

God Has Not Given Us A Spirit of Fear

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the power, love, and sound mind that God has given us, urging listeners to overcome fear and embrace their divine purpose. The speaker shares a personal testimony of overcoming fear and experiencing freedom through faith in Christ, highlighting the transformative power of God's Word and the victory available to believers. The message encourages individuals to break through the barriers of fear, trust in God's promises, and step into the fullness of their calling with boldness and confidence.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:7, 2 Timothy 1:6, Romans 8:31, Ezekiel 36:25, 1 John 4:18, Psalm 118:6, Isaiah 41:10, 1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Overcoming Fear", "Embracing Divine Purpose"

Description

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Transcript

I had a wonderful message prepared tonight. I even got notes and everything, like two pages of notes, and I worked on it a good part of today, and I went over it in my mind, and I've got it down, and while we're sitting here singing and worshipping, the Lord said, put that away. I want you to speak on something else.

Over the years, I've learned to obey God when he speaks, because he knows who's listening. He knows who's here tonight that needs to hear this message. He knows who's online tonight that needs to hear these words that God's going to speak to us this evening.

I want you to turn with me to the book of 2 Timothy chapter one, and I'd simply call it, God has not given us the spirit of fear. So Father, thank you, God. God, there was a time in my life that standing here with just a thought in my mind would be like jumping off a cliff.

I would never have considered it, but I've come to know you over the years, and how faithful you are, how faithful you are. And God, it is not a foolish thing to follow you when you lead us into somewhere that we're not familiar with to speak something, Lord, that's on your heart to speak, because we don't live by men's thoughts. We live by the power of God.

And so Father, tonight I'm asking you to release your power in the sanctuary, release your power online. God Almighty, we're coming close to the end of all things, and you promised that you would pour out your spirit beginning on the day of Pentecost, right through to the time of your return. You would pour out your spirit, and you would have a victorious church all over the world, God.

And so tonight, I pray for those that are in their homes and in their cars and even on park benches listening on their cell phones, God, that you would help every one of us to recognize that we are the called. We are part of this end time victorious church that you're calling to bring glory to your name on the earth, and you've not given us a spirit of fear, but a power and of love and of a sound mind. So God, I'm asking you for the anointing of your Holy Spirit.

I stand here to obey you, Lord, but it's up to you to bring the word into every heart. It's up to you, Lord, to release people from prisons and give them sight to see a way forward and strength, oh God, to be raised up out of whatever condition people find themselves in and into that purpose that you have for every life. God, I thank you, and I praise you tonight in Jesus' name.

Second Timothy chapter one, beginning at verse six, Paul the apostle is speaking to this young man called Timothy, who the testimony of scripture tells us that he was a very fearful young man. Paul took him under his wing, and Paul has walked a lot longer with God, and he understands the faithfulness of God, and he's trying to convey this now to this young man called Timothy. And in chapter one in verse six, he says, therefore, I remind you to stir up the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Let's stop there just for a moment. When the Lord touched you, when the Lord touched your heart, there was a gifting of his spirit that came into your life. Divine purpose, may I call it that.

Something in your life through which God is going to be glorified. I find from my own experience, it's generally taking you and I into places that we can't go, giving us things to accomplish what we're called to do, which in our natural strength we don't possess or can't possess, and making us into something much bigger than we could ever hope to be in our own strength. There is a gift of God in your life.

Everyone who's here in this sanctuary, young or old, everyone who's listening online who has opened your heart to receive Christ as your savior, when the Holy Spirit, when Christ cleansed you and the spirit of God came into your life, there was a gifting of God that came into you through the laying on of the hands of God, may I put it that way. In this case, it was Paul laying his hands on a young man called Timothy, but let's take it to a kind of a larger plane and talk about when the hand of God comes on you, there is a divine purpose for your life, which only he can fulfill. Now, Timothy was probably afraid because he's recognizing this calling of God that Paul says is on his life, but he hasn't fully embraced it yet, maybe at this point himself, and perhaps he's afraid because the scripture seems to bear witness that he was actually afraid to move into that calling because quite often we look at the calling of God or what we think the calling of God is and then we look in the mirror and we go in our briefcase and check out our resume and we fall so short of the ability to fulfill this calling that we draw back in fear and say, God, how is this possible? You see it all through scripture.

When the Lord would send a messenger and appear to somebody, the immediate response in most cases would be how is this possible? Because I have not, and it always comes back to the human person. I'm too old to have a child. I'm too young to fight a battle.

I'm too old to go into battle or whatever the situation is, we tend to draw back. Paul then says to Timothy, for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. God has given us the ability to go beyond our own resources as it is through the strength that he has put into each one of our lives.

Therefore, he says, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of being his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God. In other words, Timothy, don't be afraid of what lays before you. As our brother Deepak shared tonight, don't be afraid of what it's gonna cost you in a sense to follow Christ.

God will always be faithful. God will always give you the power to do what you're called to do. He will be faithful to you.

And you need to get that thinking in your mind that you're not gonna fail. You're not gonna be overcome. You're not gonna be trounced down.

