



Abandoning Faith

*Mark 1:15; 11:8–18; 12:12–34;
13:1–2, 14:1–50*

The Big Idea: Many times, our faith deteriorates as our circumstances deteriorate. When that happens, our faith is quickly overcome by fear, and the future looks dark. The apostle Peter experienced this, and he temporarily abandoned his faith in Jesus.

The Bottom Line: Fear and faith cannot live in the same heart.

Introduction:

Here's something I've noticed, and perhaps you have as well.

Faith often deteriorates as circumstances deteriorate.

Isn't it true that our confidence in God rises and falls with the random events of life? Our faith is easily replaced with fear.

I think if Simon Peter were here, he would tell us what to do and how to respond in this season.

Review:

In this series, we have been speaking about a story that should have died in Nero's Rome, but it didn't. It is the story of Jesus of Nazareth as told by Simon Peter dictated to and recorded by John Mark. It came to us known as the Gospel of Mark. Eventually, this first-century document was included in the Bible, but Mark wasn't writing the Bible. He was simply documenting Peter's experience as an eyewitness testimony of Jesus. Peter summarizes Jesus' message this way:

*“The time has come! The KINGDOM OF GOD is near.
REPENT and BELIEVE the good news!”
-Mark 1:15*

Last week in God Is Closer Than You Think, Jesus and his followers were on their way from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus turned the authority paradigm upside down.

He said, “You know how those with power and influence leverage their power and influence...”

Mark 10:43-45, “Not so with you! ... For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

The last phrase was baffling to Jesus’s disciples.

As they near Jerusalem, they are swarmed by Galilean pilgrims on their way to celebrate Passover. The momentum is building.

Tension:

There are rumors going around that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and healed a blind man named Bartimaeus.

Mark 11:8-9, “Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Then it turns political.

Mark 11:10, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!”

The twelve disciples are euphoric. This was what they had been waiting for. All the talk of suffering was erased.

Truth:

Read: Mark *12:12–34; 13:1–2, 14:1-50.*

Faith deteriorates when circumstances deteriorate.

In those moments, faith is quickly replaced with fear.

Warren Wiersbe said, “Fear and faith cannot live in the same heart.”

Conclusion:

God is near, and you're not far from the Kingdom of God.

Application:

Don't cut and run when the going gets tough.

Push in and trust Christ.

Next Steps:

- Memorize Mark 11:9-10.
- Don't cut and run when the going gets tough.
- Push in and trust Christ when things get difficult.

Discussion questions for group this week:

1. What does this teach me about God?

2. What does this teach me about me?

3. How do I apply this to my life?

4. If I could ask a question about this it would be....