

## Breaking the Barrier of Fear

- ❖ Story when I was pulled out to sea at St Francis – FEAR set in

We can all remember a time in our lives when we feared right?

- ❖ I think time when I was at varsity in my first week of my first year. I had changed courses twice, was hating what I was doing, and was gripped by fear about my future. This crippling fear sets in.

Fear has this way of disempowering you, or disarming you.

We all have our own fears: Some are irrational

### Some examples

- Ablutophobia                      The fear of taking a bath or cleaning yourself.
- Chronophobia                  The fear of time passing
- Trypophobia                    Irregular patterns or clusters of small holes or bumps
- Phobo Phobia                  The fear of phobias
- Coulrophobia                  The fear of clowns
- Hippopotomonstrosesquipedalio phobia                  The fear of long words
- Omphalophobia              The fear of belly buttons

On a more serious note, we've all struggled with fear in our lives. Fear has this way of taking hold of us, of trapping us, we feel afraid, and sometimes we can even feel paralyzed by fear.

### There are 2 steps into fear:

- 1) **Fear:** The fear of the immediate threat! Being chased by a dog. Which drives us to fight or flight
- 2) **Anxiety:** A lingering, undefined sense of fear which paralyses us. Worrying about things that will never happen, Fear about the future, about what others are thinking of us.

### **If fear is a thunderstorm, then anxiety is a constant, cold drizzle**

Fear can be good for us - it gets us out of danger! - but anxiety makes us agitated, nervous and upset. Constant anxiety can permanently turn on our autonomic nervous system, which is only meant to respond to crises, and so lead to all kinds of health issues.

**The Bible tells us not to fear 365 times: God is shouting out to us: Do not fear!**

## **When an Angel appeared to Mary to announce that she would give birth to Jesus. What's the first thing the angel says: 'Fear not'**

**In Psalm 3**, David faces both kinds of fear. The physical threat from Absalom's armies, and the threat to his identity as King.

NIV

LORD, how many are my foes!

How many rise up against me!

<sup>2</sup> Many are saying of me,

"God will not deliver him."<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> But you, LORD, are a shield around me,

my glory, the One who lifts my head high.

<sup>4</sup> I call out to the LORD,

and he answers me from his holy mountain.

<sup>5</sup> I lie down and sleep;

I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.

<sup>6</sup> I will not fear though tens of thousands

assail me on every side.

<sup>7</sup> Arise, LORD!

Deliver me, my God!

Strike all my enemies on the jaw;

break the teeth of the wicked.

<sup>8</sup> From the LORD comes deliverance.

May your blessing be on your people.

THE PASSION TRANSLATION Covered by the Glory

**3** *King David's song when he was forced to flee from Absalom, his own son*

### **The Humbling of a King**

<sup>1</sup> Lord, I have so many enemies, so many who are against me.

<sup>2</sup> Listen to how they whisper their slander against me, saying:

"Look! He's hopeless! Even God can't save him from this!"

*Pause in his presence*<sup>[a]</sup>

### **The Help of God**

<sup>3</sup> But *in the depths of my heart I truly know*

that you, Yahweh, have become my Shield;

You take me and surround me with yourself.<sup>[b]</sup>

Your glory covers me continually.<sup>[c]</sup>

You lift high my head when I bow low in shame.

<sup>4</sup> I have cried out to you, Yahweh, from your holy presence.<sup>[d]</sup>

You send me a Father's help.

*Pause in his presence*

### **The Song of Safety**

<sup>5</sup> So now I'll lie down and sleep like a baby—  
then I'll awake in safety, for you surround me with your glory.

<sup>6</sup> Even though dark powers prowl<sup>[e]</sup> around me,  
I won't be afraid.

### **The Secret of Strength**

<sup>7</sup> *I simply cry out to you:*

"Rise up and help me, Lord! Come and save me!"

And you will slap them in the face,  
breaking the power of their words to harm me.<sup>[f]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *My true hero comes to my rescue,*  
for the Lord alone is my Savior.<sup>[g]</sup>

What a feast of favor and bliss he gives his people!

*Pause in his presence*

### Are you battling with Fear or anxiety this morning?

- Just think about how well you slept last night, or
- How preoccupied were you on your way to church this morning,
- Have you been on edge lately and you're not sure why.

Well this is for you..

## **3 Barriers to Break when it comes to Fear and Anxiety in our lives**

### **1) Walk in His Safety**

➤ What would you say the opposite of Fear is? Fearlessness, or love,  
I would say that fear is obsolete in safety. When you're safe you aren't fearing  
Verse 3: 'Shield around me' 'You surround me with yourself'.

- ❖ Think of a soldier with armour on. What does he have? Breastplate, helmet, shield, sword. How useful are those items if he decides to retreat and run? Armour is only useful when you're heading into danger.

- **Obedience takes us not away from fear, but through and beyond our fear.**
- God doesn't say, my son my daughter you don't have to do that, you run away, no, he says, walk it with me. I have given you all that you need.
- Think of Mary, God didn't say to Mary, would you like to Give birth to Jesus, the saviour of the world? What do you think Mary... No, he announces it and says you have found favour with God

**We don't retreat from the situation we are in, we walk boldly through it, when we are safe! We find our safety in God and we find our safety in a community and family. Our church family should be a safe place. A Sunday morning should be the place that we feel the least judged. But so often it isn't. Because a Spirit of religiosity can so easily rise up within us. We should feel...**

- Safe to be real
- Safe to feel stressed out
- Safe to be imperfect
- Safe to admit marriage problems
- Safe to not have all the answers
- Safe to make parenting mistakes
- Safe to not have it all together
- Safe to admit failure, struggle, sin, addiction

The homeless, the oppressed, the rejected, the nations, political leaders, everyone should feel right at home here.

