

Prepare Now to Face Tomorrow's Fears

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual preparation and faith in overcoming fear and achieving victory in life.

Duration: 35:47

Scripture: Joshua 1:9, Psalm 37:25, Matthew 6:31

Topics: "Fear"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the dilemma faced by believers when they encounter challenges that seem insurmountable. He emphasizes the importance of choosing to believe God and not just accumulate Bible knowledge without personal belief. The preacher highlights the danger of remaining in a spiritual wilderness, where one is neither moving forward nor going back. He encourages young people to make the right choice to walk with God and not be hindered by fear or opposition. The sermon emphasizes the need to have right priorities and settle in one's heart to walk with God, especially in times of difficulty.

Transcript

I want to speak to you this afternoon a word that the Lord put on my heart. It's especially to the younger people of this congregation. Now, it will have an application to everybody's life, but in particular to those that are going to have to face the days ahead.

You're going to have to be strong in the coming days. I wish as much as God is alive that I could stand here today and say, what wonderful days await us. And I guess that's true in the spiritual realm, but in the physical realm, some very, very hard days are just ahead of us.

You're going to have to face those days. I'm going to have to face a measure of them as well. But in particular to the young, I want to speak to you from the gospel of 2 Timothy in the New Testament, chapter one, a message entitled, Prepare Now to Face Tomorrow's Fears.

Prepare now. This is the time to get ready. This is the time to get yourself spiritually ready to face whatever it is that you're going to have to face in the coming days.

Now, I don't think I have to convince you that the days ahead are going to be difficult. You already know it. There's something inside your heart that tells you that in spite of the deepest optimism that many around

us are trying to generate at this time, there's a growing sense among everyone at every level in this society that we're facing a storm such as we've never known before.

One economist yesterday said there's nothing that we even have to reference where we're at right now as a society. There's nothing in the past 60 years to even compare the kind of financial difficulty that we're in at this moment. And there's a foreboding sense.

Now, for those who are without God, indeed they have great reason to be, but for those of us with God, what the world sees as a catastrophe in some measure, God looks upon it and gives us the grace to walk through it, not just alone and making it to the end, but it's a tremendous opportunity for men and women to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. But you have to have right priorities as a young person. You have to determine in your heart that you're going to walk with God and you have to do it now.

It's a little late when the storm starts to get right with God. This is the hour to make up your mind and to settle it in your heart that you're going to walk with God. Father, I thank you, Lord, for the anointing.

I thank you for your word. I thank you for this time that we're living in. I thank you for the young people of this church.

Oh God almighty, let there be strength in this congregation from the top to the bottom. Not the strength of natural wisdom or natural energy, but the strength of the Holy Spirit. Lord, your word tells us that it's not the strong that win the battle, but it's those who know they need God.

It's those who have faith in the heart. Oh Jesus, oh Jesus, as we heard this morning, destroy every weapon that stands in our way. Destroy all the obstacles.

Destroy every entrenched stronghold, every lie of hell that stands in the way of every child of God in this sanctuary who can hear my voice. Oh God, I'm asking you for a generation of young people to sow salt and light the city, to so stand for God that they'd be like lampposts in every corner. Let the glory of the Lord come into this temple.

God, it's not time, there's no time anymore for any argument. There's got to be a touch of heaven come into our lives. We have to walk in the Holy Spirit.

None of us will stand without you, Lord. God, let me be the first to bend my knee today. Lord, I'll never get through without your strength.

I can't do what you've called me to do. None of us can, but with Christ all things are possible. Lord, we believe it.

We stand on it, Lord. We stand on it today, oh God. We stand on it.

I stand against every lie. I stand against you, Satan, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I stand against your weaponry.

I stand against your lies. I stand against you in Jesus' name. God Almighty, God Almighty, walk among us.

Walk among us, Lord. Give us grace and strength to face these days. And I thank you for it with all my heart in Jesus' mighty name.

Second Timothy chapter one, verses seven and eight. That's how I want to start with today. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Now Paul the apostle had come to a place in his life where he recognized something that those of us who have walked with God for any measure of time begin to understand. This journey is not to the physically strong.

It's not to those with a strong body or a strong will or a strong resolution. The scripture tells us, even the young among you will faint. Peter was a disciple who had a tremendous self-will, and he felt that he had a self-discipline to go with it.

But he was not able to finish the course in his own strength, and nobody can. And Paul knew because he had come to a place in his life where people who had walked with him, they'd made a great boast of loyalty. And when it came down to it, when Paul was called to give an answer before courts and kings and various tribunals, there was a season in his life where Paul said, oh, everybody forsook me.

