

Ron Armstrong • March 21 & 22, 2020
Hope in the Dark: Consumed by Expensive Fear

1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. **12** For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

2 Corinthians 12:8 ... Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ♪ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

A. Where is God when things are bad?

1. It’s okay for me to ASK.
 - a. The prophets asked.
 - b. The early CHURCH asked.
 - c. And, I know what “bad” looks like.
2. But I have to be willing to hear the answer.
 - a. He is with us, giving us the STRENGTH we need to face difficult times.
 - b. He is with us, giving us HOPE for tomorrow.
3. So what’s going to happen? Not knowing is what verses 11-12 are about.
4. Our real danger is fear, because fear is the door to DESPAIR and hopelessness.

B. How can we control fear in difficult times?

1. Start by separating valuable fear from EXPENSIVE fear.
2. Like a lot of things, fear isn’t always bad or good. It depends.
 - a. Most fear is learned. People are usually only born with two types of fear.
 - b. Valuable fear protects your life or benefits you in some way. It gives you appropriate CAUTION.
 - c. Expensive fear costs you:
 - I. Your joy in living. Yes, we can have joy even in tough circumstances.
 - II. It prevents you from seeing OPPORTUNITIES that come even in a storm. Disciples of Jesus have always figured out a way to continue to minister to hurting people.
3. Tie the rope before the storm. It will show you the way when fear or despair blinds you.