

Fil-Am Community Church

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No More Fear - Part 1

Key verse: 2 Tim. 1:7 (NKJV)

“THE FOUNDATION FOR NO-FEAR LIVING”

What do we know about fear? We know it's contagious. You can get it from other people. We know that it's limiting. Someone said, "Fear is the dark room where negatives develop." We know that it's draining. Have you ever been worn out by your worries?

We call fear by many names. We call it worry, tension, anxiety, uptight, stress. One recent study did a study of 500 different people and they discovered 7000 different fears in 500 people -- that an average of 14 different fears per person.

But the most important thing we know is that God doesn't want you to be afraid. 2 Tim. 1:7 says, *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”*

We're beginning a new series about fear. I was going to call this "Everything you ever wanted to know about fear but were afraid to ask." We're going to start this series today by looking at the Foundation for No-Fear Living.

How do I establish a foundation? There are three foundational truths. Everything we're going to talk about in the next upcoming weeks together, none of it matters if you don't get this first part. This is the core, the bedrock, the bottom line. Once you've got this foundation established, then in the coming weeks we can talk about practical steps of overcoming fears, worries, anxieties and stress in

your life. But this is the foundation. So to make it simple and brief I just put it A-B-C.

A - Accept. I accept God's love for me.

B - Believe. I believe that Christ died and rose for me.

C - Commit. I commit my fears and my life to Christ.

So, let us focus on this first one.

I. **ACCEPT GOD'S LOVE FOR ME.**

I John 4:18 *"Where God's love is, there is no fear because God's perfect love drives out fear."* The Bible says the opposite of love is fear and the opposite of fear is love. Love and fear can't operate in the same room. When love comes in the front door of your life, fear goes out the back door. God's love is the antidote to all your fear.

There are three kinds of fear that you can have. The first is what I call surface fears. Surface fears are things like you're afraid you're not going to be able to pay your bills, you're afraid you're going to run out of gas before you get to the gas station. That's a surface fear. You're afraid you're going to have a car accident and not have clean underwear. Worst of all you're afraid somebody's going to catch you shopping at the Dollar Store. Those are surface fears and they're not really that important.

The next level down is more significant and far more unsettling. These are Subconscious fears. They are the things that are right below the surface. They're a lot more deep like the fear of failure, the fear of rejection, the fear of abandonment, the fear of losing control, the fear of being found out, the fear of not being adequate for the task.

But those aren't even your deepest fears. There's a deep level of fears that I call the Soul Fear. It's singular. It's the tap root that all your other fears come out of. It's the source. It's the well. No matter how much you try to get rid of all these other fears, until you deal with the tap root it's not going to work. Until you get healing at this deepest level of your life, you're going to still have problems with all the surface fears. It's the gut level tap root, the surface fear. You need healing in that.

What is it? What is my deepest need? Your deepest need in life is to feel absolutely, totally, unconditionally loved. Completely loved. Not for something you could be, not for something you should be, but loved just as you are. That is your deepest inner need. That's why perfect love casts out fear.

Until this issue is resolved, you're going to be tormented by other fears. Only God can love you with as much love as you really need. Only God can do it. God doesn't love you randomly. He loves you consistently. He loves you every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every week of every month of every year. There's never been a time in your life when God didn't love you. That's not true of everybody else. Only God can love you as deeply as you really need to feel loved.

Secondly, if you try to get from other people what only God can give you, you're going to be disappointed, let down. Only God can give it to you. If you never get to know God, or if you just have a religious belief about God, or if you drift away from having this close relationship to Him you're going to deal with these fear issues the rest of your life. It's not dealing with the source, the tap root. You must accept God's love. If you don't get to know God, there will be a giant, gaping cavern in your soul and it will fill up with fear if you don't have love in it. Only God has enough love to fill it.

The first step is to accept God's love because where God's love is there is no fear. Why is it that people avoid God? Because they don't know what He's like. They don't know how much He loves them. It's ironic to me that when you need God's love the most is when you tend to go the other way the most. Guilt causes us to run from God instead of running to God. This is as old as Adam. Adam back in the Garden of Eden says to God when God was looking for him, *"I was afraid and I hid myself."* People have been afraid of God and running from Him ever since.

But some of you say, "But you don't know what I've done! I've blown it too much. God can never love me." Wrong. *"nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom. 8:39, NLT) Circle "nothing". That means nothing! God has never stopped loving you. That doesn't mean He approves of everything you've done. He doesn't approve of everything you've done. But He's never stopped loving you.

Others say, "I don't feel like I'm a bad person but I just don't think God's interested in me." You're wrong too! The Bible says, *"God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. Don't be afraid, you are worth much more than many sparrows!"* (Luke 12:7) He says you're worth much! If you ever want to know how much you're worth, look at the cross.

The starting point for fear is to accept God's love in my inner being.

