Bethel South Sermon Notes – "*Fearless*"

Speaker: Ps Mike Gowans
Series: [Standalone Sermon, no series]
Scripture: Mark 4:35–41, 2 Timothy 1:7, 2 Corinthians 10:5

Main Idea:

God never intended for unhealthy fear to control our lives. Fear and faith both ask us to believe in something we cannot yet see, but fear focuses on what could go wrong while faith focuses on the God who is already in control. We can live fearless—not because storms won't come, but because **Jesus is in the boat with us.**

Stop Letting Fear Take the Wheel

Life can feel a lot like a roller coaster.

We can white-knuckle the bar, close our eyes, and spend the entire ride terrified that something will go wrong. Or we can open our hands, surrender control, and trust that God is with us.

Fear paralyzes us. It keeps us from moving forward and can even reveal itself through anger, frustration, and the desire to control everything around us.

We live in a world constantly giving us reasons to be afraid. The economy, technology, politics, disease, our families, and the uncertainty of the future can all become sources of fear.

And fear continually asks the same question:

"What if?"

What if something goes wrong?
What if I lose my job?
What if something happens to my family?
What if the future doesn't turn out the way I hoped?

But faith has a "what if" too:

What if God is still in control?

Fear and Faith Both Require Belief

Fear and faith have something surprising in common:

Both ask you to believe in something you cannot see yet.

Fear imagines a future where everything goes wrong.

Faith trusts a God who already holds the future.

Our confidence doesn't come from knowing exactly what tomorrow will look like. Our confidence comes from knowing **Who holds tomorrow.**

Two Storms in the Boat

In Mark 4, Jesus and His disciples were crossing the sea when a massive storm arose.

Waves crashed into the boat, and the situation became dangerous.

Yet Jesus was asleep.

There were actually **two storms** happening:

- **An external storm around the disciples.**
- **An internal storm within the disciples.**

The external storm was real, but the internal storm was what caused them to panic.

The same thing happens in our lives. We can carry storms internally that nobody else can see—fear about our marriages, health, finances, careers, children, or futures.

But before the storm ever came, Jesus had already spoken:

“Let us cross over to the other side.”

The storm did not change what Jesus had said.

Let What Jesus Said Interpret What You See

The disciples made a critical mistake:

They allowed **what they saw to make them question what Jesus said.**

Faith does the opposite.

Faith allows **what Jesus said to interpret what we see.**

The circumstances may look impossible. The storm may be real. The waves may be hitting the boat.

But God's Word is still true.

Fear steals faith when it shifts our attention away from Jesus and onto the storm.

Three Doors Fear Tries to Enter Through

When fear comes knocking, it often tries to get us to doubt three things about God.

1. His Love

The disciples woke Jesus and asked:

“Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

Fear doesn't just make us question our circumstances. It can make us question **God's heart.**

Does God care about me?
Has He forgotten me?
Why hasn't He done something yet?

When fear causes you to question God's love, **look at the cross.**

The cross settled the question of God's love once and for all.

We may not understand everything happening around us, but we never have to wonder whether God loves us.

2. His Power

After Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples asked:

“Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

Fear magnifies the power of the problem while minimizing the power of God.

But Jesus is greater than whatever storm we face.

Most of the things we worry about may never happen. And when difficult things do happen, God's grace is sufficient to carry us through them and work even painful circumstances for good.

You don't need enough grace for an imaginary future. God will give you the grace you need when you need it.

3. His Plan

Fear also makes us question how everything is going to work out.

But we don't have to know **how** when we know **what God has said.**

His Word becomes our anchor.

Jesus told the disciples they were going to the other side. He didn't explain every detail of how they would get there.

Faith holds onto God's promise even when the process doesn't make sense.

Take Fearful Thoughts Captive

2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us:

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

We may not be able to prevent fearful thoughts from entering our minds, but we can decide whether we allow them to stay.

You cannot stop birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.

In the same way, a fearful thought may arrive, but we don't have to give it a home.

When fear delivers a toxic package to your mind:

Return to sender.

2 Corinthians 10:5 teaches us to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.

We don't have to accept every thought that enters our minds as truth.

Stop Letting Fear Preach to You

Fear has a message.

It will continually tell you:

“What if this happens?”
“What if God doesn't come through?”
“What if everything falls apart?”

If we listen long enough, fear begins preaching a sermon in our minds.

So stop letting fear preach to you and **start preaching God's Word to your fear.**

When fear says God has forgotten you, remember His love.

When fear says the situation is impossible, remember His power.

When fear says there is no way forward, remember His promises.

God's Word gets the final word.

Keep Moving Toward the Other Side

When anxiety and fear begin creeping in:

1. **Remember what God said.**
   Hold onto His Word instead of allowing circumstances to determine what you believe.
2. **Remember who is in your boat.**
   Jesus has promised never to leave or forsake you.
3. **Take every fearful “what if” captive.**
   Don't allow fear to dictate the story of your future.
4. **Speak words of faith.**
   Replace fearful declarations with the truth of God's Word.
5. **Keep moving forward.**
   Keep praying. Keep serving. Keep believing. Keep loving. Keep trusting.

The storm doesn't mean the journey is over.

Keep moving toward the other side.

Final Challenge

Where has fear been taking the wheel in your life?

Maybe you've been living consumed by “what ifs,” trying to predict and control what comes next.

Open your hands and surrender that fear to God.

Remember what He has said. Remember who is with you. Take fearful thoughts captive and choose to speak faith over your circumstances.

Living fearless doesn't mean there will never be another storm.

It means knowing that **the storm isn't in control—God is.**

Trust His love. Trust His power. Trust His plan.

And keep moving forward in His peace.

Discussion Questions

1. **What is one "what if" that tends to create fear or anxiety in your life, and how could you reframe it through faith?**
2. **In Mark 4, the disciples allowed what they saw to make them question what Jesus had said. What would it look like to let God's Word interpret your circumstances instead?**
3. **Of the three things fear causes us to doubt—God's love, His power, or His plan—which one are you most tempted to question when you're afraid?**
4. **What does it practically look like to "take every thought captive" when a fearful thought enters your mind?**
5. **What is one area where fear has kept you from moving forward, and what step of faith can you take toward "the other side" this week?**