

7-DAY DEVOTIONAL · PART 1 OF 3

Fearless: Trusting God in the Storm

Pastor Hazen Stevens · GateCity Buckhead

gatecitybuckhead.com/fearless

Scripture: ESV

Welcome

Anxiety tells you that you are alone in the boat. Jesus asks, "Why are you so afraid?" In this 7-day plan, Pastor Hazen Stevens walks through the storm on the Sea of Galilee, a prison at midnight, and three Psalms that have carried God's people through fear. Learn to trust the One who is with you in every storm. Part 1 of the Fearless series.

These devotionals are adapted from *21 Days of Fearless Living* by Hazen and Hannah Stevens. Anxiety is real, and you are not weak or faithless for feeling it. God meets us in the middle of it.

How to use this devotional

- Set aside about ten minutes a day. Read the Scripture passage first, then the devotional.
- Do the call to action. Write your answers down if you can.
- Pray the prayer out loud, then keep talking with God in your own words.
- Go through it with a friend, your small group or your family.

If you are in crisis or thinking about harming yourself, please reach out today. In the U.S., call or text 988 any time.

DAY 1

Who Is in the Boat With You?

Read: Mark 4:35-41

The disciples were seasoned fishermen. They knew the Sea of Galilee. And still the storm that night put them in a panic. Waves were breaking over the boat, and Jesus was asleep on a cushion in the back.

"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38, ESV)

Maybe you have prayed that prayer. A crisis in your family, your marriage, your health or your finances, and it feels like everything could go under while God sleeps.

Jesus awoke, rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And there was a great calm. Then He turned to His friends and asked, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" (Mark 4:39-40, ESV)

Here is what I want you to see. The disciples were afraid because they did not yet know who was in the boat with them. If they had known, they would have understood that they were safe whether Jesus was asleep or awake, and whether the storm kept going or stopped. If Jesus can be at peace in the storm, we can be at peace in the storm.

Jesus does not always calm our storms the way He did that night. Sometimes He does. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego walked into a fiery furnace without knowing if they would be rescued. Their courage did not come from a guaranteed outcome. It came from knowing God.

That is where fearless living starts. Not with a promise that nothing bad will happen, but with knowing the One who is with you in it. God is not panicked. So you do not have to be.

TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION

Where do you feel afraid right now? Picture Jesus in that situation with you. What changes when you remember who is in the boat?

PRAYER

Jesus, You are in the boat with me. I give You the storm I am facing today. Open my eyes to who You are, so that I can have peace whether You calm the waves or carry me through them. Amen.

DAY 2

Singing in the Storm

Read: Mark 4:35-41; Psalm 46:1-3

In 1736, a young minister named John Wesley sailed from England to Georgia. In the middle of the Atlantic, a storm broke the mainsail and water poured onto the deck. The English passengers screamed. But a group of Moravian believers from Germany kept singing hymns.

When the storm passed, Wesley asked one of them, "Were you not afraid?"

"I thank God, no," the man said.

"But were not your women and children afraid?"

"No, our women and children are not afraid to die."

That answer shook Wesley. He realized he had a faith that worked in calm water but not in a storm.

Underneath most of our anxieties is a deeper fear: the fear of loss, and finally the fear of death. Jesus has dealt with that fear at the root. Hebrews 2:15 says He came to "deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Hebrews 2:15, ESV).

If death is not the end for you, if it is the doorway into the presence of Jesus, then the worst thing that could happen to you is not the worst thing. Recognizing that Jesus is with us gives us power for deliverance and power for perseverance. Sometimes we believe God to stop the storm. Sometimes we sing our way through it.

TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION

What is the fear under your fear? Bring it into the light today and hold it up next to the promise of eternal life in Jesus.

PRAYER

Father, thank You that in Jesus I do not have to be a slave to the fear of death. Give me a song in the storm. Let the people around me see a peace that points them to You. Amen.

DAY 3

Midnight Praise

Read: Acts 16:16-34

Paul and Silas had been stripped, beaten with rods and thrown into the inner cell of a prison with their feet in stocks. Their backs were bleeding. Nothing about their situation was fair.

And around midnight, they were praying and singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening.

Then an earthquake shook the prison, every door flew open, and every chain fell off. The jailer woke up, saw the open doors and drew his sword to take his own life. Paul cried out, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here" (Acts 16:28, ESV).

That night the jailer asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30, ESV), and his whole household came to faith.

Fear wants to make your world small. It wants you to think only about protecting yourself. But courage in God frees you to see other people, even the man who locked you up.

You may never be in a prison cell. But you will have midnights. And the people around you, your kids, your coworkers, your neighbors, are watching how you walk through them. Your peace in a hard place can open a door for someone else.

TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION

Who is watching how you handle your current trial? What would it look like to "sing at midnight" this week?