2. **BELIEVE THAT CHRIST DIED AND ROSE FOR ME.**

Not that He just died and rose, but He died and rose for me. You! God loves you so much that he sent his son Jesus to die for you. John 3:16 says, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever (that includes you) believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* There's that word believe. It's one thing to believe about something, it's another thing to believe in

something. It's one thing to believe about a person. It's another thing to believe in a person. For instance, I believe about Oprah. But I don't believe in Oprah. I hope you don't, too.

People say, "I believe there's a God." So what? Big deal! Do you think that puts you in the Book of Life because you believe there's a God? Even demons believe, the Bible says. But that doesn't mean they're going to heaven. To believe is not just to believe in your mind. It comes from the heart. It's more than just head knowledge. It's not just believing about, it's believing in. The Greek word for believe means to trust in, cling to, rely on, adhere to, sell out to, commit to.

I believe about Lenin, that he existed, that he is a person in history, but I don't believe in him. That's why I'm not a Communist. I believe about evolution, that it is a theory, that it is a concept, but I don't believe in it. That's why I'm not an evolutionist. But I believe in Jesus. That's why I'm a Christian. Therefore, I've committed myself to Him.

It's like the chair you're sitting on. You say, "I believe this chair will hold me up." It's one thing to say you believe it. It's another to sit down on it. The moment you sat down on it, that's real belief.

But what does believing in Jesus really mean? It means believing that he is God who came down to earth. Believing that he was born of a virgin. Believing that he performed miracles while on earth, healing the sick, making the blind see, making the lame walk, resurrecting the dead, feeding thousands of people. Believing that he suffered and was tortured by Roman soldiers. Believing that he carried his cross to Calvary. Believing that he was nailed on the cross and died on the cross for my sins. Believing that he was buried. Believing that he rose again after three days. Believing that he showed himself to his disciples and went to heaven in plain sight. Believing that he will someday come again. Believing that he alone can save me from my sins, not my good works, not my religion, not my

philosophy. Believing that he gives me eternal life. Believing in Jesus means believing everything that the Bible says about him. This is not the kind of belief that others say, "I believe in Jesus as a prophet, but not as God". That kind of belief will not save you.

If I believe in Jesus what difference will it make? There are a lot of them, but one of them is if you believe in Jesus and you believe what He says about the future is true, about salvation, then you can stop being afraid of death. Death comes to everyone. Why? Because all have sinned as the Bible says. Death is the natural consequence of sin. Everybody sins. We see that everywhere. We see that in ourselves. The Bible says, "*The payment for sin is death*". (Rom. 6:23 GNT) Someone has to pay. We cannot pay it because we ourselves are sinners. Jesus, the perfect man, paid the penalty of our sin by his death.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (MSG) says, "*By embracing death, Jesus destroyed the devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life scared to death by death.*"

You need Jesus Christ in your life. You need to have a relationship to God, not because you're going to die today, because you're probably not. You might, but you're probably not. You need Christ in your life because you're going to live tomorrow and you are going to die someday. Only a fool goes through life unprepared for what he knows is impending.

What's heaven going to be like? We don't know all of what heaven's going to be like. But you're not going to have wings like angels. There's nothing in the Bible that says you'll have wings. You're not going to sit on clouds and you're not going to play the harp. That's in every commercial you ever see about heaven. White robes, harps, wings. I can't imagine anything more boring. But God made the earth in seven days and look how much fun it is here. He's been working on heaven for centuries.

Imagine you're a little canary and you've spent your entire life in a cage and you think all there is to life is a little food dish, a little bar to swing on, and a mirror to look at yourself. If somebody takes you out of that cage and takes you to a jungle where there's waterfalls and millions of other birds tweeting and it's free, do you think you're going to be bored? Not a chance. The Bible says, *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love Him."* (1 Cor. 2:9 NKJV) You can't imagine. God guarantees you won't be disappointed.

Now, the third thing you need to do to build this foundation for all we're going to talk about in the weeks ahead on releasing your fears.

3. **COMMIT MY FEARS AND MY LIFE TO CHRIST.**

The Bible says in I Peter 3:14-15 (Good News) *"Don't be afraid of anyone and don't worry, but have reverence for Christ in your heart and honor him as Lord."*

A lot of successful people are outwardly successful but inwardly there is a gnawing insecurity that's eating them up. Outwardly, they look like they've got it all together, but inwardly they're worried, thinking, "Can I pull off another day's performance or will I fall flat on my face?" Outwardly, they're saying to the world, "I can make it!" Inwardly, they're thinking, "Who are you kidding?" They've got their BMW, their MBA, their DVR, but they are SAD! They look good on the outside but inside they are caving in.

How many of you would say "I try to follow the Ten Commandments." How many of you know the Ten Commandments? How many of you could say the Ten Commandments? How many of you have seen the Ten Commandments? Do you know what the first commandment is? *"You shall have no other gods*

before Me." That's the first one. Number one on God's big ten! No other gods. The Bible calls it idolatry.

