

Encounter Church  
Sunday November 19, 2023

Love not Fear

1 Corinthians 13:13- "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Paul was in the middle of teaching the Corinthians about the proper use of spiritual gifts.

He knew they needed more than new information regarding the gifts; they needed a new framework in which to think about gifts.

Before he wrote to them, they were interested in their personal fulfillment and prestige, not in building up the church.

In this chapter, Paul gave them a new orientation toward life that focused on putting other people first.

***He taught them to love, knowing that if they loved rightly, they would also use their gifts appropriately.***

If the Corinthians majored on tongues, prophecy and knowledge, Paul focuses attention on faith, hope and love. These three qualities are the ones which 'abide'.

As the Corinthian Church struggled in its worship what should be its highest priority?

***Paul's position was plain! The highest virtue for them was to love God and love one another!***

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE!

***Love is the defining characteristic of God's presence among His people.***

***Therefore it should be the defining characteristic of God's people!***

***WHAT IS A BARRIER TO LOVE? FEAR!***

In Romania the Holy Spirit had me look at at the opposites of faith, hope and love.

FAITH- DOUBT  
HOPE-HOPELESS  
LOVE-FEAR

When we doubt God it leads to being hopeless and this leads to fear. When we have no faith or hope we fear!

*When fear takes root it leads to doubt and hopelessness which leads to fear which leads to doubt and hopelessness which leads to fear!*

**“So now doubt, hopelessness, and fear abide, these three; but the greatest of these is fear.”**

**If love is not the greatest in our life, fear will be!**

1 John 4:17-19- “God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we’re free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ’s. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love. We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.”

***“There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear.”***

A recurring message throughout the Bible is that God’s people do not need to be afraid!

***Fear never pulled a family out of poverty. Fear never saved a marriage or a business! Courage saves a marriage. People of faith save a business!***

**Fear brings us into a prison and slams the door behind us!**

Can you imagine with me a life without fear?

The disciples are fearful and think they’re going to drown on a storm tossed sea while Jesus is sleeping in the boat!

***The disciples are screaming while Jesus is dreaming!***

***Fear corrodes our confidence in the goodness of God!***

**WE BEGIN TO WONDER IF GOD LOVES US WHEN GOD IS LOVE!**

***Fear turns us into control freaks! Fear, at its center, is a perceived loss of control!***

***And the more we try and control the meaner we become. Not loving!***

Martin Niemoller documents an extreme example of this. He was a German Pastor who took a heroic stand against Adolf Hitler. When he first met the dictator in 1933

Niemoller stood at the back of the room and listened. Later, when his wife asked him what he'd learned, he said, "I discovered that Herr Hitler is a terribly frightened man!"  
FEAR RELEASES THE TYRANT WITHIN!

***Jesus takes our fears seriously! The one statement he made more than any other was this: "DON'T BE AFRAID!"***

All fears come down to 3 main types.

### **1. External Fears**

These are usually caused by something outside of you and many times have been caused by an event in your past.

In fact many of these fears have been caused by a traumatic even in our past.

### **2. Internal Fears**

These are similar to external fears and can be triggered by events outside of you.

The difference is that internal fears are connected to internal emotions. These fears manifest as fear of failure, fear of success, fear of rejection, lack of self worth.

### **3. Subconscious Fears**

Other fears are so internal to us that we develop a belief system around them.

Subconscious fear is similar to internal fear except subconscious fears are believed to be a part of who we really are.

***Subconscious fears develop into limiting beliefs. Limiting beliefs filter how you see the world and try and convince you that you're not good enough to do something.***

***Or other words, we put ourselves in prison and shut the door.***

**BUT HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS:**

Psalms 68:6- ".....God sets the prisoners free and gives them joy...."

**SO WHAT'S THE KEY TO UNLOCKING THE PRISON DOOR OF FEAR?**

***THE KEY: GENUINE ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD!***

1 John 4:16- "We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them."

Romans 8:15- "So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

***When we have genuine encounters with God we have genuine encounters with his love and his love drives out all fear!***

Psalm 34:4-"I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears."

CONCLUSION: God's plan is not doubt, hopelessness and fear. God's plan is FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE. THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE!

**LOVE NOT FEAR!**

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message?