

Fil-Am Community Church

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No More Fear - Part 2 of 10

Key Verse: Psalms 34:4

“YOUR FUTURE AND GOD'S FAITHFULNESS”

Psalm 34:4, *"I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears."*

Last week we started our series about dealing with your fears. Right now, if I asked you “What is your greatest fear?” what is the first thing that comes to your mind? Your wife? Don’t raise your hand. Seriously, I’m sure every one of us in this room is afraid of at least one thing. Some are afraid of the dark – we call that Lygophobia. Some are afraid of crowds – we call that Agoraphobia. Some of heights – we call that altophobia. Some are afraid of animals. We call that Zoophobia. But there is also a Barneyphobia which is the fear of purple animals. Only you who are parents of preschoolers will get this one.

Today we're going to look at one that's very serious. With all the uncertainties we're facing, economic crisis, terrorism, natural disasters, we're all concerned with what's going to happen next. So, this morning let me talk about the fear of the future. And why we need not be afraid of it.

You see, nobody really knows what's going to happen in the future. Mankind can transplant livers, program computers, send men to the moon, you may have an incredible IQ, you may have a PhD, LSD, everything but you don't know what's going to happen in the future. I don't care how smart you are it's just an educated guess. On top of that it's uncontrollable. We try to control the future through our worry and fears but it doesn't work.

I. FACTS ABOUT MY FUTURE

So what does the Bible say about your future? It says three things about your future. First,

1. God knows everything that's going to happen.

Hebrews 4:13 *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before His eyes."* God can see it all. God is not limited by time. God can be in the past, the present and the future all at the same time. For instance, if I were able to take you up in a blimp and you were to look down on Macy's Parade in NY you could see the beginning of the parade, the middle of the parade and the end of the parade all at once. But the person down on earth could only see what was in front of him at that particular time. Likewise from God's perspective He can see it all. There is nothing hidden. He knows everything that's going to happen to you because He's already in the future as well as already in the past. That means that God is never surprised by anything. He'll never say, "Oh really? I never expected that to happen!" or "Ooops!" because He always knows what's going to happen.

Psalm 139:16 *"The days allotted to me had already been recorded in Your book before any of them ever began."* is one of the reasons why abortion is wrong. It short circuits God's plan for your life. It says all your days were allotted even before you were born. When you were in your mother's womb God already knew the number of days you were going to live. You need to see that God knows it all. There's nothing He doesn't know and there's nothing that's going to surprise Him.

The second thing the Bible says is that

2. God has a plan for my future.

He not only knows my future but He has a plan for my future. Jeremiah 29:11 says "*I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.'"* This is telling us that God has done a lot of thinking about your future. God has thought more about your future than you have. A lot more! He has plans for your life. And they are good plans.

Can I miss God's plan for my life? Of course. People miss God's plan all the time. Millions of people go through life and miss God's plan completely. You can miss it through apathy, arrogance, being ignorant of His plan, rebellion. There are a lot of ways to miss God's plan. Most people miss God's plan for their life. But He does have a plan for you. And it is a good plan. It's your choice to either get in on it and cooperate with it or miss it and miss the very reason for which you were created.

3. God will be with me every step of the way.

The third thing the Bible says about my future is God will be with me every step of the way. Hebrews 13:5 "*God has said, 'Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you.'"* None of us know what's going to happen in the next year. But regardless of what happens to you, you're not going to go through it alone. God says, "I'm with you, I'll always be with you, I have been with you, I'm going to keep on being with you! You'll never go through it alone." This is called God's faithfulness.

The verse I've chosen for this message is Psalm 34:4 *"I sought the Lord and He answered me. He delivered me from all my fears."* It says "I sought the Lord" not a therapy, not a technique, but the Lord. And *"He delivered me from all my fears."*

Now, for every fear that you have there is a corresponding attribute of God, something about His character, His personality, His nature, that corresponds to every fear that you've got. Your fears come from either not understanding or not trusting various aspects of God's character. If you would like to get over your fears, the secret is to seek the Lord, to understand what God's really like. Because once you understand what God's really like, you don't have anything to be afraid of. In each of the fears you have there is a corresponding characteristic of God.

II. GOD'S GUARANTEES FOR MY FUTURE

For instance, today we're looking at the fear of the future. The corresponding attribute of God to that is God's faithfulness.

What does faithfulness mean? It means God can't lie, God can't break a promise, God does exactly what He says He will do. This is just part of God. God cannot be unfaithful to you because of who He is. It's impossible.

2 Timothy 2:13 *"If we are faithless He will remain faithful for He cannot disown Himself."* If somebody ever asks you "Is there anything God can't do?" say Yes. He can't be unfaithful. It's His nature to be faithful. That means God always keeps His promises. Psalm 145:13 *"The Lord is faithful to all his promises."*

What does that have to do with my fear of the future? There are over 7000 promises in the Bible. They are like blank checks from God to you, waiting to be

filled out for you to take advantage of. Time after time God says, "If you will just trust Me, I will do this in your life."

