



**GOD SAYS
FEAR NOT.**

**Scripture: 2
Timothy
1:3-10**

Have any of you ever been scared? Have you ever experienced fear where you are almost paralysed and can't move?

It seems that our society is afraid of everything. And yes, there is a healthy kind of fear as well as an unhealthy kind.

One of my fears has been heights. When I spent a week with my sister Lorraine in Tasmania we hopped on a chair lift that goes across a canyon. Lorraine sat back and enjoyed the view, whereas I was holding on tight, fear on my face.

You could say this was unhealthy fear – after all, the chairlift was safe, many people going up and down on it, we were strapped in – yet my body showed fear – my heart was pounding, I felt sick, wanted to run away – of course that could not happen.

When we experience fear God has provided us with a fight or flight reaction. Our digestion stops because the brain tells the body to send all the blood and energy to our extremities in case we have to run from the situation or fight.

Of course, that saves you, especially if you are crossing the road and a car suddenly speeds around the corner and you have to jump out of the way. Once the fear has gone, your body gradually gets back to normal.

The Bible says a lot about fear. In fact the command, **FEAR NOT** appears in one form or another 365 times from Genesis to Revelation. Wow, one scripture verse about how not to fear that you can read every single day of the year – and one you have to say twice during a leap year.

Thus it is clear that God doesn't want us to fear in the face of adversity or decision. This is God's daily prescription for us, yet we so often respond in fear. **So what can we do about this?** I would like to focus on a short passage of Scripture throughout this sermon.

Timothy had accompanied Paul on many mission trips but now Paul was in a Roman prison, awaiting execution. Here is Timothy, this very young pastor who is experiencing fears based on fact. Because of his youth he doesn't earn a lot of respect from the people. And he is trying to lead people to Jesus Christ, who is not the most popular subject during those times. The Romans thought they were troublemakers and were persecuting them. The Jews thought they were all heretics and were persecuting them. So, Timothy is discouraged and is afraid.

One of the things that helped both Paul and Timothy was their prayers of mutual encouragement.

Paul reminds Timothy of a few things in this 2nd letter.

2 Timothy 1:3-4 *I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.*

He also reminds Timothy of his roots – the influence of his faith from both his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. He is reminding Timothy of his foundation, his background and that he has wisdom.

Verse 5 *I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am persuaded now lives in you also.*

He also encourages Timothy to fan the flames of God, nurture the Spirit that God has instilled in him and do the work of the ministry.

2 Timothy 1:6-7: *“For this reason, I remind you to fan into flames the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us **power, love and self-discipline.**”*

Now you may think this is a bit harsh considering what young Timothy is facing. And yes, no-one knows what each of us individually face, but here’s the thing, Paul knows what he is talking about. Paul knows about suffering, sacrifice and fear. And Paul knows that the power of God is much more powerful than any fear we would ever have.

With God we can truly **fear not** but we have to be willing to tap into that **power**. So let’s look at these three gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Power. This is important news that any believer can receive. The same word that Paul uses to encourage Timothy is also the word that Jesus gave the disciples in **Acts 1:8** when He said, “And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”

This kind of power leaves no room for fear or doubt. When a believer has the Holy Spirit working in and through them there is nothing that cannot be accomplished in accordance to the will of God.

If you are experiencing unhealthy fear that is hindering you from experiencing the life in Christ that you are destined to live, then you need to ask yourself – have I forgotten that I have been given a spirit of power in Christ to do all things in accordance with the will of God?

Love. 1 John 4:18 uses the same word that Paul uses when he tells Timothy that he has a spirit of love. *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.*

When we walk in a spirit of love, as Christ did, unhealthy fear is driven far away from us. Jesus walked to the cross in a spirit of love and we can assume that He walked out of the grave in the same empowered spirit.

Don't forget, this is the same spirit alive in you. The next time you are experiencing fear or anxiety, worry or doubt, then stop and ask yourself – am I walking in a spirit of love?

We have to give ourselves to God and nurture and fan the flame of God that is instilled in each and every one of us.

Self-discipline I wonder if you struggle with self-discipline? It takes a lot of discipline to recognize fear and deal with it appropriately. Sometimes it seems easier to just let it go, shrug it off or call it a fact of life. But it is not a fact of the life God has for you in Christ.

Discipline is an imperative ingredient in the process of sanctification. We need discipline to take the time necessary to accurately assess the fear we are experiencing and even more discipline to deal with it.

Isn't it just like God to give us exactly what we need? He knew that all three ingredients would be necessary on this side of heaven. And for all

of us who struggle with any of these three ingredients – remember we have been given power through the Spirit to experience victory.

And when we do that, we come to the same conclusion Paul did when he states that God has not given any of us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of self-discipline.

And the implication here is that the spirit that God gives us is one that is rational. One that thinks things through. One that can separate the healthy fear from the unhealthy fear. And that is what is important here. Because that healthy fear informs our decisions and helps us to make wise and rational decisions.

We need to be using the common sense that God gave us to make good decisions for ourselves, our families, and others around us.

But we also need to keep things in perspective and understand that we are still God's people. And we need to be acting like God's people.

I am not sure if you watched but on our webpage I shared some information and a prayer encouraging us to infect others. Wait, what? Yep, that's right make ourselves infectious with God's power, love and hope. So those who are without it, will be drawn to what we possess.

We need to let people know that God tells us to **fear not** and that if our hope is in Jesus Christ, we have no reason to fear. Because whatever happens in this world or in this life, God has got it. God has got us. We should be telling people to trust God.

Verses 8-10 So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. He has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of

time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Fear not but rather, put your faith in God.

God's very nature and every single aspect about God is motivated and directed by love. Not just a personal love for each one of us but also a love for all humanity. And since God loves us, we know that He wants to provide for us and to protect us. And when we are assured of this, then what do we have to be afraid of?

Do you believe that God is the creator and sustainer of this entire universe - if you do, then who is more powerful than God?

So, I ask again, what do we have to be afraid of?

Instead of living lives motivated and overcome by fear, we should lead a life rooted in God's example. We have the power of the Holy Spirit within us, who transforms our lives to lives motivated by love

And if we have the power of God flowing through our veins, then what do we have to fear? You know fear is one of the main things people use in an attempt to refuse to share the gospel and do the things God would have them do.

Fear tells us, "you can't do that," or makes us question and think, "what will they say, or how will they react."

And the reality is, it is just a fear of the unknown or more accurately a fear of maybe having to change. We do not want to change at all so we do everything we can to avoid any sort of change.

All motivated by that one thing, fear.

There is no fear in love. Perfect love drives out fear. Fear is rooted in punishment and suffering but love is rooted in deliverance and forgiveness.

My question to you is: what kind of fear do you have?

Is it a healthy and Godly type of fear of things that are related to the common sense God gave us to protect us?

Or do you build things up in your minds and end up afraid of things that you should not fear?

Do you have irrational fears?

And the fears that you do have, have you ever examined their root, where they come from?

Is fear paralyzing you and keeping you from being the person of God and doing the things that God has called you to do?

My challenge for you this week is pretty straightforward. When you begin to feel fear, take time to identify whether it's a healthy or unhealthy fear you are dealing with.

When you recognise unhealthy fear, you can pray for the Lord to keep you walking in a spirit of power and love all while trusting that through the Holy Spirit you can experience breakthroughs in these fears.

I would encourage you to write down the different situations you felt fearful in. What kind of fear was it? If it was unhealthy fear, did you stop to ask yourself – am I walking in a Spirit of power and love?

What were the situations or circumstances that caused you the most fear? Can you recognise any trends worth noting?

Closing Prayer:

Here is a simple prayer that you can use any time you are feeling fearful.

Dear Lord,

You know that we live in a crazy and chaotic world. You also know my struggles in my daily life. When life gets to be too much, please help me come to You.

Calm my thoughts and emotions and open my heart to Your peace, comfort, and wisdom.

Help me not to live in fear.

Please reduce the feelings of fear and anxiety that plague me.

Help me rest in You and trust You as I navigate through this broken world.

In Your name I pray, Jesus. Amen.