

GOD ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR

ser4062 Where's God When I'm Afraid, Pt 1

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by Gina Kulikowski

Good morning Church Family! Wow, 2 weeks in a row you get a Kulikowski preacher! You must have done something wrong! LOL My husband, Pastor John, preached last week and he gave a great message, didn't he? He finished out the series *God in America*. I'm always blessed when He preaches!

I asked him to switch places with me in the preaching schedule. You can do that when you are married to another preacher. I asked him to switch with me so I could have the topic *Where is God When I'm Afraid?* I said I just felt like I could better relate to that topic. So being the great husband that he is, he said Ok. I know you all are glad he did because God gave him a powerful message on Unity last week!

Therefore, today I can speak with you on a topic and an emotion I know very well...fear. Where IS God when I'm afraid?

We all know the emotion, don't we? Being afraid for your life, your family, your children and your future. Fear is real.

My daughter and I have a women's ministry called Fearless Women.

Take a look at the word Fearless.

FEARLESS – lacking fear.

The truth is no one is really fearless! We all fear something at some time.

But now look at the word again.

FEAR-LESS– fearing less.

God's goal for each of us is to fear-less and live the courageous life he created us to live. We can only do that as we grow closer and closer to Him! Somebody say Amen!

We encounter fear almost every day, sometimes throughout our day. So, we ask ourselves *Where IS God When I Am Afraid?* Good question, isn't it?

Would you pray with me for the message today?

PRAY

The title of our message today is...“God on the Bathroom Floor.”

You will not understand why I chose this title until the very end of my sermon today. Stay with me and it will become very clear!

Before we go into the bible passage today, I want to talk about fear for a minute. There are two things that bring out the most fear in me. I believe this may be true for a lot of us.

Two things that cause fear:

1. Being out of our comfort zone.
2. Not being in control.

What does God do when he wants us to grow in areas of faith? He takes us out of our comfort zone, and he takes away all our control so we have but one option left. We trust him completely.

Somebody say, "Trust God completely!"

Twelve years ago I went completely out of my comfort zone when I went to Haiti on my first mission trip out of the country. My daughter Mary really wanted to go with our church, and I didn't want her to go without me. It was just Mary and me from our family. John stayed home with the other kids. Mary was about 15 years old. All she wanted for Christmas that year was a camera and to go on the church mission trip to Haiti. I was really scared to go, because I had heard all kinds of scary stories about Haiti. I heard they practice a lot of voodoo and it's a third world country with a lot of political unrest. It could be a very dangerous place if you ended up in the wrong part of Haiti. I fasted and I prayed for God's will.

A family member stopped by one day while I was praying about going on the trip and he said to just remember this, "The God you meet every day at your kitchen table is the same God who will be with you in Haiti. That thought never left my mind."

So we went. Just my 15-year-old daughter and me. We got there and it was amazing. Our first stop was the orphanage in Haiti where we would be serving that week. The girls from the orphanage met us that night in their pajamas, singing worship songs to God and I remember looking at their little faces and thinking that I am exactly where I am supposed to be. I was so happy!

That happiness lasted until we got to our hotel that night. A five-star hotel? Try minus five stars! But it gets worse! You see, once a year in

Haiti they have this celebration called Carnival. It's somewhat like the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, only different, quite different.

It was the first night of Carnival and it was going on right outside our hotel window. The voodoo drums, the devil worshipping. Just what I envisioned Haiti to be. Just outside our window was a man marching to the voodoo drums with a huge snake around his neck! Lovely, just lovely!

Mary and I were all alone in that room it was our first night in Haiti. There were two twin beds, one for each us. As I listened to the voodoo drums, and thought about the man with the creepy snake around his neck who was right outside our window, I did what any strong, spiritual, Godly, mother would do. I looked at my 15-year-old daughter, all by herself in her bed and I said, "Mary, may I sleep with you tonight? Just in case you get scared or something."

She said, "Sure Mommy, but I'm fine. Are you scared?" I fibbed and told her no, but I thought she might be. So, I got in bed next to her and suggested we listen to worship music as we slept. We had a little iPod Shuffle with worship songs on it and one pair of ear phones and we shared it that night. Where was God when I was afraid? He was in the worship music. He was in our little iPod Shuffle.

Every word of praise scared the devil away, no matter how close he was! I will never forget that night because I woke up the next morning, after a good night's sleep, with great peace and was ready to start our mission in Haiti!

The devil was right outside our door, but he couldn't touch us! He didn't have permission. Did you hear me, Church Family? He didn't have permission!

He couldn't steal our peace! God's word filled our minds that night!

I'm quite often scared in life, and think you might be too, but we don't have to be.

Do you ever feel like Satan is right outside your window? You may even hear the voodoo drums. Does anxiety fill your mind, and your heart becomes fearful?

What are you going through today? Are you scared? Where is God in all of it?

Sometimes it may seem like Jesus is sleeping through the storm and that's not very comforting. Or maybe it is.

Let's look at what happens when Jesus takes a boat ride with His disciples.

Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus Calms the Storm)

35: On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side" 36: Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

Stop here for a minute. When Jesus suggests crossing over to the other side, it should get your attention right away. To cross over to get to the other side means you have to go through something. Jesus has a place He wants to bring you to. Maybe it's a place of great faith, but the only way you can get to great faith is to go through something.

How many of you are going through something right now as Jesus is asking you to cross over to the other side?

Maybe that something is causing great fear.
Maybe you have to walk through it with God.
We can't let a spirit of fear attach itself to us. God will use our fears to build our faith!

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of Love and power and sound mind.

Remember, we walk through fear. We don't unpack and live there. It's not a place where God wants us to stay.

Sometimes we have to walk through fear to get to faith. Fear is all around us. We have to make our faith bigger than our fear!

The other side of fear is Faith.

Let's go. Let's cross over right now. It may not be easy, but we can do it, Church Family.

Mark 4: 37-38

37: And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38: But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

A great storm. The wind and the waves all around you. Do you feel like you are going to drown sometimes? And, Jesus doesn't seem to care. Can you feel the disciple's desperation? I can.

Jesus, wake up. Please Jesus, wake up! My daughter is having seizures, one after the other. I am scared Jesus, wake up! Where are

you? My husband is not coming out of an insulin reaction. Should I call 911?

What do I do? We can't pay these bills you promised to take care of for us. A person I love is suffering with an addiction that could take their life. Jesus, I need you! Why are you sleeping Jesus, why? So much pain and I don't have the answers. Jesus, I need you!

Where is God when I'm afraid? Is Jesus sleeping? Yes, in this story He is. And I didn't like this at all. It really troubled me.

I like the verse in ***Psalm 121:1*** where it says God never sleeps or slumbers. I want to think God is up, always watching over me, especially during the worst times of my life.

Why this story? Because God wants us to follow Jesus' example in this story.

Sometimes we see Jesus as God, sometimes we see Jesus as a human, just like us. He was both. Jesus was human. He needed rest. And He could rest at any time because God, His father, was always in control. GOD, HIS FATHER, HAD IT UNDER CONTROL. God was His peace. Is God your peace? Can you put your heart at rest even in the middle of your storm?

Jesus could sleep in the middle of a storm because His faith was bigger than His fear. He trusted His Father God.

I am here to tell you, Church Family, you can do the same. While the wind is trying to knock you over and your heart is filling up with fear, God is asking you to trust Him right now. God is asking you to trust HIM.

One word from God will change your heart and give you peace even in the middle of the storm! Let's look at what Jesus says....

39: Then He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace be still" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40: But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41: And they feared exceedingly and said to one another, "Who can this be that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

His Father took care of it through Him. He was the Son of God! You are a child of God.

Do you need your mind to have peace today and your heart to be calm? Even in the middle of your storm? God shows us how to know that same peace Jesus knew.

Where is God when you're afraid?

- God is in the prayers you pray! So, pray more!
- God is in the worship music you listen too. So, worship more!
- God is in the Bible. So, read it more!
- Believe it and declare it!

This is how you feed your faith and not your fears.

I want to close with this amazing story of a young women who has had cancer three times before she was 30. Some of you may have seen her on America's Got Talent this year. Her name is Nightbride. Her story will inspire you. I read her blog while on the beach this year and I knew I had to share it with you.

If you were to ask her where was God when she was afraid, she might answer in a very unconventional way.

Post by Jane Marczeski (Nightbride)

“I don’t remember most of autumn, because I lost my mind late in the summer and for a long time after that I wasn’t in my body. I was a light bulb buzzing somewhere far.

