

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor David Bennett

Key Verse: Proverbs 29:25

No More Fear - Part 6 of 10

“OVERCOMING YOUR FEAR OF REJECTION”

Good morning Fil-Am, as always it is good to be with you today in the house of the Lord. We are continuing on our series “No More Fear” This morning we are going to look specifically at the Topic the **Fear of Rejection**.

Many of you may think that the fear of Failure is the same as the Fear of Rejection. I think there are some distinct differences between the two fears.

- The fear of failure focuses on my **performance**, on what I do.
- The fear of rejection focuses on me **as a person** and who I am.

Two very distinct differences, this morning we are going to focus on the **Rejection aspect**.

As we talk about the fear of failure it's a fear that everyone can relate to. We all struggle with the fear of rejection at some point in our life. Some of us are **consumed by it**.

The fear of rejection seems to grow with us as we age.

If you did a study on little children you wouldn't see the fear of rejection, because they haven't had the past experience on which to build that fear.

You might see the fear of failure but not the fear of rejection.

Let's get right into the message this morning or as we say, Lets get into the Word of God, or more importantly let's get the Word of God into us!

I. HOW THE FEAR OF REJECTION BECOMES A TRAP

Proverbs 29:25, *"The fear of man is a dangerous trap, but to trust in God means safety."*

How is the fear of man or the fear of rejection a dangerous trap? I've listed a few traps below, it's not conclusive, there are many more, but for time's sake we will only highlight a few today.

1. The fear of rejection causes us to conform our life styles and our values.

In order to avoid rejection we sometimes become chameleons with those around us.

We settle in whether it is through

- clothes or
- car or
- lifestyle or
- even values

Values in what we believe because we don't want to be rejected for who we really are.

Many of you think this is only a kid's problem that happens in the adolescent years, where they seek the approval of social groups at school.

I use to think the same thing until I grew up and looked around and see the same pressure that those kids are under to fit in is still present as we grow.

It is sometimes even more pronounced and causes us to do some pretty stupid things and go some really bad places and put up with some really bad things just to fit in.

Has anyone ever fell trap to that?

2. The fear of rejection keeps us from speaking the truth.

Many of us will lie or distort the truth in order to keep from being rejected or ostracized by other people.

Sometimes we become what we call spectators instead of getting involved or taking a stand for what we believe.

Saints I would like to let you know that by not taking a stand, **you just did**. Some of you get that, if you didn't look to your neighbor and see if they can help you out with that.

3. The fear of rejection prevents us from giving and receiving love.

This is a biggie. Many people have shut down because they've been burned once and they don't want to be burned again. They fear the rejection so they don't give or receive love. Many marriages are like that. They fear the rejection of a spouse and so they shut down.

It is hard to reach a person that has a protective wall up around them, very similar to a turtle that withdraws into their shell at the first sign of trouble.

4. The fear of rejection leads to isolation, loneliness, and unhappiness.

Because we fear the rejection of other people we build walls around us to protect ourselves rather than bridges to relate to one another.

This is the bottom line of rejection. It's an unhappy state, constant pressure to try to please other people. That's a miserable way to live life, wondering what other people are thinking of us. These people also tend to be very critical people. If they're critical they can reject other people before people can reject them.

When it comes to spiritual matters, how does the fear of rejection affect us spiritually?

5. The fear of rejection silences our sharing about Christ and keeps us from spiritual maturity.

Why don't people share about Jesus? Because they're afraid of other's response about them. It robs us of the courage that we need to share about the most important relationship that we have.

I'm convinced that we spend far too much time turning our heads, wondering what other people are saying about **us** rather than focusing our head and our eyes on God.

OK enough of the down side of the Fear of Rejection, you can see it can cripple you and keep you from becoming all God would have you to be and steal the blessings God has in store for us, so let's take the **offensive** and see where we can take back that lost ground!

The first Action step is to realize and

1. FACE THE FACT THAT PEOPLE LET YOU DOWN.

We place far too much value on the opinions of other people. We're shaped by their words and we're at time traumatized by what they may think of us.

God knew this and that's why He said this in Isaiah 51:12, *"The Lord says, 'I am the one who comforts you, so why should you be afraid of people who die? Why should you fear people who die like the grass?'"*

People have their right to an opinion but why fear their opinion. They're going to die. And their opinion's going to die with them.

I think we can be affected by the rejection of other people but we don't have to be directed by it.

We can think about it but we don't have to allow it to control us or to consume us or to control us enough to mold our thoughts and opinions and feelings, in order to fit in.

Paul wanted to make this same thing clear as he wrote to the people in Galatia, found in Galatians 1:10 where he says, *"Do you think I'm trying to make people accept me? No. God is the one I'm trying to please."*

If I wanted to please people I would not be a servant of Christ I wouldn't be up here telling you all the things that are wrong in your life.