There was nobody left standing with me. Paul knew that it's not a kingdom of natural strength, and we make a tremendous mistake when we begin to think it is. But there was a young man, Timothy, that Paul had met along the journey.

And he said, I have a remembrance of you night and day in my prayers. See, Paul saw something in this young man. And the Bible tells us that essentially Timothy was a nervous young man.

I don't see him as being very physically strong. Didn't have a tremendous heritage. His father was a nonbeliever, according to the customs of those times.

But his mother and grandmother had a strong faith. And Paul said, I've seen that faith in you. He said, I greatly desire to see you in verse 4, being mindful of your tears that I might be filled with joy when I call to remembrance, the unfeigned or the unpretended faith that's in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother and then in your mother.

And I'm persuaded that it's in you also. Paul saw, I believe, during his preaching, the conversion of this young man, probably not much to look at, and maybe not much in his own sight, but Paul saw a genuine conversion come into this young man and a faith in his heart. And that's really all that a young person, that's all that God is looking for.

It's not about your resume. It's not about the number of degrees hanging on your wall. It's the faith that's in your heart.

It's not about your physical strength. It's not about a list of accomplishments. It's the faith that's in your heart.

And Paul saw that and he identifies it in the scripture as an unpretended faith. It's not a service time faith. It's an everyday faith.

It's a faith to believe God for the impossible. It's a faith that Paul saw in this young man that he could be everything that God called him to be, but only in the strength of Christ. And Paul laid his hands upon him.

And Paul prayed that he'd be filled with the Holy Ghost. And Paul knew and saw the commissioning of God that was given to him. He said, I put thee in remembrance to stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands.

You know, it was Paul himself that said, don't lay hands suddenly on any person. Don't suddenly commission people into the ministry because they look good. Draw back and wait until the Holy Spirit speaks.

And Paul saw in this young man something. Now he may not have seen it in himself. He was nervous.

The scripture bears witness to the fact he was nervous. His stomach was always sick. At the thought perhaps of stepping out in faith, at the thought perhaps of what God had called him to do.

And I can see Paul, the seasoned apostle, putting his hands upon him and the Holy Ghost coming on Paul. And Paul speaking into this young man's life about the future that lay ahead of him. Paul knowing that this young man is called to bring glory and honor to the name of Jesus Christ.

He says, remember Timothy, you've been supernaturally gifted and called to fulfill a specific purpose of God. And it was given to you exclusively before the world began. Verse nine, he said, who saved us, called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

In other words, Timothy, God's called you to do something and it's not up to you to fulfill it. It's Christ in you that will fulfill this calling. It is your calling.

It is unique to you. No one else can do what you're called to do. No one else can be you.

You are uniquely and exclusively designed by God. And there's a place in his kingdom that you are to occupy. There's something that Christ is to be in you that will glorify his name in the earth.

And he will do it supernaturally in your life. If in your heart, there's an unpretended faith. Now everybody can have service time faith.

We can move mountains in every service, as long as everybody's together and there are really no real mountains to move. Then we're all mountain movers, aren't we? Now the mountains are there and in here. And he had an unpretended faith and Paul saw that.

And he said, Timothy, I have personally fully embraced God's word to me, God's will for me and God's work through me. And although I have been fiercely opposed and Paul had been, it's seemingly not only in the physical, but in the spiritual realm, it's as if Paul had faced a hurricane after hurricane after hurricane. But Paul said, I've not drawn back.

I've trusted Christ, though the temptation to be afraid was always knocking on the door of my heart. These apostles and men and women of God and men and women throughout history, everyone has had to fight the same thing that you fight. It's common ground.

There's no test taken you that's unique just to you. The scripture bears witness that it's common to all men. Everyone has to fight these things.

Listen to the great apostle, Paul, second Corinthians seven, five. When we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest. We're troubled on every side without we're fighting.

That means opposition. And within were fears. Paul said, listen, I had to fight fear.

I come up against such furious opposition, things seen things, not seen things that were visible. I could put a face on it. And there were times I couldn't put a face on.

I just seemed like hell with all its fury was against me without we're fighting and within we're fears that fear common to all men. Can I get through this? Do I have the strength to do this? Where will I find the power? How can I fulfill what God has called me to be? You know, fear is a potent weapon. It's one of the most powerful weapons that Satan has against you.

Fear. Once he, once he has gotten you with fear, then he will take your faith because fear is actually the opposite of faith and fear find its strength against us. When we look at what lies ahead of us and we come to the wrong conclusion that even with Christ within us, we won't be strong enough to make it through.

