

Westland Free Methodist Church
“Life Management Series: Fear Management”
12/2/07
Genesis 3:6-10; Isaiah 6:1-4

Intro to fears of all kinds:

(Sitting on the top of a ladder tell story) Jumping off of 30 foot platform in state park in Indiana.

Illus. A Spy was captured and sentenced to death by a general in the Persian army. Before execution, the general would go through a rather unusual ritual. He would give the criminal a choice between the firing squad or the Big Black door. This spy was given the usual choice. He deliberated for a long time then finally decided on the firing squad. Moments later his life was extinguished. The general turned to his aide and said, they always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. Yet, we gave him a choice. The aide himself did not know what fate lay behind the big, black door so he asked his commander. Freedom replied the general, and I've only known a few brave enough to take it." Freedom can be a frightening endeavor. Far too many choose familiar slavery rather than taking a risk for freedom.

I. We must first understand that it is a secular fear of man that causes us to fall short of God's best for our life.

- Fear of being overcome with adversity
- Fear of physical limitations
- Fear of the future
- Nations fearing other nations
- Fear of the dark
- Fear of Spiders
- Fear of people - A salesman, driving on a lonely country road one dark and rainy night, had a flat. He opened the trunk—no lug wrench. The light from a farmhouse could be seen dimly up the road. He set out on foot through the driving rain. Surely the farmer would have a lug wrench he could borrow, he thought. Of course, it was late at night—the farmer would be asleep in his warm, dry bed. Maybe he wouldn't answer the door. And even if he did, he'd be angry at being awakened in the middle of the night. The salesman, picking his way blindly in the dark, stumbled on. By now his shoes and clothing were soaked. Even if the farmer did answer his knock, he would probably shout something like, "What's the big idea waking me up at this hour?" This thought made the salesman angry. What right did that farmer have to refuse him the loan of a lug wrench? After all, here he was stranded in the middle of nowhere, soaked to the skin. The farmer was a selfish clod—no doubt about that! The salesman finally reached the house and banged loudly on the door. A light went on inside, and a window opened above. A voice called out, "Who is it?" His face white with anger, the salesman called out, "You know darn well who it is. It's me! And you can keep your blasted lug wrench. I wouldn't borrow it now if you had the last one on earth!"
- Fear of disasters – fires in California, and instead of hurricanes that threaten the Caribbean, lately it was an enormous earthquake, that caused people to jump from their windows out of fear of being crushed by the buildings. The only serious report of injury of the entire quake was those people jumping from windows.
- Fear of physical pain – Jeff getting stabbed in the hand/it was such a shock that he wasn't sure if he had been struck by lightning.
- Then there's some who just fear fear itself. - One day in July, a farmer sat in front of his shack, smoking his corn cob pipe. Along came a stranger who asked, "How's your cotton coming?" "Ain't got none," was the answer. "Didn't plant none. 'Fraid of the boll weevil." "Well, how's your corn?" "Didn't plant none. 'Fraid o' drouth." "How about your potatoes?" "Ain't got none. Scairt o' tater

bugs.” The stranger finally asked, “Well, what did you plant?” “Nothin’,” answered the farmer. “I just played it safe.”

- **Genesis 3:6-10**- Once Adam and Eve sinned, they no longer had pure reverential fear of God. God knows good and evil, and yet he has no fear in a secular sense. That’s because he is God. Even in the garden of eden, Adam and eve did not even know they were naked because they did not see any existence like God does. God knew they were naked. But they didn’t. Even when we are in the perfect place called heaven, or any place here when we are at complete peace, we will not know any existence like God does. God is God. And we are invited into his presence as heirs to the throne of God. But we can have a pure reverential fear that overcomes our secular fear of man.

II. But there is another fear that must be understood. It is this **Reverential fear of God.**

A Reverent Fear includes:

1. **Worship(Isaiah 6:1-4)**

- 5 chapters later Isaiah is prophecying about Jesus. In **Isaiah 11:3** it says *“and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.”*

2. **Confession of Sin.(Isaiah 6:5-7)**

- **Paul** admonished believers of Philippi as he says in **Phil. 2:12** – *“Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”*

3. **Seeking God’s will.(Isaiah 6:8-13)**

- The early church grew in numbers as they lived “in the fear of the **Lord**” **Acts 9:31** says *“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.”*
- **I John 4:18** – *“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.”*

We must come to a discernment to know the difference between these ever present fears in our lives. We can live one of two ways.

Illus. Any time steel workers work at great heights, they have a fear of falling. They look amazing as they walk those beams, but they know that every once in a while someone dies from a fall. This was the case when they built the golden gate bridge in San Francisco. In fact they had a superstition that one man would die for every million dollars spent on the project. This was a 35 million dollar project, so it meant 35 men would fall to their death before it was all over. This fear of death is no different than our fear of anything outside of God. It was said that when falling into the bay below, that it was equivalent to racing 80 miles an hour into a brick wall. Because of the imminent fear the chief engineer built a huge trapeze net under the workers at great cost. The workers said they felt they could “dance on steel” as a result.

When we fall in the arms of God, it’s like that trapeze. Fearing a fall is everything to us in life, isn’t it. But when we fear God in a reverent way, it’s like a net that catches us. God wants us to “dance on steel”. If we fear him we can.

Key:God says in his word, I judge you because you fear man more than you fear me.

II Timothy 1:7 – Paul was speaking to young Timothy who was so afraid of what man might do to him, when he said, *“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”*

Do you have this spirit of fear. It's a fear of man, and God wants to replace it with a fear of himself. This fear is only because your God is so big, and strong, just like a loving father, who like when you were young, you thought he was a god too.

Psalm 23:4 says *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me."* This is a reverential fear relationship with God that casts out any secular threat of fear of man.

Managing fear in our lives is about us casting off secular fear with the ever present and welcome reverential fear of God. This is true. It is trustworthy. It is eternally dependable.

Conclusion: When we reverence God, all else will pale in comparison. The fears in life will dissipate when we put our appropriate fear in God. Fearing God will always put fear of man in it's place, and help us see it in the right perspective.

Illus. There was a well-known television circus show that developed a Bengal tiger act. Like the rest of the show, it was done "live" before a large audience. One evening, the tiger trainer went into the cage with several tigers to do a routine performance. The door was locked behind him. The spotlights highlighted the cage, the television cameras moved in close, and the audience watched in suspense as the trainer skillfully put the tigers through their paces. In the middle of the performance, the worst possible fate befell the act: the lights went out! For twenty or thirty long, dark seconds the trainer was locked in with the tigers. In the darkness they could see him, but he could not see them. A whip and a small kitchen chair seemed meager protection under the circumstances, but he survived, and when the lights came on, he calmly finished the performance. In an interview afterward, he was asked how he felt knowing that the tigers could see him but that he could not see them. He first admitted the chilling fear of the situation, but pointed out that the tigers did not know that he could not see them. He said, "I just kept cracking my whip and talking to them until the lights came on. And they never knew I could not see them as well as they could see me."