People are vital to our existence but because they're only human they're going to let us down. They are not God; therefore we should not put our faith in them.

I've watched so many people both in and out of the church put their faith in a person, a pastor and they were devastated because that person let them down. Face it. People are going to let us down. Our faith is not in people. It's in God.

Put your trust in God:

- Nothing More
- Nothing Less
- Nothing Else!

Saints remember that people will not love you as much as you need to be loved.

Human love is conditional, inconsistent. If you're living to please other people you're setting yourself up for hurt and further rejection.

My goal in this sermon today is that you will understand what I have to say and be challenged by it to make changes in your life, not that you agree with me and are pleased by it.

That will never be my goal, as I have told you numerous times in the past, if I am doing my job correctly, I should be digging into areas of your life that you need to clean up, and not telling you everything is alright.

My goal is to please God by teaching His church to grow up, pick yourself up and dust yourself off and then get back in the fight!

I don't fear your rejection, I fear standing in front of the Lord on day and have to explain why I didn't warn you.

Too many times we lose focus, and tend to concentrate on the wrong fear.

- We fear people whose opinion is temporary rather than fearing God whose rejection is eternal.

- We spend so much time looking around thinking of what other people are going to say.
- We don't fear God's rejection and His rejection is eternal.

If you're checking out Christianity and trying to figure out what it's all about, the Bible tells us that someday there will be a point where God will separate the wheat from the chaff. He will reject those who don't know Him and we need to fear that, rather than fearing other people.

Matthew 10 *"Don't be afraid of people who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. The only one you should fear is the one who can destroy the soul and the body in hell."*

Not a pretty verse. It would be one easy to pass over. Those of you who are believers, instead of fearing other people we need to fear God.

The next Action point is...

2. FOCUS ON HOW GOD SEES YOU

Saints this is a very liberating truth, however it only works if you can embrace it.

When Napoleon's horse ran away and a lowly soldier caught him, and brought it back to him, Napoleon said, "Thank you, Captain."

The man at once packed his belongings, moved to the officers' quarters, and went to mess with them. The emperor had called him captain, and he was therefore a Captian.

We are all miserable sinners, but when we receive Jesus Christ, He calls us sons of God (John 1:12).

With that knowledge, let us then promptly pack our belongings and move into the higher life to which He has appointed us!

Things would be so much easier if we just **let go** and tried to focus on how God sees us and trust him vice what the world is constantly telling us!

In 1 Samuel, Samuel was asked by God to appoint the new kind of Israel. Saul had just been rejected and Samuel was directed to the house of Jesse.

When he goes to the house of Jesse, Jesse brings before him seven of his sons. As he does, Samuel looks at the tallest, the best looking, and the most handsome of the seven sons. He's thinking, "This must surely be the next king of Israel."

But look at what God says in 1 Samuel 16:7, *"The Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"*

That's good news.

This is the constant theme in the New Testament in the words of Jesus. Jesus doesn't care what people look like and how religious they look. He goes right after the heart.

That is the main difference between people and God. When people look at us, they look at us externally.

They look at our...

- Appearance
- our homes,
- our position,
- our salaries,
- and our car.

God doesn't care about that. **He looks at our heart.**

You've been rejected in your life. Maybe because of something that people have no idea of what's going on in your heart and they haven't taken the time or the energy to find out.

The good news is that...

- God knows your heart.
- God knows your motive.

- God has a different way of evaluating us than people evaluate us.

That's a beautiful thing!

This leads us to our last Action point today which is....

3. FALL BACK ON GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Mark Guy Pearse used to tell of the time he overheard one of his children admonishing the other child, "You must be good or Father won't love you." Calling the boy to him he said, "Son, that isn't really true."

"But you won't love us if we are bad, will you?" the boy asked.

"Yes, I will love you whether you are good or bad," Pearse explained.

"But there will be a difference in my love. When you are good I will love you with a love that makes me glad; and when you are not good I will love you with a love that hurts me."

If you're sinking in the quicksand of rejection you've got to know that God can pull you out and set you on the solid ground of His unconditional love. But in order to do that, you have to **STOP** struggling because that makes you sink even faster, you have to **LET GO** and give it over to God.

1 John 4 *"This is what real love is: It is not our love for God; it is God's love for us in sending his Son to be the way to take away our sins."*

When I say unconditional love I know what goes through many of your minds, especially if you've been a believer for a while.

You go "Heard it!" I meet a lot of people who have heard about God's unconditional love, a lot of people who even theologically understand it.

But I haven't met many people that **know** it, that **embrace** it, that are able to fall back and know that God loves us not for what we do but for who we are.