You're not gonna be ashamed in a sense by being, you're not gonna be triumphed over by your enemies, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. Isn't that amazing? Before time began, God, who foreknows all things, knew you. He knew the purpose for your life.

As we heard this evening again, you're not just a happenstance coming into this world. No matter how you arrived in the world, you were not an accident. You were foreordained and allowed by God to be born with a holy calling and a divine purpose through which he will be glorified.

And he was given with the purpose came a grace that was given to you in Christ Jesus before the world began. You know, God saw you. He knew what he called you to do.

And he says, I've given you not only a purpose, but the ability to accomplish it in Christ Jesus through the victory of the cross, through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, I've given you the ability to achieve what I've called you to do. And I gave it to you before time even began in Christ Jesus. I was 15 years old when fear became a very real part of my life.

I can't go into all the reasons. There are probably too many of them. But one of them was that a pressure was put on me to achieve.

My grandfather was a judge and my father was denied an education because of World War II. And so when he came back from the war, he had to take a job in a mine. That's all that was available.

College, he left actually his first year of college to volunteer to fight in Europe. And when he came back, there was no longer any opportunity for a college education. And it was so important to him.

So being his first born son, he began to live his dreams in great measure through my life. I was going to be perhaps the next lawyer in the family. The only problem with all of this is I didn't want to go in the direction that others were telling me I should go in.

And secondly, I didn't feel like I had the skill set to accomplish the dreams and goals that others were placing upon my life. And through that and through other circumstances in my life at the age of 15, I started to suffer panic attacks. If you've ever suffered one, you know that it's the closest thing to hell on

earth you'll ever experience.

A panic attack is like a computer that melts down. It's just, but it's not a computer. It's you that melts down inside.

There's just an explosion inside. And the only way I can describe it is suddenly you feel like somebody's pouring a bucket of sand on your head. Everything around you goes dark.

And there's just this dark hole in front of you. And it feels hopeless. Your heart starts pounding outside of your chest and you literally feel like you're going to die.

You know it's irrational, but you have no control over it. And I suffered these things for nine years, nine years of hell on earth. The way I used to cope with it is that I would take Valium.

I saw doctors over it and they prescribed Valium, which is a tranquilizer. I took so much Valium that I went through college literally underwater. No other way to describe it.

I would walk in a classroom and I'd be in this incredible bubble. It's like I was in a diver suit. You know the diver suit with the big globe.

It's like I'm down 5,000 feet under the water and I'm walking around in this suit. It's the only way I could attend a crowded classroom. If I was singled out, if the professor looked at me, if he asked me a question, I would panic.

I would either collapse or have to run out of the room. Twice I was taken to the hospital after having collapsed and once, I remember, and this was in college, I remember Pastor Teresa was with me at the hospital when the nurse put the blood pressure machine on my arm and dropped it on the floor and ran out of the room. She was afraid I was going to have a stroke and die.

That's how much fear had gotten a hold of my life. I worked out like a fanatic. I worked out in the gym two hours, three hours a day.

I would run at night. I kept my body in a virtual state of exhaustion. It was one of the ways I learned to cope with this inner struggle that was in my life.

Fast forward to the age of 24. I started hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ from another police officer and I remember when I came to Christ, you know, one of the things that really stirred my heart in hearing the message of the gospel was this one verse. If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation.

The old things in his life pass away and behold, all things become new. And I remember thinking, God, is that possible that I can be a different man? Is it possible I can escape this cage that I feel like I'm in, this spirit of fear, in a sense, that's gotten a hold of my life? And because of the fear, I was getting progressively more angry. I was drinking more.

I was getting out of control in many regards. I was making life rather miserable for everybody around me. And I remember thinking, God, is it possible I can get out of this box that life has put me into? May 12th, 1978, I gave my life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and not long after that, I loved the word of God and I started devouring the word of God and the promises started just coming off the page and just washing me.

That's the only way I can describe it. As Ezekiel the prophet said to Israel in Ezekiel chapter 36 and verses 22 and onward, he said, I'm gonna gather you and I'm gonna wash you with clean water and that's what I felt happening to my life. It was like the word of God was washing away old thoughts and old fears and I was working radar, actually, when I first got saved and I remember praying for rain because when it rained, the radar didn't work so I'd have to park behind a building somewhere and I could open my Bible and I would just read and I would weep and I would read and then one night, I went home and we were up in bed and it was about midnight and I felt one of these panic attacks coming on me again, as a believer now in Christ.

