

Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Victorious Living in Christ 4: Exercising Authority Over Fear**

October 16th, 2022. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Hebrews 2:10-15; Mark 4:35-41**

1. The Nature of Fear

It is important to understand the nature of fear if we are to be successful in recognizing and dealing with it in our lives.

- **Fear can be crippling and irrational**

Fear is one of the most crippling things in life.

It can even make us question the love and care of God for us.

e.g., story of Jesus and his disciples in a boat in a storm:

35 On that day, when evening had come, **he said to them,**
"Let us go across to the other side."

37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat,
so that the boat was already being swamped.

Jesus "was in the stern, asleep on the cushion;
and **they woke him up and said to him,**

"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Mark 4:35, 37, 38 NRSV

Jesus' reaction indicates that he expected better of them. He himself was calm and unruffled. They had been with him for a while and had seen the power of God manifested through him and experienced his care.

NRSV Mark 4:40 He said to them,

"Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

NKJV Mark 4:40 But He said to them,

"Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

- The “fear of death” is what holds people in bondage.

“Since [we] the children have flesh and blood, he [Jesus] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” Hebrews 2:14-15 NIV

Fear is pervasive throughout all of humanity and is one of the biggest weapons of the devil that keeps people in bondage.

The devil holds the power of death over people and uses that to control them. Jesus came to break that power by his death and resurrection.

- Fear and Faith are opposing forces

“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

- Fear drives much of what happens in our world

For instance,

- It drives the movement of the financial markets
- It influences economies and can create recessions and depressions
- It influences many individual and family decisions
- It helps to create toxic work environments

- Fear is a spirit - but not given to us by God

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 2:7 NKJV

“the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” NRSV

“God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.” NIV

“For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” Romans 8:15 NRSV

- **Fear can grow - it often manifests in degrees**

When the disciples got in the boat, they clearly were not afraid of going on to the water. But they got to the point of a panic attack when the storm arose.

Fear can be little or a full-blown panic attack. It should never have any place in our lives.

2. Exercising Authority Over Fear

- **The Example of Jesus**

Jesus demonstrated how to exercise dominion over circumstances that induce fear. **How? With his words:**

**"Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea,
"Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm."**

Mark 4:39 NKJV

"He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea,
"Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm."

Mark 4:39 NRSV

- **Give Fear No Place**

Can we do what Jesus did here as well? YES!

Jesus gave left his peace with us, the same peace he lived and walked in and exercised. If we live in fear, we have allowed fear to come in. Jesus was very clear about this:

**"1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.
27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the
world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."**

John 14: 1, 27 NRSV

Paul says, **"Do not make room for the devil."** Ephesians 4:27 NRSV

- **Displace Fear with Faith**

Clearly, fear is an opposing force to faith.

Where faith is abundant and strong, fear has no chance of domination.

It is like light and darkness. Light and darkness cannot co-exist in the same place.

When light comes in, darkness departs. Similarly, when faith is dominant in our lives, fear cannot remain.

How do we increase faith & starve fear?

- **Feeding on God's Word & Continuing in the Word of God**
"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
Romans 10:17 NKJV

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him,
"If you continue in my word,
you are truly my disciples;
and you will know the truth,
and the truth will make you free."
John 8:31-32 NRSV

- **Through Meditation on God's Word**
"This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful." Joshua 1:8 NRSV

- **Watch Your Words!**

We condition ourselves using our words.

Therefore, what we say to ourselves and about ourselves is very important.

Fill your mouth with God's word! (Joshua 1:8)

- **Make A Habit of Confessing Faith & Resisting Fear - Always**

David was in the habit of doing this.

We see that through the Psalms.

A great example is Psalm 27:

1The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
2When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall.
3Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.
4One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.
5For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.

Psalm 23:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

Paul's bold confession in Romans 8 should always be in our mouths too:

"If God is for us, who is against us? 32He who did not withhold his own Son,
but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything
else? 33Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who
justifies. 34Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was
raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.
35Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or
persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved
us. 38For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of
God in Christ Jesus our Lord."