This morning we're going to look at five of the promises of God. God says "If you will believe these, if you'll trust Me, you'll have nothing to fear about your future." The first is,

1. I CAN DEPEND ON GOD TO GUIDE ME WHEN I'M CONFUSED

This is very important because part of your fear of the future is you don't know what you're going to do there. You know it's going to be a new situation and you think "How am I supposed to act? What am I supposed to do? How will I cope? What will the problems be?" You're filled with questions. One thing you can count on in your future is you're going to have to make some decisions in your future. Some of you hate that. You hate to make decisions. You hate to make decisions because you're afraid you're going to make the wrong decision.

So the whole idea of the future means new challenges, new decisions and it means you might make the wrong one. It can be confusing. Let's admit it. Life is complex. Sometimes there are no easy solutions. You've got a loved one on life support for six months and you wonder why. There's no easy answer to that. Life is complex yet God says because of My faithfulness, you can trust Me to guide you when you're confused.

Proverbs 3:5-6 *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do and He will show you the right way."* The issue is this: When you come to decision making in your future who's going to be your source of advice? What's going to be your source of authority? When you don't know what to do and you're confused tomorrow, who

are you going to look to? Your friends? They could be just as wrong as you are. Maybe read a popular magazine like *Cosmopolitan* and see what everybody else thinks. Or call the Psychic Hotline. Read your horoscope. Open a fortune cookie. Check your biorhythm.

God says that's a bunch of baloney! There is only one 100%, totally reliable source about your future. That's God! He's there already. He says, Trust in the Lord. Don't lean on your own understanding. Acknowledge Him and He'll show you the way to go.

How do you do that? How do you get guidance from God when you're confused? Read the Bible and pray. Let God talk to you and you talk to God. Develop a line of communication. God says you don't need to fear the future because He's going to be with you and He will be guiding you every step of the way.

2. I CAN DEPEND UPON GOD TO RESCUE ME WHEN I'M TEMPTED

There are a lot of things that are going to change in your future. But one thing that is never going to change is you're going to have the same old temptations. Same problems. Same weaknesses. You're going to have these, probably, the rest of your life because Satan knows your hot buttons and so he knows your areas of weaknesses and he's going to keep pushing that button the rest of your life. That means if you have a predisposition to lose your temper then probably for the rest of your life you're going to deal and struggle with anger. Or if you have a tendency or predisposition to get depressed you will probably struggle with that predisposition the rest of your life. That doesn't mean you have to give in to it. It just means it's going to be a struggle.

I Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation is irresistible." Anytime somebody comes to you and say, "I just couldn't help myself!" they are lying. God says no situation is irresistible *You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. For He has promised this* that's His faithfulness *and He will do what He says. He will show you how to escape."* You don't have to fear temptation if you're walking with the Lord in your life. God knows exactly the struggle you're going through and He is pulling for you and He's preparing an escape route.

Don't let Satan intimidate you. If you are tempted, that doesn't mean you're sinning. It's not a sin to be tempted. The Bible says *"Jesus was tempted in every point like as we yet He sinned not."* It's not a sin to be tempted. It's a sin to give into temptation. So, trust God when he says, "I will be with you. guide you when you're confused. I will rescue you when you're tempted." That way you make right decisions.

3. I CAN TRUST GOD TO SUPPORT ME WHEN I'M OVERWHELMED.

Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the speed of change in our world? Do you realize how quickly things are changing? New technologies happen every day. Things that you take for granted today, we didn't even have around ten years ago. Even in your own personal life you don't know the problems you're going to face in the next hour, much less the next week, the next year, the next decade.

Unexpected things happen in our lives. Some of us are going to trip over a cord, some of us are going to have a major accident, some of us are going to lose a job, some of us are going to be really sick, some of us are going to have kids that flake out and go the wrong way. What do you do? Panic? Lock the doors and

stay inside the rest of your life in fear? NO! You trust the faithfulness of God and He says that when you are overwhelmed I will support you.

Isaiah 42:2-3 says *"When you go through deep waters and great trouble I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fires of oppression [pressure, stressed out] you will not be burned up for I am the Lord your God."*

The strength I need will come when I need it. God's not going to give you strength for next year, today, because you're not there yet. It's a moment by moment, one day at a time. Jesus said it like this, *"Don't worry about tomorrow for each day has enough trouble of its own."* Fortunately the future doesn't come to you all at once. It comes to us in bite-size, 24-hour, air-tight compartments. You don't have to face all the rest of your life tomorrow. You only have to face tomorrow. God says He will give you the strength sufficient for each day or, even better, each hour. One day at a time. God says, "When you're overwhelmed, I promise you, I'll be there to support you and the strength will come when you need it. You don't need to be afraid."