Now, before Christ, when a panic attack would come, I would take Valium and usually a straight shot of whiskey, maybe even as much as four, five, six ounces of whiskey on top of Valium, it's not a good plan but nevertheless, it would so dull my senses that I could manage to get through these things but this night, I was reading the word of God that week and I remember, I didn't remember the whole verse but it was something that Paul said, if God be for us, who can be against us? I didn't even know, that's only half the verse but I didn't remember the whole verse, I only remembered that part of the verse. You never notice, David did not need a gravel truck to bring down Goliath, he just needed one pebble in his pocket. I didn't even have a whole verse, I had a half a verse but I believed it, that's the key, I believed the word of God, I believed that if God be for us, who can be against us and I remember that night, I went down into my living room and now, there's no more pills, I said, I'm not taking pills anymore, I'm either free in Christ or I'm not, I've always been a bit of an extremist that way, I said, God, this is either true or it's not, I'm either free or I'm not free, the truth will either set me free or it won't, there's no middle ground in this thing, I'm not gonna walk halfway in this thing, if this is real, then I want it and if it's not, I don't want any part of it, I went down into my living room, whiskey was gone out of my life, there's no more alcohol in my life, no more pills in my life, so I'm not resorting to those old things anymore, I went into my living room and all I knew to do was pray and I had a half a verse as a promise of God be for us, who can be against us, so I went in my living room and I felt like this panic attack was gonna be a bad one and I stood in my living room around little after midnight, all by myself and I said it out loud, I said, Satan, you can only kill me if God allows you to and if he does tonight, I'm going home to heaven, so either way I win, I'm gonna win either way, I said, so you throw everything you've got at me but I now throw back at you what I have in the name of Jesus Christ, the son of God, I resist you, that was my prayer, I resist you and I stood in that room and as God lives and as God is my witness, I felt a heat, not a fuzzy feeling, an actual heat hit my feet, go through my calves, go through my legs, go through my torso, through my chest, through my head and out the top of my head, I was completely set free that night from nine years of hell by the power of God for God has not given us a spirit of fear but a power and of love and of a sound mind, praise be to God, that was the beginning of the gift of God being stirred up in my life because I never could have fulfilled it until I got through the fear, until I was able to get through that, as I've often spoken here, that paper wall that you gotta go through before you get into the football game, you come down the tunnel, you're all ready to fight but there's a paper wall you gotta break through and fear is that paper wall and the devil writes everything he can on that wall, he draws fake bricks, calls you a loser, tells you you're not gonna make it, tells you God's not true, God's not faithful and you break through that wall and when you break through, you're now in the game, praise be to God and that night I broke through that wall, I've been all over the world, I've preached to crowds in the hundreds of thousands, I've seen people come to Christ in the most unusual of places, I've been locked in maximum security prison, you understand, with 60 lifers telling them I'm an ex-cop which is in fact a very dangerous thing to do, completely unafraid of being there, you see, he's not giving us a spirit of fear but power and love and the Bible says that perfect love casts out fear, if I love you, I'm not afraid of you, I've preached to Muslims in Kosovo, I've preached to Hindu Muslims in prison, I've

been all over in the most unusual places that I never could have gone in my own strength but by the power of God, by the spirit of God, God stirred up the gift which he had given me in my heart from the beginnings of life and actually before the world was even founded, he called me with a holy calling and according to his own purpose and grace which was given me in Christ Jesus before the world began and I think tonight of all the people who are robbed, not of heaven, it's not about salvation, heaven will still be their home but robbed of what your life could be, robbed because you stand behind that paper wall and somehow can't rouse the faith to believe even a half a verse of scripture, I wanna challenge you tonight, I challenge you, stand up, stand up in the grace of God, stand up, the cross is big enough for your victory, the blood of Jesus, one drop can make you into a different man, a different woman, can change your home, change your family, change your destiny and change the lives of thousands of people around the world, one drop of blood, just like David took down Goliath with one pebble in his bag, one drop of blood was enough to give you a new life and to make you a new creation.

We can sit at home and we can lick our wounds all we want for the rest of our lives or we can stand up and basically say, devil, you throw at me everything you've got but I throw back at you what I now have, in the name of Jesus Christ, the son of God, I resist you, I resist your lies, I resist all of the things you try to send against me to tell me that I will never amount to that which God has called me to be. That's my message tonight, that's what God told me to tell you, God has not given us a spirit of fear, you have no reason to be afraid of anyone or anything or anywhere, he's given us power through his Holy Spirit, through his shed blood, he's given us a love for people that I've preached, I've just seen God do amazing things, after the war in Kosovo, I was able to stand and preach to soldiers who had fought in that war, Muslim soldiers who had fought in the war and I saw the presence of God's Holy Spirit melt the hearts of soldiers and I saw them beginning to weep in a field and that night, the most impossible thing happened, I remember that evening when about 26 people stepped out in a Muslim community and publicly gave their lives to Jesus Christ, only God can do these things, God hasn't given us a spirit of fear and so you don't have to accept it, your calling has nothing to do with your resume, I've never been qualified to do anything I do in the kingdom of God, isn't that wonderful? I mean, I don't have a certificate that backs up anything I do, which I think is just awesome, so that means I don't need a certificate to go anywhere I go, so no door is barred to me because I'm never qualified to go there in the first place, as a matter of fact, none of the disciples were qualified, matter of fact, 120 in the upper room weren't qualified, just ordinary people, a lot of them didn't even go to school in those days but they had the Holy Spirit, they had the mind of Christ, they had the calling of God, they had the power of God and they astounded the people of their generation.

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