

Moving from Fear to Faith

Forest Park Church

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Simply put, fear is the opposite of faith.

Proverbs 23:7

"as [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he" .

1. FEAR IS A THIEF...

The book of Exodus tells us about the Israelite people leaving the bondage of Egypt for the freedom God had planned for them. They have just seen God's hand work in a mighty way.

- They have witnessed the ten plagues;
- they have experienced the first Passover;
- they have just been released by Pharaoh after 400 years of bondage. You would think that they will be filled with faith, but instead they are crippled by fear.

A. FEAR MAKES US SKEPTICAL

Then they turned against Moses and complained,

Exodus 14:11

"Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves in Egypt ? -

When we are afraid, we begin to doubt.

- We doubt ourselves,
- we doubt God,
- we doubt other people,
- we become skeptical.

B. FEAR MAKES US SELFISH

When I'm afraid, the only thing I can think of is myself.

- I don't think about you,
- I don't think about God,
- I don't think about anybody else,
- I'm just focusing in on me.

v. 11

Then they turned against Moses and complained, "Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves in Egypt ? Why did you make us leave?"

What are they saying? "***Look what you've done to us!***"

When we're afraid,

- We accuse others, we excuse ourselves,
- We pass the buck, we blame other people,
- We run from responsibility.

C. FEAR MAKES US HARD HEADED

We resist change when we're afraid.

12, they said, "*Didn't we tell you to leave us alone while we were still in Egypt ?*"

In other words, they were saying to Moses,

- "Don't rock the boat.
- Don't upset the status quo.
- We've always done it this way before."

And fear keeps people from growing,

- it keeps businesses from growing,
- it keeps churches from growing,
- because it causes us to be stubborn.

God is ready to set them free from 400 years of slavery and the Israelites say, "Leave us alone!"

D. FEAR ROBS US OF OUR VISION

When the Israelites were confronted with the Red Sea , they said,

12 *"Our Egyptian slavery was far better than dying out here in the wilderness."*

- They wanted to go back to the "good old days" in Egypt.
- They wanted to give up and go back.
- They had so little faith that God would come through for them and grant them freedom that they preferred to return to bondage in Egypt .

A lot of people are living the exact same way today.

They would rather live in the bondage of their own

- sin,
- rebellion,
- guilt,

Rather than be set free by risking it all for Jesus Christ.

2. HOW CAN I REPLACE FEAR WITH FAITH?

How do I move out in faith rather than caving in to fear?

- Whether we're talking about that first step of faith of becoming a Christian,
- Perhaps you're already a believer ready to move toward maturity
- We all need to learn how to move on to the next level.

There are five principles that God teaches us in His word.

1. INFORMATION: KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS

John 8:31-32

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Jesus had just finished a speech at the temple where He delineated differences between Himself and His listeners.

- "You are from below; I am from above.
- You are of this world; I am not of this world.
- I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins" (John 8:23–24).

The result of Jesus' message was that "even as he spoke, many believed in him" (verse 30). Then, in verse 31, Jesus begins to speak just to those who had believed.

John 8:31

"Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples'"

- True discipleship is more than intellectual assent;
- those who are "really" followers of Christ will "hold to" His Word.
- That means they will not only accept His teachings as truth, but they will also obey His teachings.
- Action is proof of faith (James 2:17).

Knowing who Jesus really is and what he's done for us creates a firm foundation on which we can build our lives in any circumstance.

Proverbs 13:16

*Every prudent man acts with knowledge,
but a fool flaunts his folly.*

Proverbs 23:23

*Buy truth, and do not sell it;
buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.*

2. EVALUATION: COUNT THE COST

Find out why you're doing what you're doing and what the risk is involved in it.

You find out what the costs are –

- What it's going to cost in time –
- What it's going to cost in money –
- What it's going to cost in reputation and emotional energy.

Once Jesus was talking to a crowd and He was telling them that if they were going to become one of His followers they needed to count the cost before they took that step of faith.

He illustrated His point with the following words

Luke 14:28, 31

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?... "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"

He says, if you're going to build a building, you better go out and plan a budget first – and evaluate the cost.

- If you're going to go to war, you'd better figure out what the strength of your army compared to the strength of the enemy's.

- If you're going to step out on faith and believe in Jesus Christ for your deliverance from bondage, you need to evaluate, count the cost, analyze the risk. It is not a lack of faith to evaluate, it is an encouragement to faith.

Every decision has a price tag and you'd better know what the price is before you take the risk.

3. PREPARATION: PLAN YOUR STEPS

Proverbs 14:15

*The simple believes everything,
but the prudent gives thought to his steps.*

The prudent person of faith thinks about where they're going.
This person understands that you don't go charging into battle without a plan.

Proverbs 16:9

*The heart of man plans his way,
but the Lord establishes his steps.*

Notice there are two parts to this verse: man's part and God's part.

1. We should make our plans – That's our part –
2. Together with God to direct us – That's God's part – And they both go together.

As you plan, you pray and you ask God to direct you.

Prayer and preparation go together.

- When you prepare without prayer, you're going to have problems.
- When you have prayer without preparing, you're going to have problems.
- One without the other is insufficient – You need them both.
- The Bible says to plan out your life, to think where you're going, to be intelligent in the direction of your life.

4. MOVE, QUIETLY CARRY ON

You've got to let go and launch out if you're going to be a person of faith. You've heard the saying, "Turtles only make progress when they stick their necks out." Well, it's true about human beings, too.

The most difficult part of taking the risk is the letting go of the old.

- We want to hold on to the old job, until the new job is secure.
- We want to make sure that everything's set up in our new home, before we move out of the old home.
- It's that letting go, letting go of the independence of being single in order to grab on to the intimate confines of being married.