

Isa 41:10-13 (READ)

What is it that you fear most in this life
Could it be one of the basic fears of mankind
Like poverty and ill health the loss of a loved one
My dad and who grew up in the great depression
Always feared he would die in poverty

All of us have some un-talked about fears that we carry in us

Some people say they have no fears but that's not true
If you awoke at 3 in the morning with something slimy sliding across your stomach would you tell me then that you have no fear
I had a friend who was a practical joker
One night he took the collar off his wife's fur coat and placed it under the sheets right about where her feet would come to rest
I wasn't there of course but I understand she got out of bed in a single bound taking all the covers with her
And her scream could be heard across the street
We all have things or situations that we are afraid of
We live in a society dominated by fear
In some neighborhoods it is not safe to walk the streets at night
We have alarm systems on our houses our cars our boats
We have security forces guard dogs police forces and a strong military
And yet we are still afraid
How many like me can remember a time when you didn't lock your doors
To your car or your house – even at night
Things have changed - today we live in a fearful society
Do you know why
Our society is dominated by fear because we choose not to fear God
So instead of fearing God we fear one another
And we have fears deep within us – those are the fears I want to address

Some of which we cannot identify but we know they're there

And fear causes us to respond to situations in an irrational manner

It is my prayer

That God would set you free from irrational fear

Isa 41:10 is God's remedy for fear

No matter what you fear this is a verse you need to claim

In order to deal with our fears we need to begin with the cause of all fear

And that is found in Genesis

Eve ate the fruit – Adam followed her

And in Gen 3 – we read this – The Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of Thee in the Garden, and I was afraid..”.

That is the first time the idea of fear is in the Bible

So the reason there is fear is because of sin

Adam sinned and his guilt brought fear into his emotions

If there were no sin there would be no fear

Now the word fear is found hundreds of times in the Bible

And often it is God's encouragement to us – fear not – fear not

Fear is a sense of dread, uncertainty

About circumstances we believe might be threatening us

That we don't know how to handle or control

All of us have them

Most of the fears we have are perceived fears

Meaning that they never come to pass

The title of my message is not how to avoid fear but how to deal with fear

Remember not all fear is not bad – Scripture tells us to fear the Lord

Deut 10 – What does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord, your God

Now of course Biblical fear of the Lord is a reverence for God

It means to stand in awe of and to honor Him

That is why we bow our heads close our eyes get on our knees when we pray

God has also given us a protective fear

It is a healthy fear that keeps us from exposing ourselves to danger

When we hear a rattlesnake rattling or a strange dog growling at us

We wisely back off

These are called rational fears – meaning it makes good sense to be afraid

So some fear is good

But there is a different type of fear - one we deal with on a daily basis

It is a silent motivator to bad behavior

There might be a sin you are trying hard to overcome

And the root cause of that sin is fear

You may be short-tempered and the root cause of your temper is fear

Many have silent fears that motivate inappropriate actions and responses

And most who do are not even aware of it

What are the basic causes of fear in our lives

First- We have been taught to fear

When you were a child your parents instilled fear into you

Fear of bugs heights and water are learned fears

Sometimes parents teach their child to fear

In an effort to protect them from real danger

And these turn into phobias

Now if your parents were afraid of something most likely you will be too

The more fearful your parent – the more fearful you will be

The second cause of fear is ignorance

If we don't know the truth about a situation we may become afraid

You see that at work when the boss announces a reorganization

Everybody becomes fearful whether they need to be or not

There are a number of people who believe they have committed the unpardonable sin

There are Christians who believe themselves to be outside the grace of God

There are people who won't go into a church because they are afraid

Of what might happen to them

All of these fears are caused by ignorance

A third cause of our fears is imagination

Our minds always consider the worse possible scenario for any situation

And some of us dwell on it as though it was the only scenario

Now listen - if you awaken at night hear a loud noise

And you think someone is breaking into your house

The emotions you feel are legitimate

Whether the facts you believe are true or not

Your nervous system cannot distinguish between what you imagine

And the reality of a situation

So whether the fear is real or imagined - physically we respond the same

That is important because the physical response to fear

If experienced over a long period of time is harmful

A fourth reason we fear is poor self image

There are people who believe that life has beaten them

Things will never work out for them

They will never get a break in life

They say things like – I'm worried – things are going too well - and they mean it

They're like those folks from Hee-Haw singing – If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all
Only they aren't joking
Some people live their lives waiting for the next bad thing to happen
And when faced with any problem they are gripped by fear
Not because they can't handle it
But because they have decided they can't handle it

A fifth reason we fear is doubt

We doubt the unchanging promises of God
We believe the Bible is the unchanging Word of God
It is infallible – it is inerrant – and that settles it – right?
No it doesn't settle it
It isn't settled until we apply the truth of God to our heart
Until we rest upon those truths and apply them to our lives
Until we do that Biblical truths are just interesting facts about God
And not really a part of who we are and what we believe about ourselves
When the Scriptures aren't part of what we believe about us
We can read the our Bible – find a verse that describes what we are facing
Get on our knees and talk to God about it
Underline it – circle it – date it
And 24 hours later ask the question – What am I going to do
Just as though the reading the praying the claiming never happened
We hear from God but we doubt the truth of what God has said
And fear grips us again
Remember Satan's question to Eve in the Garden - Indeed, has God said

The sixth reason for fear is guilt

We are caught up in our past failures
We believe we let God down
A new situation arises and instead of looking forward to the challenge
Believing that with God's help we can accomplish anything
We are overcome with fear and dread
We cannot forgive ourselves no less believe God has forgiven us
We live with guilt and that guilt produces fear

That fear damages our relationship to God
And hinders our ability to function properly
Fear - no matter what level it is in your life
No matter what area it is in – no matter what the cause
Is negatively impacting your life

Let's look at some of the consequences of fear

We were born with two fears – fear of falling and fear of loud noises
All other fears we have learned
Our mind our will our emotions our spirit and our health are all negatively affected by fear

Fear hinders our ability to think and act properly

When you are fearful it is not possible to think right thoughts
Fear induces a fight or flight reaction
Adrenalin pumps into your body affecting your emotions
And it clouds your thinking process

Over time this chemical can affect your health

Fear can cause us to be hampered by indecision

One of the reasons some people cannot make up their minds
Is that they are fearful of making a wrong decision

Fear diminishes our capacity to achieve

That is why some people get right up to very brink of success
And just when things are falling in place for them
They will make some stupid mistake – every time
They are afraid and the fear stops them short of their goal

Fear causes us to panic

Because of panic we make decisions that seem necessary at the time
But are often devastating and hurtful

Then fear torments us

A person who lives in fear will not be able to truly experience love and joy and peace
They want these things – but somehow will never be able to achieve them

Fear damages our relationship with others

When someone has been hurt by others they fear it will happen again
They desperately need to be loved
But they build walls to protect themselves
And isolate themselves from the very thing they need the most
Fear causes us to feel jealous that our friends have other friends
Fear keeps us from being honest with each other
Many Christians believe that if others knew how much they sinned
They wouldn't like them

So Christians tend to keep silent about their sins

And in silence the sin grows more powerful

Fear keeps our conversations shallow and avoids topics that might expose who we really are

Finally and most importantly fear impedes our relationship to God

When we are afraid
It's not possible to find contentment and fulfillment in God's presence

Fearful people can even begin to fear our Heavenly Father

We talk grace but deep inside we are legalists

If I sin or make a mistake God will punish me
If I sin again will He cast me off – throw me out
But grace is absolute payment for our sins past present and future
No matter how many – no matter how often
No matter how heinous we believe that sin to be
God is our unconditionally loving Father
And if we are unable to accept that truth – we keep waiting for vengeance
We believe ourselves unable to please Him because we have sinned
So we keep on sinning
God is not keeping score on your sins – He is not waiting to abuse you
But if you are afraid that He is judging you
You will never experience the love joy and peace that should be yours

No one enjoys living in fear
So how do we learn to handle our fears
The first key is to admit we have fears
If you are unaware of your fears ask yourself these questions
Is there some sin in my life I keep having to deal with
Is there some area of my life I haven't yet surrendered to God
These could quite possibly be signs of fear

The second key is to identify the fear

Go to the Lord and ask - the Holy Spirit is your guide in this
If you ask for His help – He will help you
So just ask

Then there are two key words – Focus and Faith

It is the will of God that you be set free from every irrational fear

But don't expect that you can say one prayer and all your fears will go away
God normally doesn't do it miraculously
There has to be a little bit of self effort here

Now God says – **I have not given you a spirit of fear, but of love and of power and a sound mind**
So fear doesn't come from God – it is within you