*We walk in His Safety*

This leads me to my next point..

## **2: Focus on His Glory**

*(For you oh Lord are a shield around me, my glory, the one who lifts my head up high....your glory covers me continually)*

It's so easy to build our worth and identity in comparison to others and their strengths. We can revel in others glory as to put it. Sometimes we are more concerned about the approval of men than the approval of God.

In order to Revel in God's glory, We need to stop giving ourselves or others the glory that was meant for him!

### **1) Fear of Man**

Bill Johnson

*There are many tables to eat at in life. There is the table of public opinion. The food is sweet, but it sours in the stomach. There is the table of personal achievement. That's a power meal for sure, yet the crash is as rapid as the ascent. There's only one table with rich food that settles well and brings supernatural strength; it's the table of God's will.*

*Paul Chappell (President of the West Coast Baptist College in the US)*

*The fear of man strangles us, because we can never please everybody; but the fear of the Lord frees us, because it challenges us to live and serve for an audience of One.*

- **The Fear of man is a huge challenge for many of us**, especially when we're younger. So much of our identity is wrapped up in desiring others to accept us. We look for approval.

*Some of us, focus a little too much on how we look..some if us put a few too many puffs of perfume or cologne on before we go out.*

We can hold onto people's words. It's good to get encouragement from others, but when we live in fear of them, there is a danger there. Because we start doing things to gain people's approval.

- Paul addresses the issue head on at the beginning of the letter. Galatians 1:10 *Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

## **HOW DOES A FEAR OF MAN PLAY OUT IN OUR LIVES**

- I'm worried that people will judge me.
- I find people's opinions of me more influential than I know they should be.
- I think of what people are thinking about me.
- If someone criticizes me I lose sleep over it.
- I will blame someone else if something goes wrong.

## **The Fear of Man reveals sin in our life**

- **Insignificance / inadequacy / insecurity:** Why do we care about the approval of man? Because we're not secure in what God says about us.
  - **Pride:** We like to be admired and respected – we are all tempted and drawn to make a 'name for ourselves'.
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- ❖ **For some years** I placed a very high emphasis of people's approval. I would consider their approval way above God's approval of me.

- God is our heavenly father. Gain your sense of self-worth from spending time with Him

### ***Focus on His Glory, not others***

### **3 Confide in His Faithfulness vs 4**

#### **A lot of fear has its roots in unbelief.**

- God I don't believe that you will protect me
- God I don't believe that you have my best interests at heart

Some of our anxiety comes from believing the lies of the enemy and expecting those lies to come true, E.g.: God you aren't concerned about my future and so I won't get that job! In fact, I'm not expecting to get that job

We need to identify the lie upon which the fear is built on.

I remember spending time in a forest at Hogsback, looking out to a lake, and God distinctly asked me: Do you really believe that I'm real? And I had to really deal through that, and work out my salvation

The real issue at play, was that of **Control**. Let's look at this for a while...

- Control is when someone tries to determine the way things are done outside of God's leading and direction.
  - It's rooted in **unbelief** (God won't / can't sort this out, so I will have to) and fear ('I am scared this will fall apart so I will make sure it doesn't').
- **Now I know some of our personalities lend themselves to controlling and leading. Interestingly, people who are string leaders, who exercise control are often proud about it, more so than other personality types. Look around the room and those who are smiling with a smug look on their, they're thinking that me, in a leader.**

Leadership is good, but control is dangerous

**In the Bible**, Peter was guilty of control: In the garden of Gethsemane, Peter tries to take control of Jesus' destiny by telling him not to go to the cross.

*He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."*  
Mark 8:32-33

**By contrast, Jesus lived in surrender to His Father. Not trying to control things**

*When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:23*

## IDENTIFYING CONTROL

Control can become so integrated into our personality that sometimes we can't even see it. It can hide so deep within us that we may be unable to distinguish between our true, God-given personality and the stronghold of control. How do you identify it. Well 2 ways:

- 1) Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal it to you, to give you revelation
- 2) Ask someone who loves you to be honest with you about it

What situation or person are you controlling in order to make sure you're feeling secure? Where is unbelief present in your life. Where does faith need to rise?

*Confide in His faithfulness*

### **1 Walk in His Safety**

Go forward in obedience, covered by his shield

### **2 Focus on His Glory**

Fear of Man/Find your identity in God, instead of others

### **3 Confide in his faithfulness**

Deal with unbelief/control

**For me...**

**My fear of Man** was wrapped up in the lie that God's approval and identity for me wasn't real. That God's approval wasn't enough for me.

**My Controlling nature** at times was wrapped up in not believing that God had it covered, and so I would work situations to my favour.

Many of us need to come before God this morning and repent for entertaining fear in our lives.

- For not walking in obedience because of fear
- For entertaining a fear of man
- For allowing control to control us

**In CLOSING, I would like to read some Scriptures over you all**

**What does Freedom from Fear look like? (Check these scriptures)**

*He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.*

Jeremiah 17:8

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

2 Timothy

1:7

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

1 John 4:18

*For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, do not fear; I will help you.*

Isaiah

41: 13

**CLOSE**

What's the big one for you today?

Some of us need to lay down fear this morning, and repent from it.

Some of us need to receive the love of God and linger in his presence

Some of us need to say enough is enough and start walking in surrender to God