Overcoming Our Fears
Text: II Timothy 1: 3-10

INTRODUCTION:

A. No two people are just alike, but we have many things in common.
   1. God created man in His own image so man has some traits in common with God.
      a. We are a triune being. (body, soul, spirit)
      b. We have the capacity to rule. (Gen. 1: 28 ... subdue it and rule over ...)
   2. All share the same basic set of emotions, but develop them differently. (5 common)
      a. Anger
      b. Happiness
      c. Sadness
      d. Surprise
      e. Fear
   3. It is this last emotion (F E A R) that we wish to discuss in this lesson.

B. There are some things that we should fear.
   1. President Roosevelt was famous for having said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Not fully true.
   2. Some fears are instinctive and essential to survival.
      a. Babies are born with the fear of falling.
      b. We are instinctively afraid of predators. (whether man of beast)
   3. A wise man will fear the God who hold his future in His hand.
      Eccl. 12:13- The conclusion, when all has been heard, is:
      fear God and keep His commandments,
      because this applies to every person.

C. Fear is essential to survival in the spiritual realm as well.
   1. Matt. 10: 28- Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul;
      but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
   2. Our spiritual fight or flight response must be kept perceptive.
      a. James 4:7 - Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
      b. I Tim. 6: 11- But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue
         righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.
      c. Cf – II Tim. 2: 22 ... Now flee from youthful ...
D. All men (including Christians) must learn to deal with fear.
   1. Pres. Herbert Hoover said, “The dominate emotion everywhere in the world is fear.”
   2. We all must learn to control our fears or they will limit our lives.
      a. Uncontrolled fears become phobias which interfere with life.
         1) Won’t ride a plane or elevator. (King of Libya won’t stay above ground level)
         2) People have been afraid to go out of their house for years. (Paula Dean)
      b. Fear causes people not to reach their full potential in life.
         1) Afraid of failure
         2) Afraid of the opinion of others (social pressure)
   3. People can be caused to fear most anything.
      a. Their past ... Their present ... Their future
      b. Afraid of life ... Afraid of death
   4. Fear has only the limitations we place upon it. (Imagination knows no bounds.)
      a. Mark Twain, “I’ve worried about a great many things, but most of them never happened.”
         (Worry projects fear into the future.)
      b. The famous General, George Patton wrote,
         “I learned at a very young age not to take the counsel of my fears.”

I. “Do not fear” is one of the most often repeated commands in the bible.

A. When God sent Abraham away from all of his earthly security.
   1. After the defeat of the 5 kings God told Abraham not to fear:
      Gen. 15:1 - After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision,
      saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you;
      Your reward shall be very great.”
   2. God told Hagar, Abraham’s concubine, not to fear: Gen. 21:17
   3. He gave the same admonition to the son of Abraham, Isaac: Gen. 26:24

B. Moses kept encouraging the children of Israel not to be afraid:
   1. When the Egyptians had them penned against the Red Sea, he said:
      Exod. 14:13 - But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see
      the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; ...”
   2. Even after they saw the sea parted and Egypt destroyed,
      They were afraid to go into the Promised Land and take it. ... Num. 13
C. When angels appeared to people they were told not to fear.
   1. Mary. Announcing inception
      Luke 1: 30 - The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.
   2. Women at the tomb
      Matt. 28: 5- The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified

D. Though fear has been around since the beginning (Adam in the garden), it can never be allowed to stop a Christian from serving God.
   1. General Patton acknowledged that he was afraid in every battle.
   2. The Apostle Paul constantly had to overcome fear.
      II Cor. 7:5 - For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within.
   3. Jesus had to overcome great fear to go to the cross. Matt 26: 36-46, Mk 14, Lk 22
      *Likewise, YOU and I must overcome our fear and speak out for God.

II. God has never accepted being shy as an excuse.
   A. He did not excuse Moses at the burning bush.
      1. Exod. 4:10ff ... Moses used the excuse that he was not good with words.
         a. Moses was saying that he was shy. (Couldn’t think well on his feet.)
         b. God did not accept that excuse from Moses and He won’t accept it from you.
         a. Moses was fearful to get out of his comfort zone.
         b. Staying in our comfort zone on earth will cause us to be in a discomfort zone eternally.

   B. Jesus told the parable of the talents to warn us about the results of fear.
      1. Review the parable. Matt. 25: 14-30
      2. Vs. 25-26  And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’ 26 But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. ... 30 Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
      3. Satan uses the weakness of our flesh to urge us not to spread the gospel.
         a. The devil knows when you are afraid.
         b. He reinforces your fears.
C. Jesus instructs us that our fears can cause us to be rejected by God.

1. Any time one is fearful to share the gospel Satan is working in his life.
   
   * a. Becoming a Christian requires that one change his lifestyle, his character.
   
   b. Being shy to speak is one of the defects we must purge from our character.

2. Timidity does not come from God.

   **II Tim. 1: 7-9** For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, (Rev. 21: 8a) but of power and love and discipline. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, …

   a. God called us to be the proclaimers of His gospel one the earth. **I Pet. 2: 9**
   
   b. Satan works to dissuade Christians from bearing fruit for God. **John 15: 2**

3. Jesus warned us that the failure to speak up for Him would be eternally fatal.

   a. **Matt. 10: 24-42** … Only by confessing Jesus before men will He accept us.
   
   b. Vs. 8 . The Apostle warns that we cannot be “ashamed” of the gospel. Cf- **Rom. 1:16**

D. The Apostle Peter reinforced the teaching of the Apostle Paul.

1. **I Pet. 3: 13-16** Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

   a. Context: Christians being intimidated
   
   b. Response #1 : Surrender to Christ as Lord, not to those intimidating.
   
   c. Response #2 : Prepare yourself to defend your faith.
   
   d. Response #3 : Make sure your life does not diminish your testimony.

2. *When Satan silences Christians he defeats the Christ they espouse.*
III. How does one learn to overcome fear?

A. By realizing that fear is the antithesis of faith.

1. Trusting in God defeats fear.
   
   Phil. 1: 12-14   Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

2. Trusting in God empowers the Christian.
   
   Eph. 3: 20-   Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

3. Trusting in God give the Christian confidence.
   
   Rom. 8: 31- What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ... But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

B. Loving God will cause one to overcome his fear.

1. I John 4: 18- There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

2. II Cor. 5: 14-15   For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

3. When a shy young man loves a girl, he overcomes his shyness to approach her.

C. Trusting God to fulfill His promises gives one courage to speak out for Him.

1. Heb. 13: 5-6   Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,” so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?”

2. No matter what happens on this earth, it will work out to our good.
   
   Rom. 8: 28- And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
D. Placing a higher value on eternal life with God than on this temporary life.

1. Satan opposes Christians without ceasing, day and night.
   a. I Pet. 5: 8
   b. Rev. 12: 10b “… he who accuses them before our God day and night.”

2. Christians are able to overcome Satan in three ways.
   Rev. 12: 11- And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.
   a. By realizing we are not in this alone. (“I am with you always.”)
   b. By keeping on telling people about the gospel even when fearful.
      “Courage is fear holding on a minute longer.” Gen. Geo. Patton
   c. By desiring Heaven more than life on earth. (Rev. 2: 10, Luke 14: 26)
      Demas didn’t have this faith.
      “Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me” II Tim. 4: 10

CONCLUSION:

A. Christians are in a daily battle for the souls of mankind.
   1. Our Master has sent us out to point the way to safety.
   2. The future of the church depends upon our successfully doing so.
   3. Your eternal future depends upon your doing so.

B. Satan uses your own fear to intimidate you into surrender.
   1. God will not judge us on our success.
   2. He will judge us on what we did with the gospel He entrusted to us.
   3. If Satan is able to make us afraid, we will be condemned and rejected by God.

C. The power is not in us, but in the message we preach.
   1. The gospel is the power of God to save men, not persuasive arguments. Rom. 1: 16
   2. God does not want us to try to overwhelm sinners with argumentation.
      I Cor 2: 1-5 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.
   3. God just requires us to boldly repeat the message we were given. I Cor. 15: 1ff
I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy. For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well. For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ...