

Freedom from Fear

Luke 12:4-12

INTRODUCTION: Prescriptions for anti-anxiety medicine started climbing in mid-February, spiking 34% by March 15, according to a new report from Express Scripts. The peak roughly coincides with the World Health Organization declaring a global pandemic on March 11 and states starting to impose stay-at-home orders.

The recent increase in usage was nearly twice as high for women, whose prescriptions jumped almost 40%, compared with men, who saw a 22.7% rise.

It's a sharp reversal from the pattern over the last five years, during which the use of drugs known as benzodiazepines -- including Xanax, Ativan and Valium -- declined 12.1%.

Fear has been a real factor during this season.

According National Institute for Mental Health – 6.3 Million Americans have some type of mental phobia. In other words large amounts of Americans have fear as a factor in their lives.

WHAT DO YOU FEAR? What keeps you awake at night? What seasons every decision you make and keeps you from reaching your real potential?

- **Financial?** Layoffs. Some of you lay awake at night gripped with fear over what your employer might do.
- **Medical?** Doctor's Reports. Mom and Dad how many of you watch your kid like a hawk and analyze every twitch in his eye. And the next thing you know your brain has turned that twitch into a tumor and you are convinced a tumor is growing somewhere?
- **Family?** The Unknown - Some of you are gripped with fear because of what your spouse might be doing. You have no evidence, you have know reason to doubt... but you do.
- **Opinions?** - Some of you live your life afraid of what others might think. That's why you don't share your faith.
 - You know what i believe, I believe some of these young people are called into the ministry, but they won't surrender because of fear of what mom or dad will think.

Here is what I want you teach you today - if you could see from God's perspective, there is **ABSOLUTELY nothing to FEAR**. That is so true that **fear itself is a sin against God**.

As a matter of fact, "Fear Not" is the most often quoted encouragement in the scripture. It is found some 366 times, once for every day of the year and an extra for leap year.

CONTEXT:**TEXT: Luke 12:4–12 (ESV)****1. The Disciple's Wise Perspective**

⁴“I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.”⁵But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!

Jesus uses a form of the rhetorical method that the Greeks call "**Reductio ad absurdum**" or "reduction to absurdity." He is arguing that FEAR is illogical, and He is doing so by reducing FEAR to its absolute worst-case conclusion.

Simply put, Jesus says, "Eh, don't be afraid... What's the worst that could happen? **Death** and that's no biggie." In fact, there are far worse things that could happen, and if you are going to fear at all, fear that.

Keeping a long term view of circumstances and situations can deliver you from fear.

WISDOM - During our Wednesday night services we have been looking at the subject of Wisdom in the book of Proverbs. My definition of wisdom is **seeing things from God's perspective**. In other words, seeing the long view.

The **foolish person** is the opposite; they only see what is right in front of them, and they are oblivious to the chain of effect that will result from the decisions they make. They are short-sighted.

The **wise person** may be tempted to make the same decisions as the foolish, but they are able to do the mental math and get to a place where they are convinced that the long-term outcome is not worth the short-term pleasure.

ILLUSTRATION: Do you remember your **first day of 3rd grade**? It probably seemed like a big deal at the time. You wanted to dress right, act right, because THIS is the first day of 3rd grade. But now? You hardly remember it!

That's what all the things that terrify you will seem like after you have **been with Jesus for about 1 Million years**.

- What was life on the old earth like? I think I wore a hat...
- Did you get laid off? haha, that's right I was an engineer...
- Didn't you get cancer? haha, you know it seems like there was something like that...

2. The Disciple's Worthy Price

⁶ Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷ Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

3. The Disciple's Witness Promise

a. A Profession from Heaven

⁸ "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God, ⁹ but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

ILLUSTRATION: Daniel Kirby was an Evangelist back in the Horse and Buggy days. He tells the story of a dream he once had that he was suddenly thrust before the Tribunal Judgement Bar of God. In the presence of the Almighty, he fell down into a fetal position, absolutely gripped with fear. A voice came from the throne, "Who are you, and why are you hear?" But he was unable to move a muscle in response. Again, the voice came, "Who are you, and why are you here?" Still, he was gripped with fear. A third time, the voice thundered, "Who are you, and why are you here?" This time, he felt arms reach down under his; he opened his eyes just enough to see the nail scars. It was the Lord Jesus Christ. He lifted Kirby up to his feet and boldly declared, "Father, this is my servant, Daniel Kirby; he declared me before men; now I declare him before you." Could he do the same for you?

b. A Penalty in Hell

¹⁰ And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

This passage has terrified people for 2,000 years. Over the years, many people have come to me terrified, thinking that they may have committed the unpardonable sin. And they should be terrified if they have.

