



Date 07/18/2021

Healthy Church Series
Fear ... Not

Opening

Story: Pr. Via
(Pray)

Transition

Handouts, notes pages.

We've been through the 7 Churches in Revelation. We've seen that churches can vary greatly. – commendable/or not; steadfast/compromising; Harsh persecutions/made in the shade; alive/dead; rich/poor. Things are not all that it seems.

➔ An intimate relationship with Christ solves all the problems:
Whether you've Lost your first love,
Stray to false teachings
Arrogant independence from Jesus.
Fear of persecution, prison, death.

Body
Fear is Real

If you've ever been afraid before raise your hand.

The rest of you are afraid to raise your hand!

The Bible recounts a wide range of people who were afraid in different situations.

→ **Joshua** was to go to battle against the Canaanites.

3x - Do not be afraid, people.

→ When **Israel** was in captivity under the Babylonians, the Lord told Israel, “So do not fear.” (Isa 41:10)

→ The angels told **Zechariah, Mary, Shepherds**, “fear not.”

→ Jesus tells **Smyrna** Church, do not be afraid of what you are about to face – prison, persecution, death.

→ Covid comes along, and Jesus says, “time to fear, folks!” (NOT!)

We can safely say – there was a LOT of fear during Covid.

- We watched the surreal virus move across the landscape.
- Shut down personal interactions for fear of transmission.
- Impending doom as businesses, traffic, social interactions came to a screeching halt.
- increased-risk group → fear.
- I don't want to expose my aging parents to Covid → fear.
- My kids don't want me to go out → fear.
- Vaccines arrive. We learned that there are risks to the vaccine.
- We learned that there are risks to everything!

Fear is real. If you have fear, ADMIT it!

What we confess loses its power over us.

Don't walk in denial, or it will go *subconscious* and control you.

What is *your* reaction to Covid?

Are *you* walking in fear?

For you...

- Are you taking precautions, and not letting fear stop your life?

- Is staying isolated a resignation to the forces around you, or are you pivoting to find the opportunities that arise.
- Can you adhere to safe practices and still passionately pursue the mission and purposes of God?
- Are you listening to the voice of the Lord, or taking a break from the Word, Prayer, Fellowship, Witnessing until this all blows over?

It doesn't matter if you ...

stay home or go out. You can have fear
Take the vaccine or not. You can have fear.

Person A and B can do the exact same things, have all the same information; One has fear, the other no fear.

Jesus told Smyrna not to fear prison, persecution, death.

Does a simple command suddenly remove fear?
How do *we* live out God's command to not fear?
During covid, have your thought about *how* to *not* fear?

Living fearfully has a **negative effect** on a person's life.
This is not to say that you won't get Covid.

Be Faithful to God in Life

Being Faithful to God in life does not mean no fear exists,
but that Fear does not govern your life.
Faith and obedience to God overcomes fear that tries to stop you.

Fear often reflects a lack of faith in God's sovereignty.
The more you see God's sovereignty, the less you fear.
The less you see God's sovereignty, the more you fear.

Sidebar: Caution about a wrong response to God's sovereignty

- God is sovereign so I can be irresponsible.
- Here is how it works: God is sovereign, You are responsible.
- “I don’t need to practice any health measures”
 - Irresponsible and reckless. Ungodly.
 - A church in Kaimuki was in the newspaper this spring.
 - Easter Sunday of all days
 - Taught *against* healthy practices.
 - “covid is being sent through a demonic wind, so rebuke it.”
 - Meanwhile they were instructed to lie and say that they think it came from a Korean restaurant. (demonic!)
 - 50 people got Covid. Told not to tell contact tracers.
 - One of their congregants died.
 - “Do not fear” they said. So they were unafraid of getting and transmitting covid, but they were terribly *afraid* of getting the vaccine.
 - There ARE risks to getting and transmitting Covid, and,
 - There ARE risks to the vaccine. (Thousands of deaths)
 - If you want to hide away out of fear, you will have to come out eventually. Then what? You face the same risks ... and still have fear.

Live for God’s Purposes:

It is possible, in the name of being physically safe, to miss pursuing the Purposes of God. What is your life for? To serve God’s purposes!

In the name of preserving your life at any cost, some will sacrifice God's purpose for them in order to live longer or live healthier.

Faithful saints throughout time, however, sacrificed long life and health in order to accomplish the purposes of God.

Story: airplane in great turbulence, girl quietly reading. Asked later why she was so calm, she said, *I wasn't worried because my daddy is the pilot, and I knew he was going to get me home.*

Paul said in **Acts 13:36** – “For when David had served God’s purposes in his own generation, he fell asleep...”

God has a purpose for your life, and you will not die until you accomplish His purposes.

That purpose is more important than your life itself.

Pr. George Nagato: our goal should not be to arrive safely at death, or to live as long as possible.

But to live life All In and All Out for God.

What is God’s purpose for your life that is more important than your life itself?

- If you don’t solve this question you will strive to live a healthy and long life, get to the end, and life will be meaningless.
- If you resolve this question in your mind to live for God’s Mission and purpose you can get to the end of your unhealthy and short life, and have immeasurable meaning and purpose. And – life eternal!

Pastor Timothy Keller? – I’m not going to die because of statistics or probability, but because it is God’s time for me.

Our purpose is to carry out Christ’s Great Commission.

- Ask how you can live your life carry out the Great Commission!
 - Even in covid.
 - When you put your life as the top purpose, your fear increases! You must protect that at all costs.
 - When you put God’s purposes as the top purpose,

- Your fear decreases. You are not phobic of death.
- (I'm not talking about being reckless or irresponsible.)

Accept that there are “risks” to everything.

Comparative Threats:

- Matt 5:21-22 (anger) 25-30 (lust)
- Matt 6:14-15 (forgiving others)
- Matt 7:1-2 (do not judge)
- Matt 10:28
 - Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.
- Matt 16:20 – what good is it for a man to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul.
- John 6:63 (the Spirit gives life...)
- Jn 15:5-8 (5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.

All of these verses say that our souls are immeasurably more important than our bodies.

As we will see, Fearing God is the fear that overrides all fears, and in a divine twist, brings peace.

If you make your decisions solely on earthly risks, you will probably miss the most important threat of all. That of completely neglecting God’s warnings about basic living.

Be Faithful to God in Death

Jesus to Smyrna – Be faithful, even to death.

- How can Smyrna do that? Not fear about their one life?

Christians can say “do not fear” because we have a **different perspective** on life. *This world is not all there is.*

The Gospel is about removing the fear of death.

- (Matt 10:29) *A bird cannot fall to the ground without it being God's will.* Neither can you.
- (Psalm 73) *You hold me by my right hand; you guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory. Who have I in heaven but You, and being with you I desire nothing on earth.*
- (Matt 25) Jesus says that after you die God will say to the faithful, “*you have been faithful; Enter your master's happiness.*”

Paul told the Philippian church – (Phil 1:20-21) *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage, so that now as always, Christ Jesus will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

How your face death can exalt Christ ... or insult Christ.

However you die - but lets say it's from Covid or the vaccine – on my death bed, in my dying breath I turn and say to you:

- *I should have not gone there; I'm too young to die; I should have taken the vaccine (or not taken the vaccine; Where is God when you need Him? By all means, protect yourself.*
Or...
- *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is store for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that Day. And not only to me, but to all who long for His appearing.*
Go tell as many as you can of eternal life in Christ!

Which response gives glory to God? Which response shows confidence that Jesus' death purchased eternal life? Which response shows that I

really believe that eternal life in Christ is better by far than life on this earth?

Being Faithful to God in Death is the final exclamation point on the faith you claimed to life during life.

Jesus reminds Smyrna that He is the First and the Last, the one who died and came to life again.

This is, as (Eph 1:19) says “... his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in us when he raised him from the dead and seated Him in the heavenly realms...”

Song - In Christ Alone, Verse 4:

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny!
No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home Here is the *power of Christ* I'll stand!

Closing: A Prayer of Faithfulness to God

Prayer of Adoration: Lord, You are sovereign over my life.

- All my days are in your hand.
- No weapon formed against me will stand, no pestilence can harm me unless allowed by You.
- You are Almighty and Sovereign over my life.
 - Whatever happens to me is in your hands.

Prayer of Confession: confess your fear! If you have any fears, have you confessed them to God?

Lord, I am afraid of...

- Dying or getting sick from Covid
- Passing Covid to those around me.
- The vaccine
- Forgive me for walking in fear.

Prayer of Thanksgiving: Lord, Thank you for

- your Sovereignty and Love.
- Your protection. Not a sparrow can fall to the ground...
- For the wisdom and ways to be responsible and safe.
- If I (loved ones) die I will be with you in heaven.

Prayer of Supplication: Lord, I now ask ...

- For **protection** and **safety** in the path You lead me in.
 - For **faith** in the midst of my fear.
 - Romans 14:23
 - For **courage** in the face of my fear.
 - Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage *presumes* fear.
 - Courage is acting rightly despite fear.
 - **Wisdom** to walk in ways that honor You.
 - Is your path honoring God?
 - Are you pursuing the purposes of God?
 - **Removal** of fear and anxiety.
 - 1 Peter 5:7
 - “I will not worry, I will not fear, because God is looking out for me.”

Declaration: I will trust in You. My dependance and security is in You alone. Whether I live or die I want Jesus Christ to be glorified in my body.