

FEARLESS LIVING

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction

"Fear is one of the most debilitating emotions known to the human race. It is unbelievably powerful. It penetrates the heart, poisons the spirit, and paralyzes the soul. It can affect you not only emotionally, mentally, and spiritually; but it can even affect you physically."

– Maxie Dunham (former Asbury Seminary President)

I'm afraid of _____.

1 John 4:18a – There is no fear in love ...

1. The sources of negative fear

- Idols: What I do. What I have. What others think of me.

Deut. 5:7 – "You shall have no other gods before Me."

1 John 4:18b – ... fear has to do with punishment ...

2. The fruit of positive (godly/holy) fear

- Confidence • Love for people • God revealed in community

1 John 4:17b – ... we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.

1 John 4:20-21 – 20 ... (anyone) who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 ... whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 4:12 – No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. (See John 14:9; 1 John 1:1.)

1 John 4:18c – ... whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

3. Cultivating godly fear (direction not perfection!)

- Use silence to discern and connect with Christ's presence in you.

Philippians 2:13 (NLT) – ...God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.

John 15:4-5 – 4 Abide (imperative verb = command) in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

1 John 4:15-16 – Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

- Prayerfully meditate and appropriate God's love for you, personally.

1 John 4:19 – We love because he first loved us.

Galatians 2:20 (MSG) – ... My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not "mine," but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me _____ (your name goes here) _____ and gave himself for me ...

- Note specific ways Christ's transforming love is changing your character and conduct.

1 John 4:17c – ... as he is so also are we in this world.

Philippians 1:6 (NLT) ...I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.

Purposeful reflecting...

- Pray for help to know God better as you reflect on today's message.

Experience

- Offer the prayer of Samuel, "Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Sam. 3:10). Then spend five minutes in silence. (Use a timer!) Notice what you notice (maybe take notes). Repeat once a day for a week.

- Meditate on Romans 8:38-39. What impact would it make on your negative fears to possess the same conviction Paul has about the power of God's love? Can you think of specific fears that would be relieved in you? How would that make you feel? Ask the Lord to deepen your conviction.

Transform

- Where do you see in yourself a tendency to live for what you do, for what you have, or for what others think of you? When you give in to that tendency, what need does that "idol" seem to satisfy? How, specifically, do you need to look to God to meet that need instead?

- Do you discern the evidence (fruit) of positive fear (faith) in yourself? Where would you like to see more fruit? What one thing can you do to foster "fruit development"? Is there someone who could help you follow through? Read Matthew 7:7-11 then ask the Father for what you need.

Share

- Ask someone you know well to tell you of any ways in which they've seen your character and conduct change over time.
- Ask God for an opportunity to talk to someone about his/her fears. If something you've discovered from the message has helped with your fears, ask if he/she would like to hear about it. If so, share it.