



Who Has the Last Word – Faith or Fear

Message by Pastor Andrew Kulasingham 22nd March 2020

- Faith and fear are similar because they both are influenced by the unknown.
- Faith and fear are different because they both see the unknown with different lenses.

When faith has the last word, fear is silenced.

Isaiah 7:1-9

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it. ² And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

³ Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field, ⁴ and say to him: ‘Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah.

⁵ Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying,

⁶ “Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel” — ⁷ thus says the Lord GOD:

“It shall not stand,

Nor shall it come to pass.

⁸ For the head of Syria is Damascus,

And the head of Damascus is Rezin.

Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken,

So that it will not be a people.

⁹ The head of Ephraim is Samaria,

And the head of Samaria is Remaliah’s son.

If you will not believe,

Surely you shall not be established.”

The context of the passage is that Syria and Israel have joined forces and are poised to attack Judah.

The same circumstance can be seen with two different perspectives:

- Seeing through the lenses of fear
- Seeing through the lenses of faith

1. Seeing through the lenses of fear

Isaiah 7:2 **And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria's forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.**

Here are the facts (verse 1):

- Syria and Israel had joined forces and attacked Judah
- “but could not prevail against it.”

Here is what was heard (verse 2):

“**Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.**” – That is true but not the full truth. But that was the last word. It produced fear in King Ahaz – “**...his heart and the hearts of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.**”

When fear has the last word, we tend to see everything through the lenses of fear.

2. Seeing through the lenses of faith

Isaiah 7:4

...say to him: “Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands

The fact is there was a credible threat – “**the forces are deployed in Ephraim.**”

Faith does not ignore the facts.

Faith seeks a God perspective before proceeding with action.

Isaiah brought the God perspective.

1. Take heed and be quiet...

- “stop worrying” (NLT); “be calm” (AMP); “don’t panic” (MSG)

2. Do not fear or be fainthearted

They say there are 365 “fear nots” in the Bible. I haven’t counted. But there sure is a lot of them. KJV has the phrase “fear not” at least 103 times. The entire tenor of Scriptures is to “fear not” and instead to fear God. The Psalms deal with fear extensively.

Psalms 27:1 (NKJV) **The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?**

Psalms 27:5 (NKJV) **For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.**

Psalms 56:3-4 (NKJV) **Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear.**

Psalms 91:9-11 (NKJV) **Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways.**

Luke 12:32 (NKJV) **Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**

The Kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 7:8 **Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands.**

3. ...these two stubs of smoking firebrands

God sees beyond the fog of the unknown.

He calls the two armies “burned-out embers” (NLT) “smouldering logs” (AMP).

FEAR said – Isaiah 7:6 (NLT) **We will attack Judah and capture it for ourselves. Then we will install the son of Tabeel as Judah’s king.’**

FAITH said - Isaiah 7:7 (NLT) **“This invasion will never happen; it will never take place;”**

Who will you give the last word to – fear or faith?

God knows the end from the beginning.

The King of Syria will end up returning to Syria and will be assassinated by people close to him. He dies and the nation falls.

The same thing with the king of Israel; he too will die – sixty five years later Israel goes into exile.

The invasion never happened, just as God said.

The same circumstance two different perspectives – fear or faith

It’s a hopeless situation in man’s perspective; but with God he responds with an emphatic “not gonna happen”.

God gave a promise but Israel had to respond to that promise

Isaiah 7:9b

(NKJV) **If you will not believe, Surely you shall not be established.**

(NLT) **Unless your faith is firm, I cannot make you stand firm.**

The sense is lost in translation.

The Hebrew goes like this "IM LO THA AMINU KELO THE AMENU".

The word amen is in the words “aminu” and “amenu”.

It literally means “if you do not believe the “amen”, I cannot establish the “amen””

“If you do not believe what you are amening, and do not live based on what you are amening, how can I establish what you are saying amen to?”

You say Amen to the Word of God. But if you do not believe the Word of God, and don’t live based on the Word of God, how can God establish the Word of God in you?

BELIEVING AND LIVING THE AMEN

It is one thing to know God's promises.

It's another thing to believe in God's promises.

It's yet another thing to go further and walk in God's promises.

Knowing and believing is not enough.

What truly matters is to live in the reality of God's promises.

Living the Amen – I believe and nurture that belief until it comes to pass.

The root word of amen is '*aman*' – to build up or support; to foster as a parent or nurse.

We see that use in the book of Ruth.

Ruth 4:16 - **Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse (*aman*) to him.**

See also – 2 Corinthians 1:20 (NLT)

For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (MSG)

For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means "Yes") ascends to God for his glory.

Jesus Christ has fulfilled all God's promises by saying AMEN on the cross. Now our Amen needs to come forth through believing in what Christ has done on the cross, taking every promise, saying yes and amen to it, and living in it until we see the fulfillment in our lives.

It is not sufficient to merely agree with God's promises.

Yes, we need to agree, to embrace and to align our thoughts to God's promises.

But *amen* also includes the idea of nurturing, nourishing, building and supporting the new way of thinking you now have embraced according to God's promise.

You do nurture it until you see it happen.

How to nourish what we have amen-ed

1. Look out for the moment-by-moment God happenings and fill our lives with praise and thanksgiving.

The way to nourish what you have "Amen-ed", is to be aware of the little signs (God happenings) – the deposits of hope that God infuses into our lives.

These God happenings are the little answers to prayer, the little miracles that happen every day. We need to be aware of God happenings daily and nourish our Amens with praise and thanksgiving for what has happened already and for what is yet to come.

2. Support one another with encouraging words that will support and nourish the God perspective.

Ephesians 5:18-21 (NKJV) **...but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.**

“Unless your faith is firm, I cannot make you stand firm”

When you say, “Amen,” you are coming in agreement with God and His word.

Believe that Amen, nurture and feed that Amen, live in that Amen and expect God to establish that Amen.

Next time fear speaks to you, make sure faith has the last word.