

Fears

Joshua 1:1-9

PW Emerson – 9/25/2011 – Ten:27 Ministries

OBJECT LESSON

On a slip of paper, write down your biggest fear.

It could fear of failure, fear of heights, fear of what others will say, fear of how you'll look, fear of commitment, fear of what the economy will do next, fear of clowns, etc.

A fairly common fear with children is a fear of the dark

No one will see this piece of paper – it's for you.

SERIES INTRO

We're doing a few weeks looking at people from the Old Testament and a key characteristic for each.

- Last week looked at David, of David & Goliath fame and how he overcame limitations others had on him

Today looking at Joshua – Moses' right-hand man.

INTRODUCTION

Johns Hopkins reported of the biggest fears of grade school children

1960	1990
1. Animals	1. Divorce
2. Being in a dark room	2. Nuclear War
3. High places	3. Cancer

4. Strangers	4. Pollution
5. Loud noises	5. Being Mugged

It's not just children; adults have fears too.

Black Bart was a professional thief whose very name struck fear as he terrorized the Wells Fargo stage line. From San Francisco to New York, his name became synonymous with the danger of the frontier. Between 1875 and 1883 he robbed 29 different stagecoach crews. Amazingly, Bart did it all without firing a shot. Because a hood hid his face, no victim ever saw his face. He never took a hostage and was never trailed by a sheriff. Instead, Black Bart used fear to paralyze his victims. His sinister presence was enough to overwhelm the toughest stagecoach guard.

Black Bart lived over 100 years ago. But still today, I see people ALL THE TIME that are paralyzed by fears.

Our fears are very large motivators. Fears cause us to do all sorts of things:

- Fears of what will happen with the economy will cause us to invest one way or another.

One of my favorite comedians, Stephen Wright, once told about his biggest fear: fear of widths.

- Some people are afraid of heights
- Stephen Wright is afraid of widths
- So he goes walking around his building ... on the ledge.

Fear of commitment keeps many people from being in relationships.

The 23rd United States President was Benjamin Harrison.

- He was the first president to live in the White House with electricity
- But Harrison was afraid of electricity; so was his wife
- So they would NEVER touch a switch

As a result, if there were no servants around to turn off the lights when they went to bed, they slept with the lights on.

Moses had been the voice of God to the Hebrews & the Egyptians, to let God's people go from Egypt.

- Moses was the human leader that people looked to as the Hebrews wandered around the wilderness for 40 years

Just before entering the Promised Land, which other people were living in, Moses dies and Joshua takes over

Joshua had great cause to be afraid:

- He was following in the footsteps of a great leader
 - Congress – House Chamber has pictures of great law givers. They all look toward Moses.
 - I'll bet he heard LOTS of people rumbling
 - I am a Moses Man
 - Moses didn't do it that way
 - If only Moses were here
- He was to lead the people into a land that was already being lived in, occupied.

- The Promised Land was being used!

But he didn't let his fears stop him.

Joshua 1:1-9

¹ After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: ² "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. ³ I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

We see in this piece 3 things that tell us how to handle fears.

I GOD WANTS US TO ACT

Verse

I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses.

That is literally, you have to set your foot there **FIRST!**

Joshua 3

⁷ And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. ⁸ Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: ‘When you reach the edge of the Jordan’s waters, go and stand in the river.’”

¹⁵ Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, ¹⁶ the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

God could have stopped the water, people see it, then cross. **NO!**

God waited for the people to take a step – stepping out on faith!

I hear all the time today that people want a sign!

If we don’t trust God then we’re not living on faith!

We may have fears but God tells us to take a step **IN SPITE OF OUR FEARS!**

Think about Moses going before Pharaoh, telling Pharaoh to let God’s people go!

- Pharaoh is just going to act because I say so ...?
- God waited to show the plagues until Moses went to Pharaoh **FIRST!**

A day doesn't go by without next year's presidential election making the news.

- The most qualified person never gets elected
- The most qualified person doesn't run for election

The president is the person with the most votes **THAT RAN!**

If we let fears of

- Inadequacy
- Failure
- Looking bad

Keep us from acting, then our fears dictate our behavior.

God wants us to **ACT!**

For our lives today ...

- If you want to do something for God ... then do it!
- If God tells you to do something ... do it!

II GOD'S LAWS ARE DESIGNED FOR OUR BENEFIT

Verse 8

⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Often people think about God's Law as

- A set of Do's & Don'ts
- Like man's laws, rules that we are to follow
 - Don't speed
 - Stop at Stop Signs
 - Stay between the lines

But the idea behind God's laws is that they are there for our benefit

God, who wants what is best for us and knows us best, gives us his laws because they are to HELP US; they are for OUR BENEFIT!

II Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

So many people talk about that verse as holding up God's Word.

That verse is telling us that God's Word is for our benefit.

The idea is that if you want to live a better life,

- You want to be at peace
- You want to know what is best and what is not for you,

Then Get to know GOD'S WORD because it is there for OUR BENEFIT!

If we want to break past a place where FEAR drives us to a place where GOD drives us, getting better in tune with God's Word will help!!!!

III HAVE COURAGE

Let's read our piece from Joshua 1:1-9 again – Notice how often it talks about having courage!!

3 or 4 TIMES!

God is helping Joshua NOT to be afraid and part of that is to HAVE COURAGE!

Last week we looked at David, of David & Goliath fame, and how David overcame limitations placed on him by others. One of the keys for David is ALSO courage.

Yes ... sense a theme

CONCLUSION

- Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

- Psalm 46:1-2 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

The best response to fear is God: God can help us get past all fears.

Look at the slip of paper on which you wrote down your biggest fear. Is that fear keeping you from serving God?

If it is, then it's time to tackle that fear head on!