After the doctor told me I was dying, after the man I married said he didn’t love me any more I chased a miracle in California and sixteen weeks later I got it. The Cancer was gone.

But when my brain caught up with it all, something broke. I later found out that the tragedy at once had caused a physical head trauma and my brain was sending false signals of excoriating pain and panic.

I spent three months propped against the wall. On nights that I could not sleep. I laid in the tub like an insect, staring at my reflection in the shower knob. I vomited until I was hollow. I rolled up under my robe on the tile. The bathroom floor became my place to hide, where I could scream and be ugly: where I could sob and spit and eventually doze off, happy to be asleep, even with my head on the toilet.

I have had cancer three times now and I have barely passed thirty. There are times when I wonder what I must have done to deserve such a story.

I fear sometimes that when I die and meet with God, He will say I disappointed Him or offended Him or failed Him. Maybe He’ll say I just never learned the lesson, or I wasn’t grateful enough.

But one thing I know for sure is this... He can never say that He did not know me.

Call me bitter if you want to. That's fair. Count me among the angry, the cynical, the offended, the hardened, but count me also among the friends of God.

I am God's downstairs neighbor banging on the ceiling with a broomstick. I show up at His door every day. Sometimes with songs sometimes with curses.

Sometimes with apologies, gifts, questions and demands.

Sometimes I use my key under the mat to let myself in. Other times I sulk outside until He opens the door to me Himself. I have called Him a cheat, a liar, and I meant it. I have told Him I wanted to die, and I meant it.

Tears have become the only prayer I know. Prayers roll over my nostrils and drip down my forearms. They fall to the ground as I reach for him. These are the prayers I repeat night and day, sunrise and sunset.

It's not mercy that I asked for, but it is mercy nonetheless and I learn a new prayer: THANK YOU. It's a prayer I don't mean yet, but will repeat until I do.

Call me cursed, call me lost, call me scorned. But that's not all. Call me chosen, blessed, sought after. Call me the one who God whispers His secrets to.

I am the one whose belly is filled with loaves of mercy that were hidden for me.

Even on days when I'm so sick sometimes I go lay on the mat in the afternoon light to listen for Him.

I know it sounds crazy, and I can't really explain it, But God is there-even now.

I have heard it said that some people can't see God because they won't look low enough. And it's true. Look lower. God is on the bathroom floor. "

Where is God when she is afraid? God is on the bathroom floor. Where is God when you are afraid? God is anywhere you want him to be.

Maybe you have to look lower. Maybe you have to shout louder, maybe you have to be your crazy self and just cry out to God.

I am not afraid to look low enough for God.

He's been on my bedroom floor when my husband John wouldn't come to after an insulin reaction.

He's been on the floor of this church years ago when my daughter would drop to the floor and have seizures. He was out in the middle of the parking lot when Ashley fell like a ragdoll on the icy cold ground and had a seizure before youth group.

Where is God when you are afraid? He right here! He is in your prayers, in the arms of a friend, in worship music, in a little iPod in Haiti, keeping the devil away from us!

Call out to him anywhere, anytime.

Call out to him right now, right where you are.

Don't run from God. Please, run to God! Yell at Him, question Him, but don't you run from Him. God wants to know you. Look low enough for God and you will find Him.

Be the neighbor banging on the ceiling if you have to, but get His attention. Wake up, Jesus wake up! He will come to your rescue.

You have to feed your faith and not your fear! Feed your faith with God's word and His promises.

If you have never asked Jesus Christ into your heart to be your Lord and Savior, you can call out to God right now!

It's as easy as A B C...

- **Admit** you are a sinner.
- **Believe** God sent His only son Jesus to die on a cross and pay the penalty for your sin.
- **Commit** your heart and life to Jesus Christ.
- **Do it** today

If you want this relationship with God, please say this prayer with me.

Dear God, thank you for loving me, I admit I am a sinner and I've done things wrong. Please forgive me for my sins.

I believe you sent your son Jesus to die on a cross for me. Dear Jesus please come and live inside my heart and be my Lord and personal savior.

Holy Spirit please empower me to live my life for Jesus Christ. I pray all this in Jesus name. Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer you have made the best decision you will ever make! Welcome to the family of God!