**And the only cure - the only cure for your fear is
faith and focus**

**You fears will be cured when you live by faith
and focus on God's Word**

So let's see what Scripture has to offer us

REREAD ISA 41:10

First God promises to always be with you

Also Jesus promised that He would never leave you never forsake you

Know that you are never on your own – never alone in any situation

You are indwelt helped and protected by the very power of God

The Sovereign Omnipotent Loving Omnipresent God is with you – always

**Second Omnipotent God promises to strengthen
you**

God has promised to give you the energy and strength you need

To handle any situation that comes into your life

Listen carefully - He will give the strength to get through

Regardless of how that same situation affected you in the past

**Then God promises to help you through the
situation**

You possess the Holy Spirit in power

He is your helper – He is the one who will get you through

You are able to do anything and everything that God requires of you

And God will help you stand up to any fear that you might have

That is an incredible promise

Then God will support you and lift you up

No matter what you face in this life God will uphold you

It doesn't make any difference what is happening – He will uphold you

That means He will raise you up above the circumstances of life

The right hand of God stands for His power

He can contain and control any situation

There is nothing that can happen to you that is not controlled

Limited or changed by God's power flowing from His love for you

Remember God starts this verse with – **Do not be afraid; do not look anxiously about you, for I will be with you**

God's love for you is the reason you do not have to be afraid

Let's finish up with Matt 14:27-30 (READ)

The disciples are in a boat battered by the wind and waves

When they see Jesus walking on the water

Have you ever tried to walk on water – when I was young I did

I thought that if I kept my feet moving fast enough I could keep from sinking

So I started at the beginning of a dock and took off as fast as I could

I ran down the dock with my feet moving as fast as I could – you know little short quick steps and then I hit the water – let's just say it wasn't a pretty sight - My face and my foot hit the water about the same – and with my head underwater my feet were still trying to take these quick little steps

So my advice is – don't try this at home

But here is the principle of faith and fear

As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus he walked above the circumstances

But seeing the wind he became afraid

You know that you can't see the wind – you can't

So Peter didn't see the wind with his eyes – he saw it with his fears

The moment Peter considered his circumstances

The moment he took his eyes off Jesus

Thought about the wind and looked at the waves

That is the moment he began to sink

The key to overcoming fear is faith and focus

When you fix your eyes are upon Jesus nothing can overcome you

As long as Jesus is your focus nothing will cause you to fear

As long as Jesus is your focus you will walk above the circumstances

When you begin to think about your situation you will sink like a stone

And emotionally you will feel like I looked physically when I tried to run on water

First you must admit that you have fears then you need to identify the fears

Third – to overcome fears you must choose your focus

Our first response will always be to focus on what is confronting us

But in Isaiah God says – do not look anxiously about you

God knows that to overcome fear you must choose to focus on Him

We can choose what we think about

When our fears attacks we think about the cause of the fear

The more we think about it the worse the situation seems

The writer of Hebrews says – Fix your eyes upon Jesus

And the way you look at Jesus is to look to Jesus through eyes of faith

That means to believe Jesus will help you in any fearful situation

Your eyes of faith are strengthened by remembering God's promises

Believing them and resting on them

In Psalm 23 David says – Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil

Why no fear – because **My Lord is with me – He comforts me**

God goes through the dark valleys with us and He is our comforter

Throughout the OT God tells His people that He will be with them

But in the NT He changes – He tells us that He is in us

Do you believe that – do you understand what it means that God is in you

Do you believe it and rest on it

When we set our focus on God we look at our circumstances

Through the truth of who He is

Always remember - your fears may seem well founded

Your situation may seem desperate

But God is the ultimate reality

And He has told you that He will be with you

He has said He will uphold you – He will strengthen you – He will help you

It is God's presence and power that makes you capable

Of overcoming any circumstance this life can throw at you

Face every circumstance in light of who God is

And what He has promised to do for you

And your fears will be overcome

So how do you handle fear

Admit that it is there and identify it

When fear comes and it will –

Choose to focus on who God is and the promises He has given

All of who He is, is in you

When circumstances cause you to fear

Your focus must shift from yourself Him

From your circumstances to Jesus the ruler of circumstances

When you start to fear – remember this verse in Isaiah

It wouldn't hurt to memorize it

Recall His promises and look to Jesus to bring you through it

Not because you deserve it – you don't - you never will

Look to Him to bring you through because He loves you

And as you focus upon God's presence His promises and His love

You will be exercising your faith