

Sermon Notes: Be Not Afraid

Matt 10:26-31

Michael McNally, Aug 15, South Bay Christian Church

Introduction

- Do you overcome fear by sheer willpower? By internal fortitude, as in this recitation?
I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer.
Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration.
I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me.
And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path.
Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.
-- Frank Herbert, *DUNE*
- **No** -- biblically the answer is to trust in God's own person and covenant relationship.
When you face fear, you aren't abandoned, or cast back upon your own resources.
Instead you are knit together as one with God through Jesus Christ. That's the answer to fear.

Develop the problem of fear

- The gospels are books flooded with fear, one dominant emotional theme. My live sermon did not cover all these scriptures, but this shows how humans are constantly driven by fear -- and so often either fall into sin or recoil from answering God's call. You don't need to read all these, but browse to see how confronting fear is a major gospel theme:
Matt 2:22, Matt 14:5, Matt 21:46, Matt 25:25, Matt 28:4,
Mark 5:15, 6:20, 9:32, 10:32, 11:18, 11:32, 12: 12, 16: 8
Luke 8:35, 9:45, 20:19, 21:26, 22:2
John 3:20, 7:13, 9: 22, 12:42 , 19:8, 19:38
- In our time we have many fears: COVID, Politics, war, climate change, etc. Fear causes anguish, torment. In this dark era the United States unprecedented depression and suicidal ideation.

Develop on the main scripture

- "Do not fear" is the Bible's most frequently repeated command.
- Matt 10:26-31: So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

- Obey God's commission for your life and you will suffer & sacrifice for it. *But that's good!* That's a price and kind of proof of discipleship. Be not afraid.

POINT 1: Jesus sends his disciples on a journey that repeatedly tests their courage. Every disciple has such a journey. For example, see the constant tests of fear Jesus' followers faced across his life (before birth, cradle to grave and beyond):

- Announcing the birth of John the Baptist. Luke 1:11
- Announcing the birth of Jesus. Luke 1:29
- Calling his disciples. Luke 5:8.
- Revealing Christ in the transfiguration. Luke 9:34
- Many occasions revealing his coming crucifixion.
- Finally, announcing Jesus' resurrection. John 20:19

We too are "in the world like Jesus," tested by fear, but upheld by the Father's love. 1 John 4:16-19.

"This present world is a perfectly safe place for us to be." That certainly is what Jesus, and the Bible as a whole, has to say to us. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps 23). -- Dallas Willard, in The Divine Conspiracy

POINT 2: On this journey, the disciplines must resist fearful lies and proclaim truth

- **FEAR: False Evidence Appearing Real** - fear is based on a lie that sidelines God out of our minds.
- Popular culture, especially social media, stokes fear. Fearmongering is contagious, like a viral disease.
- Are you tempted to share on social media? Are you tempted by this culture's divisiveness? Resist conspiracy theories (modern gnosticism), shun fear based thinking, hold your peace. James 1:19, Isaiah 8:12, Eph 6:12.
- Halt the viral spread of fear, don't participate in it or amplify it. Matt 10:16
- Instead uphold and share what is good. Phil 4:8-9. Christ's gospel: radiant joy, good news

POINT 3: True courage comes from knowing God

- Matt 10:28-31. God's love is beyond measure, we are valued infinitely more than "many sparrows." His love and his treasuring concern toward us is why we have courage.
- God rains down encouragement upon us, his children. Matt 14:27. Rev. 1:17. Luke 8:50. 1 Peter 5:7. Heb 13:5-6. Psalm 27:1-5. 2 Timothy 1:7. Rom 8:15. Psalm 31:24. Phil 1:6. Phil 4:6-7. Luke 12:32. Isaiah 43:1. John 14:27.

Conclusion

- Consider personally how you can **START** showing more courage, **STOP** being controlled by fears, or **CONTINUE** what you are already succeeding in as a walk of faith.
- *You aren't abandoned, or cast back upon your own resources. Instead you are knit together as one with God through Jesus Christ. That's the answer to fear.*