There is a huge difference in **knowing of** and **knowing**! You can only truly know from experience.

It is only when you truly know His unconditional love and you fall back on it, it gives us liberty to live. It gives us freedom to live.

- Do you know it?
- Do you know God's unconditional love this morning?
- When you do your life will be radically different.

A young man, who was struggling to let the Lord have His way in his life, knelt to pray.

He had been advised to “**Let God** do the work for him.” But as he was kneeling, he cried, “I want to let God have His way, but I can’t.”

The day before he had cut out of pasteboard the letters “**LET GOD**” and tacked them on the wall.

He rose from his knees and with a feeling of defeat and despair; he left the room and slammed the door with a bang, saying, “I can’t “LET GOD.””

On his return to his room, he was startled to note that the slam of the door had loosened the letter **D** on the word **GOD**, causing it to fall to the floor, and changing the motto to “**LET GO.**”

Falling to his knees he let Go and said, “I will Lord, I will Let go,” and as he did, let go, it allowed God to take control.

Saints what is **keeping you** from letting go today?

God is waiting for us to know His unconditional love.

- We can relax and be unconcerned about the rejection of other people and focus on His love.
- He's waiting for us to know it.

- He's got the upper hand on us already because He knows everything about us.

Hebrew 4:13 *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."* Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight.

It is only our struggle that keeps us from realizing that we should just relax in God's control.

I remember a story about a swimmer that said he learned to swim in his boyhood, but it was only this summer that I achieved complete mastery of myself in the water.

It seemed that for 30 years the boy had assumed that he must constantly struggle with the waters to keep from sinking.

It wasn't until one day an expert swimmer watched him for a few minutes and then cried: "Stop fighting the water and trust it to hold you up.

If you do then you can use your strength and finally get somewhere."

Under this new direction a few moments of trial and error was able to convince me he was right.

The swimmer lay flat in the water without moving hands or feet and realized to his delight, that the water in fact held him up.

With that new discovery he then struck out, using his strength to forge ahead.

What a revelation! Why didn't someone tell me that years ago?

Saints so many people constantly struggle to be Christians, just like this swimmer struggled with the water, when if they would only trust Christ and **LET GO** they would realize they could be kept.

When we live to please an audience of one, God's love crowds everyone else out and we are totally accepted by Him.

In the summer Olympics in Barcelona I was touched by an event that took place in the life of Derrick Redman. He was a runner for Great Britain. He tried to make it in the 1988 summer Olympics and he was injured and he had to make a decision, "Do I go through all the work for four more years to get to the 92 Olympics?"

He did and was in the semifinals of the men's 400 meter race. He's in one of the center lanes. He's destined to win and will probably have a shot at a medal.

At this point we will look at the video of the race...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-Yn4b9iCIE>

Out of the blocks he's leading the pack with 100 yards from the finish line he pulls a hamstring and falls painfully to the ground.

- As the crowd watches the rest of the race he picks himself up and begins to limp.
- He knows he's not going to win but he wants to finish.
- People are coming at him and trying to help him but he keeps pushing them off.
- All of a sudden there is a commotion in the crowd and a man is coming out that the security guard is no match for.
- He busts through and runs on to the track.

It was Jim Redman, Derrick's father. As he came alongside his son and put his arm around him Derrick collapsed and his dad whispered to him, "**You don't have to do this alone son.**"

And they walked together to the finish line.

After the race Derrick Redman was interviewed and he said "My father was the only person who could have helped me, because he understood everything that I had been through."

I think we're a lot like Derrick the runner. You and I are around a lot of people who are watching how we live and how we perform, but only our heavenly Father really understands everything about us.

- He wants us to **forget the crowds**
- and **embrace** Him and His approval
- and His **unconditional** love as
- He **walks with us** to the finish line.

Saints you need to understand that we will never be able to finish the race on our own!

What is keeping you from **Letting Go?**

What is keeping you from **Letting God?**

I challenge you to allow **God's love** for you to crowd out the opinions and the desire to please other people.

- Other people will let you down.
- Focus on how God sees you which is so very different from the world.
- Fall back on His unconditional love and focus your eyes on Him.

As always the opportunity to let God reign supreme in your life is waiting for you to answer the call.

Stop playing games and trying to make it a spectator sport, step up, to the plate, don't let fear of rejection keep you from the blessing God has in store for you.

Let us pray...

Father God thank you for seeing us in a way that is so different that the world sees me.

I pray that today I would learn to take our eyes off other people and start focusing on you. Thank you that your love is not performance based, but

based on the fact that we are your children and because we are that we belong to YOU!

May we learn to LET Go and stop fighting and accept YOU.
And all the saints said... Amen.