That's exactly what the children of Israel did in the book of numbers. They came to the border of what God had for them, the border, the edge. I wonder how many people when we get to the throne of God, one day we'll have gotten to that same place right to the edge.

You know, young people, I remember in my twenties being in services like this and God speaking to my heart, what was preposterous. He was going to make me a preacher of the gospel. He was going to set me before thousands of people.

I heard it inside. Now you're talking to a man who'd run out of the room if five people turned their attention to me. Get sick to my stomach at the thought.

I know what Timothy felt like. When I first was called to preach in little groups of people, I would be sick. I'd be physically sick before standing in the room.

And by God's grace, I remember saying, if God before me, who can be against me? I've just stand up. I just show up. And it was like do or die was right off a cliff for me.

And the Holy ghost would come on me. And suddenly folks, I just give the glory to God because suddenly there's this river of life. I remember the first time ever I preached.

I was in a room of about 21 or 22 people. I remember standing up. I don't even fully remember what I said.

All I remember is everybody started crying in the room. When I gave them an opportunity to receive Christ, all but one in that room responded, raised their hands. I was more shocked than they were that they were responding to what I had to say.

They said, the land is exactly as God says it is. Now this is the dilemma we face. Like if I were to ask every young person here today and every older person, you say, is the Bible true? It's true.

Everything that God says is the truth. Now you have no debate with that. And neither did the children of Israel when they came to the border, they said, it's exactly what God said.

But there are oppositions there. There are things bigger than we are. They're stronger than we are.

And they look like giants to us. And we feel like grasshoppers in their sight. We can't do it.

It's true, but not for me. That's the dilemma. That's what you have to face, especially if you're 30 or under right now.

That's what you have to face. You have to face a choice in your life. You're going to believe God, or you're going to be forever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth.

You will accumulate Bible knowledge. You will quote verses. But like Martha, when Jesus comes to do the miraculous, all you can do is quote scripture, but really don't fully understand it, nor personally believe it.

And what a dilemma. The people who came to this place in their walk with God ended up in the wilderness. Now the wilderness is a place where you're not going back to where you came from and you're not going forward to where you should be.

You're just in the wilderness. And how many people live there today? How many people just live like that in the house of God, just in a go nowhere place? Can't say Friday that I'm not like I was Monday. Can't get up and rejoice in the morning and say, oh God, I see new mercies every day.

I'm changing by the spirit of God into what God has me to be. It's an awful place to be. Joshua, nearing the end of his life in ministry, he looked back at those that still had to go in.

And now Joshua had walked with Moses. Joshua had, we heard about him this morning. He'd gone in, he'd given the instructions for Jericho.

He had divided the land. Joshua had, his life was a life of victory. Now at the end of his days, he's looking back to those who still had to conquer.

There's still much to do. There's still a considerable testimony that needed to come in and through the promised land. And he's looking towards those who are still coming up and still have to follow.

And he'd issued a challenge very similar to that, which Paul was giving to Timothy. He says, choose you this day, whom you will serve. He said, if you choose, you can serve the, the gods of the people.

He goes all the way back to before the flood. And most commentators agree that was the flood, most likely in the days of Noah. He said, you can serve the gods who didn't do anything for people way back through history, or you can serve the gods in the, in the place where you now dwell.

It's the land of the Amorites. He said, the gods that didn't do anything for people back there, or the gods were doing nothing for the people today. You can make that choice and serve them.

He said, choose whom you're going to serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Remember when I was a young Christian, I had, I still have it actually.

It's almost the only thing I have left from those days. But I, I had a friend make me a sign. It's about five feet wide by four feet high.

And it says, choose you this day, whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we'll serve the Lord. And I hung it on a tree limb over the road where my farmhouse was.

If only I had have known where that was going to lead and what that really meant, but I meant it with all my heart. I am going with God and whatever that is going to mean, I'm going to serve him with all of my heart. And it was that determination, which brought Joshua into the supernatural.

At the beginning of his life, the Lord said, have I not commanded you be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed for the Lord thy God is with thee with us, whoever thou goest. I have spoken to you, Joshua. Don't be afraid and don't be dismayed.

Now fear is when we look at the size of the opposition that we have to encounter and dismay comes when we look inside and don't see enough strength to fight the battle. And God's word to Joshua is don't let fear or dismay get ahold of you because it's not about you. It's not about you.

It's about Christ in us. That's the good news. The hungry heart gets the victory folks.

There are no weak vessels in this sanctuary today. Did you know that? I don't care if you've got arms this big from pumping weights for the last three years or arms this big from doing nothing but reading books. It doesn't matter to God.

