

A message from Pastor Heather.....

From ghoulies and ghosties and long-leggedy beasties and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord, deliver us!- traditional Scottish prayer

Courage is knowing what not to fear - Plato

There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. - 1John 4:18

I'm not going to tell you not to be afraid, because you can't help it. Fear is inherent in your biology. The main function of fear and anxiety is to act as a signal of danger, threat, or motivational conflict, and to trigger appropriate adaptive responses. This instinct keeps you alive. And, it would be terribly condescending to tell you not to worry about things, when there is, indeed, a great deal about which to be concerned.

I would like to give you some good news about fear though. We're afraid of a lot of things we don't need to be afraid of.

Fear of the Other, fear of change, fear of the future, fear of losing what we have - all things we do not need to fear.

We're fortunate, you see, to be a people of a God who loves us perfectly. As such, God has created us all in God's image. So, to be honest, there is no Other to fear.

If change hadn't been a part of our existence from the very beginning, we'd still be wandering about in a garden somewhere. If change wasn't possible, how could we even be redeemed? I think we fear change that call us to self-critical evaluation, because what we really fear is what we might discover about ourselves if we do. But God doesn't love us for our facade-God loves us for us. Nothing to be afraid of here.

Fear of the future is a tough one, because that's entirely speculative. We don't fear the future; we fear what might occur in the future. We fear something that doesn't yet exist, except in our busy little minds. It's part and parcel of being mortals with a finite lifespan. It's not, however, part of being a people called to eternal life. So when we try to control it by making plans and studying trends, no matter how good we might be at prognosticating, we still fear that something we cannot anticipate or control will throw everything off. However, when we make plans and study trends and take risks in the context of a vision that we have sought from God, things we cannot anticipate or control belong to God. We don't have to worry about them, and we certainly don't have to fear them.

Fear of losing what we have-oh, that's such a Kingdom of the World fear. When we live in the Kingdom of the World, as we mostly do, its a perfectly legitimate concern. Often, our worth as a human is defined by what we have. But this is nothing to be

afraid of when what we have is abundant life, given to us by our Savior. Granted, this is not considered of great worth in the Kingdom of the World. But consider this - you can reject abundant life, but you cannot lose it. You cannot lose it. You have nothing to lose in the Kingdom of God, therefore you have nothing to fear.

But what about [insert every horrible thing that happens in a broken world]? Shouldn't we be afraid?

Biologically, we don't really have a choice. So yes, there are things that we will fear.

But there's plenty that we don't have to fear. And by moving towards being made perfect in love, we find ourselves in a much better place to address the things that do stimulate fear and anxiety.

Goulies and ghosties and long-leggedy beasties don't cause us much anxiety when they charge up to our door demanding treats, because we know not to fear them. Give them a Snickers bar and they'll happily go away until next year. If only all of our fears could be so easily dismissed.

Many of them can, with God's help. Don't fear what you don't have to, brothers and sisters. Have courage.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Heather