PRAYER

Lord, give me courage and composure in my hard places. Let my trust in You be so real that someone else asks about the hope I have. Amen.

DAY 4

The Shepherd Is With Me

Read: Psalm 23

David wrote this psalm as a man who had been a shepherd. He knew what sheep need: food, water, rest, protection and someone to lead them.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1, ESV)

Anxiety lives in the gap between what we need and what we think we have. David closes that gap with one sentence. If the Lord is my shepherd, I am not on my own, and I will not lack what I truly need.

Then he goes further: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4, ESV) David does not pretend the valley is not dark. He just refuses to walk through it alone. The rod and staff were the shepherd's tools for protecting and guiding the sheep. They are signs that God is not only near, He is actively watching over you.

And then this: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." (Psalm 23:5, ESV) God does not always remove what threatens you. Sometimes He sets a table right in front of it and invites you to sit down and eat.

TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION

Read Psalm 23 slowly, out loud if you can. Which line do you most need to believe today? Write it down and carry it with you.

PRAYER

Lord, You are my shepherd. I shall not want. When I walk through dark valleys, remind me that You are close beside me. Thank You for the table You set for me today. Amen.

DAY 5

One Thing

Read: Psalm 27:1-5, 13-14

David's life was never calm for long. Saul hunted him. Armies came against him. His own son turned on him. And yet he wrote, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27:1, ESV)

How did he live like that? Verse 4 tells us.

"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple." (Psalm 27:4, ESV)

David's peace did not come from perfect circumstances. It came from where he fixed his attention. He chose to gaze on the beauty of the Lord.

Whatever we magnify in our minds will shape our faith. If we stare at the threat, it grows. If we look at God, the threat takes its proper size.

A life centered on God is a fearless life. Not because nothing bad happens, but because our hearts are anchored to Someone who does not change.

TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION

Take five minutes today to do what David did. Set aside your problem for a moment and simply look at God. Thank Him for who He is: faithful, good, strong, near.

PRAYER

Lord, You are my light and my salvation. The one thing I want most is to be with You. Turn my eyes from what I fear to Your beauty, and let my heart be steady in You. Amen.

DAY 6

Make Him Your Fortress

Read: Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm 91:1, ESV)

Psalm 91 is beautiful poetry. But how do we actually live in God's shelter when we are anxious? Here are three practical steps from this psalm.

1. Declare who God is to you. Verse 2: "I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'" (Psalm 91:2, ESV) Say it out loud over the specific thing you are afraid of. This is an act of surrender. You are admitting you cannot carry it in your own strength.

2. Get quiet and listen. After you declare, wait. Let Him remind you of His love and His promises. Fear is loud. God often speaks in the stillness.

3. Remember who you are. Verse 14: "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name." (Psalm 91:14, ESV) You are not a stranger asking for help. You are a loved child of God, and He answers when you call.

Declare, listen, remember. You can practice this in a hospital waiting room, before a hard meeting, or at 2am when your mind will not stop.

> **TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION**
>
> Name one area where you feel weak and afraid. Walk through the three steps over it right now.

> **PRAYER**
>
> *Lord, You are my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust. I am Yours, and I rest in Your shadow today. Amen.*

DAY 7

Nothing Can Separate You

Read: Romans 8:31-39

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31, ESV)

Paul wrote this to believers who knew trouble, hunger, danger and persecution. He does not promise them those things will never come. He promises something better: none of it can separate them from God's love.

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39, ESV)

Did you notice that phrase? *Things present nor things to come.* That covers whatever you are afraid of today and whatever you are worried about tomorrow. Those fears are real, but they are not stronger than God's love.

I started writing these devotionals because I wanted to live more fearlessly myself. I was in a season with my family where there was a lot of pressure to worry. What steadied me was not a technique. It was coming back, day after day, to the truth that I am held in God's love and nothing can change that.

There will never be a moment in your future when you are not fully loved by God. Fear often comes from a lack of trust. When we trust His love, fear loses its power.

TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION

Is it hard for you to believe that nothing can separate you from God's love? Why? Tell Him honestly.

PRAYER

Father, thank You that nothing can separate me from Your love in Christ Jesus. Not the things present, and not the things to come. I choose to rest in Your love. Amen.

Keep going

Part 2 of the series, **Fearless: Courage for Anxious Hearts**, picks up where this one leaves off. Find all three at **gatecitybuckhead.com/fearless**.

Read it in the Bible App

All three Fearless plans are also available free in the YouVersion Bible App from GateCity Buckhead.

Pray with us

GateCity Buckhead prays together online through the week, and we would be honored to pray with you. See the times at **gatecitybuckhead.com/digital-community**.

Visit us

Sundays at 11am at Atlanta International School, 2890 N Fulton Dr NE, Atlanta. Plan your visit at **gatecitybuckhead.com/new-here**.

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