BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!
Part 2: Fighting Fear (Exo. 14:5-31)

INTRO—Key Thought: No problem is too big that God is not BIGGER!

ILLUS—Little boy asked Daddy about his fears and he said no to all. Son said, "I guess Mommy is only thing you fear?!" Everybody has fears. Study of 500 showed an average of 14 a person. Phobia list (524) … We fear failure, rejection, loss, death. Man's oldest problem is fear (Gen. 3:10). Bible has much to say about fear—says more about fear than heaven or hell. I want to use one of the most famous stories in the Bible, Hebrews crossing Red Sea. Five days earlier exodus began, now at cul-de-sac, mountains on both sides and sea in front—and Pharoah's army closing fast—and they were afraid (v. 10). From their experience, let's learn how to better fight our fears:

I. THE RESULTS OF FEAR (vv. 11-12) – Fear can do a lot of damage. Fear does four things. It makes us:

A. *SKEPTICAL* (v. 11a) – Fear tends to make us skeptical. It causes us to doubt and ask questions. You can sense sarcasm. Often ridicule what we fear. General attitude of fearful people is, "I doubt it!" We doubt ourselves, others, even God.

B. *SELFISH* (v. 11b) – Focusing only on themselves, they turn on Moses and blame him. When we get afraid, we tend to look out for number one and blame other people. We get selfish when we become fearful.

C. *STUBBORN* (v. 12a) – We resist change when we are afraid. Moses rocked the boat. Fear keeps people from growing and trying new things. It paralyzes and immobilizes us. Fear causes us to be hardheaded. The hardest thing to open is a closed mind.

D. *SHORTSIGHTED* (v. 12b) – Fear makes us want to live in the past. We want to retreat and go back to safety of the known. Little did they know, the Promised Land was just ahead, but were too shortsighted to see it out of fear. Some prefer slavery to uncertainty. Fear can distort memory. We like to hang on to our fears, though painful, because we know what to expect.

II. THE RISKS OF FAITH (vv. 13-18) – With 2mm mad at him, how did Moses respond to their fear announcement? He saw the root of their complaining was fear. Calmly, not defensively, not taking it personally, Moses tells them to take three actions to face their fears:

A. *LET GO OF YOUR FEARS* (v. 13a) – Most of our fears will never happen. A study showed . . . Legitimate fears (8%) must be faced head on. They must be admitted. Moses told them to face and let go of their fears. "Fear not" found 365 times in Bible – one for every day! God had led them to that cul-de-sac (14:1). He backed them in a corner. Why? Set them up for a miracle. God loves to back people into places where they have to trust Him. God has guided us all into some Red Sea experiences. Where He guides, He provides. He is in control! God guides us into impossible, Red Sea fearful situations for two reasons:

1. His Own Glory (14:3-4) –
2. Our Own Growth – This tested their faith. They responded in fear – now must let go!

B. *LOOK UP TO THE FATHER* (v. 13b-14) – Time and again God says, "Stand still. Watch me move. Look up to me!" Why? Fear makes us want to run not stand still. Natural reaction to fear is to get out of dodge – to leave, quit, or run. Hard to see God unless stand still (Psa. 46:1). Israelites had nowhere to run. They could only stand still and look up. Remember he has all the resources you need (2 Tim. 1:7; Rom. 8:31). Accept His love (1 Jn. 4:18). Trust is love based.

Note: Sometimes God waits until the last second to answer. Why? Again, to test and grow our faith. In His time, the waters will part (v. 21).

C. *LAUNCH OUT IN FAITH* (vv. 15-18 " . . . move on") – Time comes to quit praying and launch out in faith (v. 16). Faith doesn't suppress fear, it allows us to launch out in spite of it. Fear always takes us to moment of truth. Retreat or advance? God wants us to take the plunge. There's a time to pray and a time to act. Faith is a verb, not passive. It is acting, moving, launching. If want to walk on water, must exit boat! We all fear. All learned, but two (fear of falling and loud noises). We must Unlearn our fears. You must launch in faith. Life is full of risks and we act in faith all the time (fast food, prescriptions, seats). If can faith these, can't we faith God? God usually takes us through our fears not around. Requires courage.

III. THE RESULTS OF FAITH (vv. 19-31)

A. *VICTORY* (vv. 19-28)—What they feared was defeated

B. *FEAR OF GOD* (vv. 29-31)—Only right fear

CONC— Any Red Sea (fears) in your life today? What's scaring you? It will show up in skepticism, selfishness, stubbornness, shortsightedness. What fear are you clutching today? Habit, relationship, loss of job, etc. Take these steps: Let go, Look up, Launch out! And watch the waters part so you can walk on dry land. Read Psalm 27:1, 3, 14; 34:4; 56:3, 11; Isa. 41:10.