Idolatry is any time you put anything, any person, any career, any job, any decision, anything first place in your life instead of God. That's called idolatry. It may be a good thing, but if it's in first place in your life where God ought to be, you've made it god. Like your SUV may be your god, or your house, or your job, or your bank account, or your girlfriend. But that's called idolatry. Any time you let this happen you're setting yourself up for fear because you weren't made to live that way. Anytime anything else besides God becomes more important in your life you're going to develop fears because it can be taken away from you.

If getting people's approval is the most important thing in your life, then you'll develop a fear of losing the approval of other people. If making money is the number one goal in your life, then you'll develop a fear of losing it all. If getting married is the most important thing in your life, then you'll have a fear of never getting married or losing your marriage. If success is the most important thing in your life, you'll develop a fear of failure. If your reputation is the most important thing in your life, you'll develop a fear of losing it and you'll have to work on your image all the time. Idolatry equals fear. Think about what makes you afraid. Is there any chance that issue could be competing with God in your life? That's why you're afraid.

It says, "*Don't worry! Don't be afraid of anyone. Have reverence for Christ in your heart and honor him as Lord.*" Circle "Lord". That's not a word we use a whole lot. We don't have lords and ladies and counts and countesses in America. This is a democracy. What does it mean to be Lord? It says honor Christ as Lord. It means let Him be the manager of your life. Let Him be the boss. Let Him call the shots. Let Him be the chairman of the board. He doesn't want to be resident in your life, He wants to be president in your life. "God, You be number one." That's

what it means to be Lord. Let God be God! To honor Christ as Lord means He's the only person you ultimately have to please.

If you really make Christ Lord of your life, then He becomes the only person ultimately you have to please, do you think that might simplify your life? Do you think it might reduce the stress? Do you think it might release the tension? The Bible says, "*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*" (1 Pet. 5:7 NIV). Imagine a garbage bag in front of you in which you cast all your worries. Fill up the garbage bag with your worries. Tie it all up and toss it out. The garbage truck comes along and picks it up. It says throw your worries on God. Why? Because He cares for you.

"Cast". There are two kinds of cast. One is you cast to throw away. Another is to cast as in fishing -- you cast it out and reel it back in. You don't want to do that. Let it go.

Let God be God. Resign as general manager of the universe and you'll be a whole lot more relaxed. The world does not depend on you or me. God is God and you're not! As long as you try to be God, you'll be filled with fear. You'll be filled with worry. You can't handle it all yourself. Worry is a warning light that says two things. One, it says, something has become too important to me, so I'm worrying about it. It's more important than it should be. It's taking first place in my life. Two, it means I'm trying to solve it. I'm trying to play God. I'm trying to control the issue. Both of those don't work.

This is what it means to commit your fears and your life to Christ. What kind of life will you have? A life of fear or a life of victory? Romans 8:15 (NIV) says "*So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.'*"

I like this song we've been singing these past few weeks. A song about knowing who you are in Christ. Some of us listen to many voices speaking to our minds, voices of evil spirits that whisper "regret", "defeat", "you are no-good", "you are not loved". But the truth is, there is only one voice we should listen to, the voice of God's Spirit who says that you are the child of the one true King. If you have God's Spirit in you, don't be afraid because you are the child of the only King in the universe. Amen?

A guy said, "I've had this overwhelming sense of uneasiness, emptiness, frustration. It's like pieces of the puzzle didn't fit. I thought I was having a mid-life crisis. I just realized I needed God in my life."

Maybe you feel that way. Maybe you feel like things aren't fitting together right. Maybe you've felt like things aren't falling in place and you're feeling a sense of incompleteness. What am I here for? Is this all there is? Why am I here?

If you've had those feelings, congratulations. Where do you think those feelings are coming from? That sense of "Is this all there is?" where do you think that's coming from? God is putting a hunger for Himself in your life. He's saying "I know you and I want you to know Me. I made you. I love you. I've watched everything you've done from the moment you were born." He's putting in you a dissatisfaction that says, "There's got to be more to life than this!" There is.

You see, there's a God-shaped vacuum in each of us. Nothing else can fill it. If you don't fill it with God, it will fill with fear. Then you wonder why you're stressed out, why you worry, and why you're uptight all the time, why things just don't seem to go the way you think they ought to go. Nothing else can substitute for God. It doesn't matter how much human affirmation you get, it doesn't matter how many awards you put on your shelf, how many achievements you get, how many possessions you tend to stockpile, nothing can substitute for God in your life.

Why don't you accept God's love today and begin to get to know Him? You say you've fallen away from God. What do you do? Isaiah 54:7 says, "*With deep compassion I will bring you back.*" Come home to God today. And the Bible says "*May God give you more and more grace and peace.*" (1 Peter 1:2 NLT). That's my prayer for you this coming weeks, that fear will be a thing of the past and instead, his grace and peace will fill your being.

Let us Pray...