



Message Discussion Guide Week of April 23, 2023

Message: Encounters with Jesus, Part 2: From Fear to Courage

Key Scripture: [John 20:19-23](#)

Preacher: Bud Fickley

Message Highlights:

There's a difference between being scared and being afraid or feeling fear. The former is an emotion we feel in a moment that quickly fades. The latter is a state of being that persists beyond a specific event – it's a sense of dread about something that may or may not happen.

Ultimately, all fear in this life comes back to a fear of death. Death brings with it a finality that separates us from the things that we hold dear in this life. We often disguise a fear of by saying things like:

- "I don't want to lose the things I've worked so hard to build."
- "I'm worried about the people I might leave behind."
- "I feel like there's so much more I still want to accomplish."

Making the shift from Fear to Courage is really about letting go of the worldly things we hold on to and embracing the eternal promises that God offers us. In [John 14:27-29](#), Jesus promises to leave us with a peace that's not of this world. That peace allows us to embrace the eternal promises and let go of the temporal.

John Wesley, one of the forefathers of modern-day Methodism, believed that if we allowed the risen Christ to work in us, we would rise to the Image of God. In doing so, we are able to experience the promises of heaven, not just in a post-mortem trip to heaven, but even in the present day.

Engaging the world with the love of God is the greatest example of having risen in the image of God. [John 15:13](#) tells us that being willing to set aside our own life (our needs, wants, and desires) for others, is the greatest form of love. When we grow into courage instead of fear, we let go of this world, and love others as God loves us.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) "Do not be afraid" is the most repeated phrase in the Bible. Why do you think that, when faced with the unknown, our default state is one of fear?
- 2) Have you ever experienced a moment when you allowed the needs of another to overwhelm your own need for safety or security? You may not have put your life on the line, but you were willing to give up anything for the benefit of another. Describe how you felt in the moment and how you feel looking back on it.
- 3) Rational or irrational, what are some of the fears you have in life? How has that/those fear(s) prevented you from living into the full image of God? At the root of that/those fear(s), what is it that you think you are afraid of losing or having to let go of?
- 4) Why is it so easy for us to let things of this world shift our focus away from the eternal promises of God?
- 5) [Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-58](#)
 - Are there things in this world that still have control over you instead of Christ?
 - How can death lose its victory even though we know we are likely to die in this world?
 - Paul says that sin is "death's sting." How are our fears about death related to our sinful desires?
 - What must you let go of in this world for death to lose its victory over you?
- 6) What do you hear in this message that you can apply to your life this week?

Abundant Life Tip: When you're experiencing fear, it can be helpful for us to be reminded that God promises us that there is something greater than what this world has to offer. [John 3:16](#) reminds us that God wants more for us. [John 17:2-3](#) tells us that Jesus plans to take us to heaven with him. And [1 Cor 15:55-57](#) tells us that we have victory over death. Keep reading through scripture and you'll find one reminder after another that God offers courage in the face of fear.