

Conquering Fear
(Rev. Dr. Roger Cann)

The hospital chaplain entered the recovery room as promised. He had told Malcolm that he would be there after the operation was over. In his cubicle Malcolm looked greatly diminished. There were tubes and connections for oxygen and post op medications. Malcolm looked so small with all the apparatus around him.

“Malcolm, it’s good to see you. I trust you are encouraged that the operation is over and done with. If you wish, I’ll read a scripture passage and have a prayer.” Malcolm responded: “I’m afraid.” And in that brief exchange it became clear that he had a fear of dying. The chaplain assured him that his was a legitimate fear that could be replaced with positive thoughts of confident faith in God’s promise never to leave him. Malcolm confessed, “I wish I had that kind of confidence.”

The chaplain began again to respond to Malcolm’s fear. “Your admission of wanting confidence is a vital first step. Let me read to you a passage of scripture that we usually read at funerals. It’s the assurance Jesus gave to his disciples:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:1-3.

“Jesus Christ is God in human form. The more you know about Jesus and how he lived, the more you will know how God wants us to live. We need to take everything that we know about ourselves and commit that to everything that we know about Jesus Christ. This is a journey of discovery. I’m going to leave my New Testament with you so that you can start your journey. We’ll have many a pleasant exchange about how we conquer our fears.”

The chaplain gave a short prayer with Malcolm joining in with: “Okay Jesus”. Two days later when the chaplain visited Malcolm, he found him without all of the tubes and connecting apparatus. He looked a whole lot better. He was sitting up with the New Testament open on his knees. He confessed to the chaplain that he wasn’t sure that he was ready to die. Rather he felt that there was much more to life than he had ever imagined. The doctor told him he could leave the hospital in a day or two. What he needed was a place to live and a job. He hoped there would be a community of believers to welcome him.

My Lord promised:

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”
(2Cor.12:9).

