

Fear That There Won't Be Enough

On Sunday, we continued our sermon series called “Fear Less” by exploring our fear that there won't be enough of what we need in our life.

1. Warm up question: As you look back over this past week, if you could have had more of something in your life, what would you have chosen to have more of?
2. In the skit we saw on Sunday, a first century woman named Abigail talked about several areas in her life where she felt like she didn't have enough of something. She was feeling a lack of:

Time Energy Money Faith Safety (for her son)

- a. Which of these areas of lack most bedevil you? Tell us why you struggle in that area.
 - b. What other areas of lack would you add to this list?
 - c. Abigail kept swinging between moments of worry and complaining, on the one hand, and moments of thankfulness and trust, on the other hand. Do you experience the same back-and-forth struggle? Why is it so hard to keep out of the worry/complaining mode?
3. In church circles, we tend to hear many pious platitudes that tend to gloss over the struggles and challenges we face. Platitudes are an easy way to avoid the hard work of thinking deeply about faith's most challenging questions. Michael Heher, in an article written for preachers, says, “Don't make promises God doesn't keep. Account for the shaky ground and patches of quicksand. Don't deny our disappointments or turn away from our broken hearts. Explain the beasts lying in wait, the damaged goods that can't be fixed, and the trouble in the streets. Show us God in the horrors hidden under cover of night and the prayers that don't get answered. Make your words equal to our predicament. Give us faith as wild as the world. Describe that, and we'll hang on every word.”
 - a. What do you think Heher means when he challenges us to have “a faith as wild as the world?”
 - b. Have you ever found yourself at a place where life was so difficult, your faith was challenged? What happened?
 - c. What are some of the pious platitudes you've heard – or shared – in the past? Do you believe the platitude is true?
 4. One of the pious platitudes we often hear goes something like this: “If you have enough faith, there will always be enough of what you need.” On Sunday, Jeff

challenged us to ponder the extent to which that is – or isn't – a true statement, especially in times when life gets really hard. He shared the example of an elderly homeless man who, despite his extreme poverty, seemed joyful, serene, and contented. The old man is featured in a British documentary where he was filmed singing the following words, over and over again:

Jesus' blood never failed me yet
Never failed me yet
There's one thing I know
For he loves me so
Jesus' blood never failed me yet

- a. When you heard the old man's song on Sunday, what feelings or thoughts arose within you?
 - b. Do you believe the old man was just spouting pious platitudes or that his song was a true and authentic testimony for him? If the latter, in what sense do you believe it was true for him? How could he say Jesus never failed him?
5. Jeff suggested two lessons God wants us to learn that can help us conquer fear of insufficiency in our lives. First, in any difficult situation, find the good things that are there and focus on them, rather than on what's missing.
- a. Jeff said, "It's not that people who are living well have more than other people, it's just that they focus on the good they do have and celebrate it, rather than bemoaning what they don't have." Do you buy that? Why or why not?
 - b. Proverbs 13:7 says, "There are those who make themselves rich, yet have nothing. There are those who make themselves poor, yet have great riches." What do you think that means?
 - c. What are some practical ways we can get better at focusing on the good around us in difficult situations?
6. Read John 6:1-13. From the example of the little boy in this Gospel story, we drew our second lesson for how to overcome insufficiency in our life. While the disciples were freaking out about not having enough, the little boy recklessly offered to share his meager lunch. As a result, he experienced the thrill of being the catalyst for one of Jesus' greatest miracles – the lesson being: give and even more will be given back to you. The Lakota parable about Jumping Mouse makes the same point.
- a. Read Luke 6:38. Do you believe these words are true? Can you think of a time in your life when you dared to give and got back much more in return?
 - b. To sum things up, Jeff said, "Poverty is a state of mind." In what sense is that true – and not true?