But I want you to understand it in its context. Here, Jesus says every sin you can possibly commit can be forgiven, no matter how atrocious - except for one - the Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

What Is Blasphemy? It is a verbal sin. Remember a few weeks ago, we studied when the Pharisees said that Jesus was casting out Demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of Demons?

In Matthews's account of that event, here is what Jesus said.

Matthew 12:31–32 (ESV)

³¹Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.³² And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

What did the Pharisees do? They saw the work of Jesus and attributed it to Satan. Jesus says you can be forgiven for that if you come to your senses and repent. But if you do that to the Holy Spirit, you won't be forgiven.

What does that mean? Well, understand that the Holy Spirit is the only means of a person being converted. The Gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit illumines the hearer, grants him/her repentance and faith, and they are born again.

NOW, that is not how the Baptist get saved... that's the only way it happens.

John 3:5–6 (ESV)

⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

You can't be saved apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

NOW, if you reject the Holy Spirit's conviction and declare it not to be life and hope but rather the work of the Evil One... there is no other hope for you. You've rejected the only hope of salvation that exists and that cannot be forgiven.

NOW, the context of what Jesus is saying here in Luke is that to you who are disciples of Jesus, you are saved, and you are going to go into the world preaching the Gospel... know that you are clothed with tremendous power, the Holy Spirit sends you, and to reject your message has tremendous consequences attached to it.

So, the lost world should be terrified of that reality - but not you.

c. A Partner on Earth

¹¹And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say,¹² for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

Jesus said to Paul in Acts 18:9 (NASB95)

⁹And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent;¹⁰ **for I am with you,**

Now that is the DIVINE Trump card. I am with you.

It doesn't matter what you put on the other side of the equation - it just doesn't stack up against I am with you.

- I may be going to get **laid off** - It's ok, I am with you.
- **People may not like me** if I say that - it's ok, I am with you. I am a friend that sticks closer than a brother.
- The **Dr. says it doesn't look good** - It's ok, he's a practicing physician, I'm the great physician.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL for THOU ART WITH ME!!!!

Matthew 28:19–20 (NASB95)

¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Did you see that? Who get's lo I am with you always? Those who go make disciples. You want to get point two - get busy in point on.

Isaiah 41:10 (NASB95)

¹⁰ 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Jeremiah 1:17–19 (NASB95)

¹⁷ "Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will dismay you before them.

¹⁸ "Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. ¹⁹ "They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, **for I am with you to deliver you,**" declares the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: SIMON PETER:

- The Soldiers come to arrest Jesus - he takes out a sword and cuts off the ear of Malcus. He is ready to go to war for Jesus.
- Just hours later, he is distant from Jesus and he is terrified of a slave girl, denying Jesus with a curse.
- Then on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection - we see him bolding preaching the Gospel, indicting the crowd for crucifying the Messiah. What happened? The Holy Spirit came... the filling of the Holy Spirit produced the same boldness that being right next to Jesus produced.

INTRODUCTION;

When I was in about the 7th grade. I remember going to a Bluegrass Convention with my cousins, Tatum, Zeke and Boone. We were having a great time when in walked 4 guys I knew from school. These guys were bullies. These were the guys who shaved in little league. These were the guys who drove to middle school. They were stuck there all day and we were stuck there all day and it didn't take them long to decide to have some fun with us. They saw us walking outside and when we got away from our parents, one of them walked up and just shoved me into the wall. I turned around and said, "boy what's your problem" he said to me, "I ain't a boy, I'm a man". The proceeded to tell us how they wanted to fight all of us at 3 o'clock in the men's room. Well, for the next couple of hours we were scared out of our mind. We couldn't call the police or tell our dads. We had no idea what we were going to do. Then at 2:45 Tatum and Zeke's brother Scotty came in. Now Scotty was known for making the paper every Saturday for ending someone's football career on Friday night. Scotty was huge! All of a sudden, the decks were stacked a bit more in our favor.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: