst of an unparalleled health emergency that has brought our normal everyday life to a standstill. Schools have closed, some canceling classes for the remainder of the year. Many businesses are closed, particularly restaurants and any other type of business where groups could gather. Churches have stopped having their normal services and gone to online services. My question to you as a Christian is this: "How do you think Jesus would have conducted Himself in such a situation?"

At the root of this global crises is one unmistakable, undeniable, force; **fear**, specifically the fear of death. Without a doubt fear is shaping the way almost every person is living from day to day. Whether they stay indoors and refuse to go outside, or they put on surgical gloves and a respirator and stay 6 feet away from another human, life today looks nothing like it did 6 months ago.

Can anyone who has read the accounts of the life of Jesus ever envision Him donning surgical masks and gloves and walking 6 feet away from people? In all honesty it is impossible for me to believe Jesus would have resorted to closing Himself off from ministering to others in such a way.

Am I telling you to rip off your facemasks and gloves and run around touching everything in sight? NO! Because sadly I don't think enough believers are prepared to face the consequences in the event their actions put them in a place they are not prepared to believe their way out of. But, I do believe this should be a wake-up call to believers who are struggling with thoughts of fear and torment that something is missing in their daily walk with Jesus.

Then there are those well-meaning believers who have heard stories of men like John G. Lake, who lived during similar conditions, and continued to lay hands on the sick and pray with them and see miracles. Maybe they get the idea; “Hey that looks like something I want to try”, and they end up contracting the disease and wonder why it didn’t work for them.

My first question would be, “what kind of track record does the person have for believing and receiving healing for themselves.” It would be similar to a baby who just took their first steps and the next thing you know they are enrolling in a marathon. You might say, “Mark, it’s the same process, putting one foot in front of the other”. Your right. The process is the same and the potential is there, but wouldn’t it be better to learn to walk first before attempting a marathon?

So why would anyone try such a crazy stunt? Maybe immaturity or just plain and simple pride drove this person to try and show everyone just how special they really were. One example that comes to mind is found in Acts 19. (Acts 19:11-16)

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: (12) So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. (13) Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. (14) And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. (15) And the evil spirits answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you? (16) And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

So, before you get the idea of trying to do what John G. Lake did, and have them put some froth from the wound of a diseased person in your hand, like he did, and watch the disease die under a microscope, you might want to trust God and take a swing at getting the sniffles off your body.

“I’ve been saved a whole week, I think I’m ready to take on covid-19. Bring me the sickest person first.” Am I saying that their faith won’t work? No! That’s not what I’m saying at all. What I am wondering is if they can overcome the mental battle and not get into fear? One way to keep yourself from getting tripped up with fear is to invest in your personal relationship with Jesus. When you truly **know** Jesus intimately you will trust Him. All too often it seems that believers are

trying to trust in God without ever spending time to get to know Him. How often do we freely put all our confidence in the word of a total stranger? Never!

Just like a young child trusts in their parents to take care of them, we must have the same child-like faith towards our heavenly Father to protect us and provide for us no matter what we face. This level of trust doesn't come without investing time into your relationship with Him. That's not to say we put a clock on how long we pray, because that is religion. The time we spend with Jesus isn't for the purpose of us earning "brownie points" with God. The real purpose is for us to get to know God intimately so that when it's time to make a stand of faith regarding some life threatening disease it isn't like we're talking to a total stranger. We trust Him because we have gotten to know Him.

Yes, it is the same faith at work in a believer who got saved yesterday as was working in John G. Lake when they put the highly contagious froth on his skin. The difference is that through developing an ongoing fellowship with Jesus and seeing one person healed after another, John G. Lake was able to overcome the mental battle and see people healed

Lake's private fellowship with Jesus certainly played a huge role in his success over incurable diseases. I'm also sure that Lake knew God's word frontwards and backwards. The battle was to remain in faith and not to respond in fear. Instead of allowing fear to overwhelm him, John G. Lake operated in faith, faith that was grounded in a personal fellowship with Jesus. This is how you overcome in the evil day, walk with Jesus and invest yourself into getting to know Him by spending time alone with Him and reading His word.

Another good example is Peter. Think about Peter walking on the water to Jesus. Peter had faith to even ask Jesus to bid him to come to Him on the water. Peter had faith to step out of the boat and the bible says that Peter walked on the water. (Matthew 14:29) So what caused Peter to sink? The next verse gives us the reason why Peter began to sink. (Matthew 14:30)

"But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord save me. (31) And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, caught him and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt."

It has always seemed to me that people want to focus on Peter's faith instead of focusing on the real issue according to Jesus, Peter's doubt. Jesus didn't say, "Peter, why don't you have any faith?" Jesus said, "Why did you doubt". What was it that caused Peter to doubt? Peter's vast experiences on the water as a

fisherman made him an expert at knowing the weather conditions and how dangerous being on the water could be in a storm. Peter allowed his five senses to speak to him louder than the words of Jesus.

As a result, Peter began to sink, not because faith wasn't present, but because fear of the natural circumstances trumped his faith and caused him to believe in them more than in the word of Jesus. The same holds true for us today. Jesus told us to speak to our mountain, command it to be removed and cast into the sea and not to doubt in our hearts but to believe that those things we say shall come to pass and we shall have whatsoever we say. (Mark 11:23)

"Mark, I tried that and it doesn't work for me." Wrong, this works for everyone who is willing to believe. I would recommend you start with something like a stuffy nose and see those symptoms disappear. I remember hearing one preacher who believed God for a pair of socks and another preacher believed God for a bible. Start out with something simple and work your way up to more challenging things, but start somewhere. David killed the bear and the lion before he defeated Goliath. He had proven to himself God's faithfulness.

Don't wait until your body is wracked with pain to try and receive your healing for the first time ever. Yes, the potential is there for you to receive one second after you make Jesus Lord of your life, but can you weather the emotional and mental onslaught of the devil as he works on you to turn loose of your confession of faith? That's the real issue.

Do we as believers have everything we need to overcome covid-19? Most certainly, yes! We have everything we need in God's word, not only for ourselves, but for those around us. God's grace can make up the difference if you find yourself in a life or death situation and this is brand new to you.

But, no matter how long you have been saved, I encourage you not to wait until its life threatening. Start today while you are symptom free to challenge yourself to believe God for simple things and watch your confidence in God grow. Before you know it you will have had one experience after another where you witnessed for yourself God move in your life because you believed. Then, when it is time to run that marathon (to lay hands on the sick) you are prepared and ready to run.

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins