

Sermon Title: A Message of Encouragement in a Sea of Fear

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Sermon Purpose: To call the true Christian to be encouraged in a sea of fear.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 mindsets to remaining encouraged in a sea of fear.

Introduction: Read 4:16-5:1-10

On behalf of Pastor's, Christians, and people everywhere, I would like to say a word of thanks to all those on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Doctors, nurses, health care workers, grocery store employees and all essential workers. Thank you for being faithful in risking your own health, families, and life to minister to people you don't even know. Thank you!!!

But even as I give these words of appreciation and encouragement, there is a heavy burden of conviction on my heart and mind. You see, there is a virus called sin that has created a pandemic of death physically and spiritually for over 10,000-12,000 years of human history. The cure for this sin virus was brought onto the market, free of cost to everyone over 2,000 years ago from a lab called Calvary. One person by the name of Jesus Christ was the guinea pig so to speak, the virus of sin was placed on Him. It brought about death (2 Corinthians 5:21) but three days later the vaccine of the resurrection was applied and a means of healing was provided for all who would be vaccinated with the blood of Jesus Christ. This vaccine would make all who believe based on the Scriptures to be impervious to the penalty, power, and one day presence of sin and death.

Everyone who was vaccinated, has been given the responsibility and calling to become front-line workers who would risk their time, talents and treasures and if necessary their very lives to testify and minister to others who were infected with this virus of sin. The symptoms could vary from person to person, but the cause was the same, sin!

My heart is saddened because I have observed what's being modeled by the front line workers during the COVID-19 epidemic, the sacrifice, the risks, the compassion, and the commitment not being modeled by Christians. As awful as this current pandemic is, it is only temporary, but the sin virus, with its death toll potential is eternal.

SOMETHING HAS TO CHANGE!!!!

1. What will be different for us as front line workers now, and when we start to gather again?
2. What sacrifices have we realized we need to make in order to minister to those around us who are sick with sin, those who are carriers, but may not recognize the symptoms?
3. How will our view about what is important change?
4. What will we as Christ's front line workers be willing to resist and sacrifice to fulfill our heavenly marching orders?
5. What will we be willing to risk, death if required, in order to save others?

I. The validation that is needed in a sea of fear is to value spiritual strength over physical strength. V.16

II. The vindication that is needed in a sea of fear is to value the future over the past, and the present. V.17

III. The vision that is needed in a sea of fear is to value the eternal over the temporal. V.18

I. The validation that is needed in a sea of fear is to value spiritual strength over physical strength. V.16

This is in reference to New Covenant ministry, which is a paradigm for the Christian life on earth. "Lose heart" is a strong term which refers to abandoning oneself to cowardly surrender. This is how we are to respond to life, pain, trial, troubles, fears, and suffering. The task or assignment of ministering the New Covenant ministry was to noble of a task to lose heart over.

(Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 3:13; Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 9:16-17; Colossians 1:23-25)

A. Christian's do not lose heart because of the outward. V.16a

The physical body is in the process of decay and will eventually die. The text is referring to the normal aging process all people experience, but with the added emphasis that his lifestyle was speeding up the process. Paul was wearing himself out in living out ministry, this was the essence of life for him, and should be for all Christians.

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Christians are to give sacrificial service unto the agenda of Jesus Christ for all saints. The pace, the effort, the service, and suffering brings about decay, death, and destruction for the Christian.

2 Corinthians 6:4-10; 11:23-27

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Isaiah 40:28-31 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. **29** He gives power to the weak, And to *those who have* no might He increases strength. **30** Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, **31** But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

B. Christian's don't lose heart because of the inward man. V.16b

This is a reference to the new creation inwardly. The born again portion of man, created by the new birth, the spirit of a Christian, the eternal part of the new man.

Ephesians 4:24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Colossians 3:10 and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Romans 8:23 Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

The new inner man is being renewed every day when properly fed and nurtured. There is the growth and maturing process of the believers that should be constantly occurring. While the physical body is daily decaying, the inner self of the believer continues to grow and mature into Christlikeness.

Ephesians 3:16-20 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, **17** that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height-- **19** to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. **20** Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

1 Peter 4:1 Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,

1 Peter 4:13-14 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. **14** If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

It is the recognition of this truth that encourages the true believer to value the inner man over the outer man and produces spiritual endurance.

II. The vindication that is needed in a sea of fear is to value the future over the past, and the present. V.17

- A. The past and the present suffering is light affliction. V.17a
The Greek word for "light" means "a weightless trifle." The word "affliction" refers to intense pressure (**2 Corinthians 11:23-33**)
2 Corinthians 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

Yet the pressures are viewed as weightless and only lasting for a brief moment, when viewed from an eternal perspective.

James 4:14 whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Ecclesiastes 12:5 Also they are afraid of height, And of terrors in the way; When the almond tree blossoms, The grasshopper is a burden, And desire fails. For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets.

- B. The future outweighs the past and the present. V.17b
"fear outweighs them all glory" hyperbole is literally "extraordinarily unto the extraordinary."
1 Peter 1:3-7 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, **7** that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Paul is referring to suffering for Christ, not suffering for sinful acts, attitudes, or actions.

Matthew 20:20-23 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. **21** And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." **22** But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." **23** So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father."

The Greek word for "weight" refers to a heavy mass. For Paul and all believers with this view, the future glory we will experience with the Lord far outweighed any suffering or inconveniences we experience in the world.

Romans 8:17-18 and if children, then heirs-- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. **18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. **1 Peter 1:6-7** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, **7** that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Paul wants us to know and understand, and stand firm in the fact the greater of our suffering and inconveniences for Christ's sake, the greater will be our eternal glory in the future.

1 Peter 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

III. The vision that is needed in a sea of fear is to value the eternal over the temporal. V.18

Endurance and encouragement is based on the Christian's ability to look beyond the physical to the spiritual; beyond the present to the future, and beyond the visible to the invisible.

Pursuing God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God, the righteousness of Christ, holiness, godliness, truth, the Great Commission, the souls of men should consume the believer's desires, feelings, emotions, time, talents, treasures, and testimony in summary their whole life!!!

The eternal perspective and hope in the things that are not seen sustain and strengthens the true believer.

1 Peter 5:4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

1 Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

Romans 9:1-4 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, **2** that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. **3** For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, **4** who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of God*, and the promises;

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.