It's not about that. It's not by might. It's not by power.

It's by my spirit says the Lord. It's the heart of faith that gets the victory. It's the young person that says, God, by your spirit within me, I'm going to be everything that you've called me to be.

I'm not drawing back. I'm not stopping short. I'm not living in the wilderness.

I'm not living in this halfway station between the past and the victory in Christ. If Christ is real and I'm going with you, God, and I'm going all the way for whatever you have in my life, Lord, I'm not backing up. I'm going with you all the way.

That's why Paul says to Timothy, for God has not given us the spirit of fear, but a power and love and a sound mind. He's not given us a spirit of fear. In Acts 27, 24, when Paul was in that tremendous storm that we read about, and all of the ship and all of its journey was falling apart, like very much of our present society is starting to face.

Paul stood on the deck of that ship and Paul had a word for his generation. Paul that was ignored, Paul that was considered insignificant, Paul that was stuck down in the lower part of the ship and nobody would listen to him. And suddenly, suddenly I believe the commander of the ship says, get me that man that said we shouldn't go on this journey.

I want to hear what he has to say. And Paul stands up on the deck of the ship and he said, don't be afraid. Don't let anybody's heart fail.

He said, a messenger of God, the God that I serve and whose I am stood before me. And he said, I believe what God has spoken to me. And he said, fear not Paul, fear not Paul.

That was the word. That's the sound mind. He said, fear not.

And when that simple word gets into your heart, that's where the sound mind comes from. Fear not. I don't have to be afraid.

You don't have to be afraid. David said, I've been young. I'm now old.

I've never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed baking bread. Jesus said the Gentiles are always concerned about what shall we eat? What shall we wear? Where shall we live? Your heavenly father knows you need these things. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.

Seek first, first, the kingdom of God, first, the will of God, first, the word of God. Don't be afraid. You are more of more value than many sparrows, Jesus said.

And yet your heavenly father feeds them. Don't be afraid. Fear not, Paul.

Fear not Timothy. There are going to be many things in the news in the future. They're going to cause fear.

And some things are causing fear today, but for the child of God, God says to you, fear not. That's where your sound mind will come from. Fear not.

Don't be afraid of the days ahead. That was the word of God, which gave him a sound mind. And then the Lord says to him, thou must be brought before Caesar.

Now that's the will of God for his life. You're going to testify before this ruler. You're going to testify before those who think they are in authority, but in reality, they're not.

You're going to be given as a witness to them. That's what God was telling the apostle Paul. That was the will of God for his life.

That's where the power comes from. The sound mind comes from his word. The power comes from embracing his will.

That was not an attractive thing. He's going to, I mean, God's saying, Paul, I have great news for you. You're not going to die in the storm.

You're going to go and change before Caesar. Think it through for a It's not like he was telling him he was going to have a timeshare holiday in Barbados or something like that. He was going to jail.

He was going to be brought before rulers. You see, Paul could embrace the word to not be afraid because he embraced the will of God. It's important for you and I not to try to take our will and cram it into the kingdom of God, but find out what the will of God is for you.

Remember, we started out by saying you have, he has saved us and called us with a holy calling. That's not our choice. It's God's choice for each of our lives.

And Lo, he says, God has given thee all them that sail with thee, power, love, and a sound mind. And the love is the work of God. And Paul, God has given you the 276 people on this ship with you because you have embraced the word.

You have embraced the will of God. God is going to add and bring life and bring strength and bring victory and bring hope because you have embraced the word of God and the will of God. People's lives are going to be spared.

They're going to be given direction. You're going to be given a word. You're going to stand in the storm.

You're going to have strength that is not given to normal or natural men and women. And people's lives will be spared because you made the choice to embrace the word of God and the will of God. And it brought you into the work of God, which is empowered by the love of God.

What is the work of God? God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. That's the work of God is love and unpretended love of God that comes from the heart of those who are given to the work of God. Paul says to Timothy, don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.

Now the word ashamed means don't be overpowered by what might lie before you. Don't be ashamed. Don't be triumphed over.

It doesn't mean that you blush and hide in the corner. It means don't be triumphed over by it. Don't be turned back from it.

Keep in mind, Paul is writing to Timothy from jail. And in this epistle, this and the next, he's preparing for his own departure. Paul knows that the end of his course is coming soon.

And he says, Timothy, don't be turned back by these things. Don't live your life trying to find a safe haven for yourself. Be given to the work of God.

Go through whatever tries to stop you on this journey. Face your fears and overcome them by the power of God. Face them now.

Face your fears now. Choose this day. It's very hard to get right with God in the storm, folks.

