

ME AND MY INSECURITIES, Part 5

Training for Fruitfulness

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Feelings of insecurity may be activated by many different circumstances, but, in general, insecurity is the result of harboring fear in our hearts.

In previous sermons I have presented four types of fear that are the most common sources of insecurity:

- Fear of lack (“What about me?”)
- Fear of conflict (“Must we fight?”)
- Fear of loss (“I can’t live without *that!*”)
- Fear of punishment (“What’s ahead for me?”)

These fears are inevitable; everyone has faced them. We develop various ways of dealing with them—some are helpful, but most are ineffective. However, God offers *real answers* to the fears you and I face.

Generalizations

Lack, Conflict, Loss, Judgment. I believe that every fear you or I must face will fit into one of these categories; they are specific and comprehensive. But overshadowing these are three levels of non-specific fears—the forefathers of these four classes of fear. They are:

- Fear of Change—familiar is friendly; different is difficult
- Fear of the Unknown—what is unknown cannot be imagined or understood or controlled
- Fear of Death—the father of all fears; encompassing everything below it

Why must we deal with our fears? Why not just ignore them?

Because fear unchecked leads to emotional and mental instability: distraction, preoccupation, fantasies, delusions.

And fear attracts predators: some animals will become aggressive when they sense fear in another, and so will some people. If aggression is an attempt to control, then fear is an invitation to be controlled.

Bottom line: it’s a *faith* issue. Behind every controlling fear lies a false belief—a fear-belief—that fosters it. The fear-belief may have been true at one time—as in the case of a traumatic experience, especially one that first occurred before you knew the Lord Jesus Christ—but it is *no longer* true. You are no longer that person. You have been born again and joined your life to Jesus the Liberator. It is important now to identify such false beliefs and replace them with the truth of God’s Word.

Faith and fear cannot co-operate. To embrace one is to dismiss the other. Remember, you can’t stop birds from flying through the trees, but you can keep them from nesting there. So also with feelings and thoughts. You may not be able to prevent them from arising, but you can certainly prevent them from taking up residence.

For instance, someone told me last week that he lost his job. Could that generate fearful feelings or thoughts? Of course. And if he entertained those thoughts, he would grow more nervous and agitated and his faith would fade away. Fear would rule his mental processes and begin to impact every other sphere of his life.

If asked, I imagine he would still contend that he was a believer in Jesus Christ, but for practical purposes his faith would be inactive and ineffective.

On the other hand, if he began to counter those fearful feelings and thoughts with God's Word, remembering the faithfulness of God and His promises to provide, his active faith would subdue his fears and prevail.

How do you want to live? In fear, or in faith?

Good Side of Fear

There is a positive side to being afraid, if you face your fear with faith.

Each fear provides a "training camp" for followers of Jesus. Through your battles with fears you will develop empathy for others who are also engaged in similar battles. You will increase patience with circumstances that are beyond your control. You will nurture humility towards other people, especially those that test you. You will cultivate submission toward God as He leads your life. These are the rewards of your active faith in the midst of testing.

Healing for Insecurities

Remember my illustration of the "canopy of fear"? The father of all fears is the fear of death. Therefore, God, in His great wisdom, orchestrated a salvation effected by the death of His Son.

Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Jesus came to destroy the works of the evil one. By His death, He overcame death, hell, and the grave. His resurrection is evidence that He has conquered. And in His conquest He has led "captivity captive"—He has disarmed our captor and set free all those who formerly were subject to bondage.

Though we face fears and suffer insecurities, we have been redeemed. Deliverance is ours! We have a Savior!

Do You Know Him?

Deliverance from fears is yours...if you know Him. If you feed on the knowledge of Him. Those who remain ignorant of the marvelous details of His majesty and grace, do so to their own misery and harm.

Know this then:

To our anxiety of **lack** (not having enough), God's Word answers:

- "My God shall supply all your need."
- "The Lord is my Shepherd, I will not lack."

- God is El Shaddai (“He who sees and provides”).
- “You will not be dependent on anybody.”

To our fear of **loss** (of loved ones or precious things), God’s Word answers:

- “I will give you back what you lost to the swarming locusts.”
- “Everyone... shall receive a hundredfold.”
- God is He who raises the dead.
- Christ came to seek and to save what is lost.
- His free gift is eternal life.

To our apprehension of **conflict**, God’s Word answers:

- He is your Sword and Shield.
- You are “kept by the power of God.”
- God knows “the number of your days.”
- God is for you, not against you.

To dread of **judgment** to come, God’s Word answers:

- *“You have been saved by grace through faith.”*
- Your sins have been forgiven.
- Your unrighteousness has been cleansed.
- You have an Advocate with the Father.

We may fear **change**, but life is change. We are called to maturity and are being perfected to be like Jesus.

We may get nervous about the **unknown**, but God “knows the end from the beginning.” He is the Eternal God, who made all things, and He is leading.

We may dread **death**, though it comes to all people, but Jesus Christ is the Lord of the living and the dead. He is the Resurrection and the Life. He holds the keys of hell and death and has authority from the Father to raise to eternal life all those who have trusted Him.

We may know Him. He invites us into relationship.

Do You Trust Him?

He said, *“You believe in God, believe also in Me.”* The fruits of God’s Word belong to those who identify with the One the Word reveals by trusting His purpose, His method, and His power.

When we lack, He is our Provider. Trust in Him.

When we have lost, He is our Restorer. Trust in Him.

When we face conflict, He is our Defender and Protector. Trust in Him.

When we fear judgment to come, remember He is our Savior. He will never forsake us. Trust in Him.

When change is forced upon us, He remains the Unchanging God, whose love is unfailing. Trust in Him.

When the unknown looms before us, we see Jesus, our Intercessor, seated at the right hand of God, ever living to pray for us. Trust in Him.

When death draws near, our God is the Resurrection and the Life, securing for us a life proven to be greater than death. Trust in Him.

If you know Him, also trust Him.

Psalm 56:3 *When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You.*

Do You Follow Him?

The One we know we must also trust. And the One we trust we must also follow. Our discipleship is *to Christ*. We are not tethered to a set of rules or confined by an institution. We are joined to the Lord by faith. We walk hand-in-hand with Him. Follow His lead.

He was touched with the feelings of our infirmity. He knows what it is to feel fear and anxiety, but He did not live by those things. We need not live by them either, if we follow His lead.

One day, tired and hungry, He rested beside a water well, while His disciples went to a nearby village to find some food. While He waited, He met a woman coming to draw water from the well. His graceful conversation with her about God and her spiritual need nourished Him. He said, "I have food to eat that you are unaware of." They may have been unaware at that time, but we are not. We can read of it for ourselves. He overcame His lack by sharing what He did have.

When you face lack, what do you talk with others about? Your scarcity, or your fullness in Christ?

He knows about conflict, too. The Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He met him head-on, resolute in His confidence that God's Word is true, no matter who disagrees with it. He said, "It is written... It is written... It is written..." and the devil left Him for a season.

When the devil came back for Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus didn't hide. He said, "I am the One you are looking for," and the soldiers fell backwards to the ground at the impact of His presence. He overcame evil with good.

When you face conflict for your faith, take courage: Jesus went through it ahead of you. If you will trust and obey, He will teach you what to say in that very moment. He will give you the victory.

He also knows about loss. It was He who left Heaven's throne and glory to become one of us. He took on flesh and blood in order to offer Himself as a ransom for our sins.

Philippians 2:5 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...*

When facing loss He did not grasp, He did not clutch at what He had. Instead, He overcame loss by giving more.

2 Corinthians 9:6 *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.*

Jesus knows all about the judgment of God. In fact, the Father has entrusted all judgment to Him. He faced judgment not for His own sins, but for ours (a battle you and I will never fully understand). The judgment was real; He bore the stroke of divine condemnation in our place. He did not shrink from

the cross; it was the reason that He came. Now, He tells us to take up our cross each day, for His sake. (Not the burden of your own misfortune or misdeeds, but the pain you experience due to the sins of others—that is your cross to bear.)

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save (grasp) his life will lose it, but whoever loses (surrenders) his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Real Security

Get to know Jesus well; you dare not proceed without Him.

Trust the One you get to know. Though you will not understand Him thoroughly, you may trust Him. Your trust will be amply rewarded.

Follow His lead. Do for others what He has done for you. You cannot outgive God. Trust and obey and your fears will be subdued—one at a time, every time, and every one.