4. I CAN DEPEND ON GOD TO DEFEND ME WHEN I'M OFFENDED.

It seems like today, unfairness is increasing. Criminals go scot-free after spending millions of dollars of tax payers' money on a three year trial and then go free. Innocent people suffer and dishonest people prosper. It just doesn't seem fair. Whoever said life was fair? This isn't heaven. This is earth. This is an imperfect place. The earth is marred by sin. God never said it was fair on earth. There will be prejudice, mistakes, injustice. You're going to be put down. People will take

advantage of you. People will cheat you. There will be unfairness all over. The question is, How do you handle it?

There's an article every month in Readers' Digest called "That's Outrageous". It's on the stupidity of the unfairness in our society today. Now we have this new thing called political correctness -- PC. You have to worry about what you say, otherwise somebody may sue you because you used the wrong word. A bald person isn't bald; he's follicly challenged. A short person isn't short; he's vertically challenged. You're not overweight; you're just nutritionally enhanced.

You've got to use the right words. Life isn't fair and you will be misjudged and mistreated and cheated. What do you do? God says, don't waste one moment of your future seeking revenge, trying to get even. He says, "Let me handle it, I'm faithful. I'll take care of it for you."

I can depend on God to defend me when I'm offended. Why? Romans 12:19 *"Never avenge yourself. Leave that to God for He has said that He will repay those who deserve it."*

You may have been hurt by people, victimized by people. Do you think God didn't see that? Of course He did. God has seen every hurt you've ever received. Financially, emotionally, spiritually, physically. He's seen it all. He's keeping a record of it and He's faithful. God says one day He's going to settle the score! Don't waste one moment of your future trying to get even. Let Him do it.

God gives you two options. You can either defend yourself against injustice or you can let God defend you. It's your choice. Who do you think can do a better job defending? Let God defend you and don't spend all your time trying to right the wrongs where you've been hurt.

5. THE BIBLE SAYS I CAN DEPEND ON GOD TO REWARD ME WHEN I'M FAITHFUL TO HIM.

When I do what He wants me to do, when I do the right thing, then it is not overlooked, but I can count on God to reward me at some point. Many times you're tempted to doubt, "Why be good? Nobody really cares." Most of the world isn't trying to be good. Why have moral standards? Why try to do the right thing? Why try to live for God? Why try to have ethics in my business when everybody else is cut throat and dog eat dog and every man for himself. If I try to be ethical and have moral judgements in my business some guys will laugh at me. "Who do you think you are?" Why do it? I hear people say, "I put out so much for my husband and my kids. They don't even notice." Or, "I try to be a conscientious worker and I try to be productive at my job but my boss couldn't care less and he never appreciates whatever I do. He doesn't notice." But God does. God does! The faithfulness of God says, "I will remember and I will reward any act of goodness. Any time you do the right thing, even when you don't feel like doing it, but you go ahead and do it."

Hebrews 6:10 *"God is not unfair. He will not forget all that you have done. Nor the loving labor which you have shown for His sake."* The Bible says even a cup of cold water given in His name will be rewarded.

Whenever you do good to someone, you think of somebody else instead of yourself, God says, "I will remember that and I will reward that." God is faithful.

Only one life will soon be past, but only what's done for Christ will last. What are you going to do with your future? No matter how many days you've got left, I want to suggest you stop focusing on being scared and start focusing on being a servant. That's what is going to be rewarded. And no service, no reward.

Let me summarize all these for you: God says in relationship to my future I can depend on God to guide me when I'm confused, to assist me when I'm tempted, to support me when I'm overwhelmed, to defend me when I'm offended, and to reward me when I'm faithful to Him. In light of all of that, what are you afraid of? What in the world is there to be afraid of in your future? It really comes down to this: Do I really trust God? If I believe God will do what He says He'll do, if I trust His faithfulness, there's nothing to be afraid of. If, on the other hand, I don't really believe God will do what He says He will do, there is everything to be afraid of in your future. It's your option. It really boils down to this: My fears in myself or my faith in God. Who am I going to trust? Will God keep His promise? Will He do what He says He'll do or is He just making this up? If so, rip up your Bible. He's said it all through the Scriptures, over and over again.

Philippians 4:13 *"I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me. I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses me with inner strength into me."* It doesn't say you're not going to be afraid. It doesn't say you're not going to feel feelings of panic or doubts. It says nothing about feelings. But it says that Christ will infuse you with the power you need to do the right thing if you trust Him. That is the power you need to overcome your fear of the future.

It's available. There's only one little catch. This power is not automatic.

I know as many believers who are defeated by their fear of the future as I know unbelievers who are defeated by their fear of the future. It is not automatic just because you're a believer. You must do three things:

1. I must admit that I'm afraid.

"God, I don't know what's going to happen. I might be one of those people who gets cancer. I might lose my job. I might have a major illness. I might get in a car accident. I don't know and I'm afraid. I scared. I'm worried about the economy." Admit it.

2. Ask Jesus Christ to infuse you with His power and His strength. Say, "God be strong where I'm weak. I'm not depending upon myself. I'm depending upon you to face this fear."

3. Step out in faith and do the right thing, taking it one step at a time, one day at a time. God's not going to give you energy for next year today. But He will give you energy for tomorrow when you get there.

Let us pray...