It's very hard to get right with God in a season of panic. Today is the day. Now is the time.

Now is the time to make the choice. Choose this day. Young people, make the right choice.

Making the right choice will get you through the days that you're going to have to face. You won't be left behind. And your testimony will not be pushed to the side.

You'll have something to say to this generation. But make the choice. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but power and love and a sound mind.

And I know this to be true. I know what fear can do. I was paralyzed by it for over nine years.

I know what fear can do. But I know when I came to Christ and made a choice of going all the way with him and walking with him, there's no fear in my heart. And that's not an idle boast.

That's a boast in Christ. It's got nothing to do with me. It's got everything to do with him.

But I'm not afraid of the coming days. God puts his love in the heart for people. And his love for people casts that fear out of your heart.

Don't draw back, Timothy. Be a partaker of whatever you have to go through for the sake of other people and for the sake of the glory of God. That's my message.

I can't really add anything to it. It's what the Lord gave me for you. There is a point in everybody's life where I can't explain it.

It's a spiritual point where you simply in your heart cross over the line and you just say, I'm going with God. And it's not an emotional thing because that can be worked up in a service. A preacher can preach eloquently or cry hot tears and you can be moved by the moment, moved by the music, but those things don't last necessarily.

No, I prefer a decision. There were times in my young life as a Christian where I just got out of my seat and said, I'm going with God. Whatever that means, I'm going.

I'm not drawing back. By the grace of God, I'm not quitting. And I'm not going to quit when it gets hard.

I'm going to trust God for the power to finish this journey. If you will make that choice in your heart, you'll be astounded at the power of God that is available for you. Power, love, and a sound mind.

That's what comes from God. And it only comes from God. We're going to stand in a moment in the annex.

We'll wait here for you too as well. Young people in particular can apply to everybody, but young people in particular who want to say today, I'm going with Jesus. I don't understand all it means, but I am.

I'm going with Jesus. I'm going to finish this course, and I'm going to walk with God no matter what it costs me. I'm going to walk with God.

I'm going to find His Word. I'm going to find His will, and I'm going to enter His work. That's your part.

God's part is to fill you with the Holy Spirit and give you the life that only He can give. As we stand together, if the Holy Spirit has spoken to and is drawing you, please come and join here and meet me at the front of this sanctuary, please, if you will. In the balcony, you can go to either exit and make your way down.

Main sanctuary, just slip out of where you are. Let's take time to worship and just make your way down, please, if you will. Father, Father, I couldn't have made it without the Holy Spirit, and none of these young people can make it either without your Holy Spirit.

Lord, all we can do is form the intent to walk with you, but you have to come, and as Paul laid his hands upon Timothy, you've got to put your hand upon us, O God. You've got to put your power and your life within us, Lord. There's no other way this journey can be finished.

I pray in Jesus' mighty name, God, you know every sincere heart that's in the sanctuary and at the Psalter. I pray for an anointing of the Holy Spirit. I pray for a baptism, O God, so mighty, Lord, that we'll be taken from image to image and glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

O Jesus, O God, Lord, give us that power that we need, Lord, to face this generation that we live in, to stand, O God, as living testimonies of the fact that you are alive from the dead. Lord, be God within us. Be God, be the power of God within us, Lord.

Give us the strength, O God, that we need to face this hour that we're living in. I thank you for it, Father. I praise you today, Lord, that our prayers are not in vain.

You'll meet every hungry heart. You'll fill every empty soul, O God. Lord, you'll meet everybody that meets you on honest ground.

Just as you met Joshua and you said, take off your shoes, this is holy ground. God, you meet us and you empower us. You give us the ability, Lord, to go against the strongholds in our own heart and in this generation.

We thank you for that power, Lord. We thank you for that ability. We thank you, mighty God.

We thank you for a word for our generation, Lord. We thank you for the ability to stand, mighty God. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God.

We thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, mighty God.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Glory to the Lamb of God. Oh, Jesus, we thank you, God.

We praise you. We bless you, Lord. God, thank you for filling us with your Holy Spirit.

Thank you for the might of our God, the strength of our God, the power of our God. Hallelujah, Lamb of God. We give you glory and honor and we thank you for this in Jesus' mighty name.

Hallelujah. Walk with God now. And he promises to walk with you.

I'm sorry if this seemed hard today, but young people, this is not a bake sale, the Christian church. This is your life. This is your future.

This is your hope. And not only yours, but many other people will find life through you. Make the choice to walk with God.

Don't turn back. You don't have to turn back. When the enemy comes against you like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will always raise up a standard against him.

You can set your watch by it.

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