

SERIES	On Heaven as On Earth: Fear vs Open-Hands
BIBLE	Matthew 6:19-34; Rev. 21:5
TITLE	Finding faith within the fear
OVERVIEW	<p>In a world without God all you have is fear. And if this is all there is, you need to be afraid constantly that you may lose the little that you have. You may miss out on the only opportunities you'll ever get. Or you may lose your own life earlier than what you had hoped. Fear can trap you. Immobilize you. Cause you to live isolated, in distrust, and with closed hands.</p> <p>Here's where the Kingdom of God offers you a new way. One that doesn't necessarily take away the fear, but allows you to live boldly and with faith in the midst of fear. How? Because you know there is a bigger picture. You know there is a God who is in control and can provide your needs even when all is taken away. You know there is an eternal provision that cannot be lost. And even more importantly, the Kingdom of God changes what you see as important now and for eternity.</p>
SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN	<p>Re-valuing What You See (Mt. 6:19-24) In facing the topic of fear, Jesus starts by asking us to see things with a different value system. All the things that we collect here on earth will eventually break or get stolen... in either case, they will need replacing or will be gone. But Jesus says that there are things that we can attain which have eternal value and will never be lost. The question is: Which is which?</p> <p>Interestingly, stuck right in the middle of Jesus' re-valuing things, He talks about your eyes being the gateway to the rest of your life. If what you see is full of darkness, then so will the rest of your life be. But if what you see is light, then so will your whole life be full of light. Jesus is challenging you, how you view things in this life will affect your whole life. Your "re-valuing" can change everything. It affects what you fear losing and what you value gaining.</p> <p>God is ACTUALLY in Control (Mt. 6:25-27) This section starts with the "therefore". Which means everything that Jesus just said supports everything He is about to say right here.</p> <p>If you re-value what you see, it will change how you live. If you start to see things with the value that God actually places on things, you will start to care about very different things than you did before. One of the most important of these being the fact that God is actually God. He is actually in control. He is actually a good Father. He provides your needs. What you actually NEED. He does this for animals, how much more His children.</p> <p>First Priorities (Mt. 6:28-34; Rev. 21:5) All of this leads up to the first priority of God—His Kingdom. Seeking His Kingdom means loving people above things. Valuing changed lives above large bank accounts. Knowing that God promises to provide not only what you need, but to overflow blessings in your life as you follow the path that brings His Kingdom to earth. This way means living with open hands. Everything you have is in fact God's and is His to use at any time. This also is how His Kingdom finds roots in your heart first.</p>
GOSPEL	<p>2 Timothy 1:6-7 - The overflow of the gospel is NOT fear, but boldness!</p> <p>Romans 8:12-17 - The Spirit brings life and security because we know our Father is with us.</p>
NEXT STEPS	Get practical. What needs to change for you to live in faith and not fear? What's one practical step you could take this week? Life Group? Prayer walk? Serving?