

Sermon: From Fear to Family – July 24, 2016 (Scripture is from the ESV)

Location: New Philadelphia Church, Sillim Campus – 1:30pm service

Introduction

Good afternoon, Sillim! It's great to be with you all today.

If you are new to our church, Sillim is one of six campuses of New Philadelphia Church. We have campuses in Itaewon, Hongdae, and Busan in Korea and also in Sydney and Melbourne in Australia. We are all one family, with each campus having their own campus pastors, with our head pastors being Pastors Christian and Erin Lee. While we are all one family, each campus has their own unique makeup. When Sillim was established just under two years ago, there were three things I desired our campus to be marked by:

1. A hunger and appreciation for the Word of God
2. Honor and awareness of the Holy Spirit
3. An outward spirit, where we are not just concerned for ourselves but that we are actively being God's hands and feet to those around us

My hope is that our church will treat the Word of God with respect and will seek His counsel daily. My hope is that we will also talk to the Lord each day in a relational way, not in a methodical way. We're able to have intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit. And I know as we grow in His Word and in His Spirit that our eyes will be opened more and more to His love for those around us. An outward spirit comes naturally to those who know God's Word and walk with Him.

Today I want to share more about being led by the Spirit of God and how to overcome one of the greatest hindrances to a sweet relationship with God. The title of today's sermon is, "**From Fear to Family.**" The passage I will be preaching from is Romans 8:11-17.

Definition of Fear

Let me start first though with a definition of fear.

SLIDE ONE

Google dictionary defines fear as, "An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat." Let me read that again: "An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat."

So what is fear caused by? It's caused by "belief: belief of someone or something being dangerous." What is another word for belief? "Faith." The definition for fear could also be read as, "An unpleasant emotion caused by the faith that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat."

Fear is faith in the wrong things. **Fear is faith in the wrong god.** Fear is faith that the outcome will likely be bad. Fear leads to panic and hopelessness. Fear drives us far from God. Fear is the opposite of love.

SLIDE TWO

1John 4:18 – There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

Fear has no place in love. Love casts it out. “Love casts out fear.” I want you all to remember that as I go forward with this message.

So let me ask you, what are you afraid of? Spiders? Heights? Public speaking? Many such fears are a result of a traumatic childhood memory. Many young kids are fearless. They have to be taught healthy fear, such as don’t touch the hot stove or put your finger in the electrical socket. For the kids at my children’s home the youngest ones are the most fearless. They pick up the weirdest bugs and insects and put them in my face. When they’re called to do something in front of a crowd of people most of them just laugh and act silly. They haven’t been taught fear yet.

When I was a child I apparently had no fear of bugs. But then one day I was walking with my mom and her friend and a bee flew near us. My mom’s friend flipped out and yelled, “A bee! A bee!” as she flailed around. Her actions put fear in me that affected me the rest of my childhood. I became terrified of bees and other bugs because of that moment.

For the girls in one of the suites at my children’s home they are all scared of Korean centipedes (which aren’t that scary). Why? Because their dorm mom is terrified of them. I remember teaching in one of the rooms when the dorm mom called out urgently to me. I came out and all the other girls were gathered behind her, alarmed, looking into one of the other rooms. I walked into the room to find a little centipede slowly moving along on the floor. I went ahead and killed it and told them everything was fine. While it felt nice being the hero that evening, I felt bad that the kids were learning fear from their dorm mom.

Phobias are one thing, but relational fears are another. Relational fears can remove love from our lives. These fears can also be taught and instilled in us through others. Hurtful parents, unfaithful friends, and other poor examples can teach us fear rather than peace. The relational fears we learn we can often end up projecting on God. As a result of an abusive or demanding parent, we can believe that God the Father is also demanding and filled with wrath and anger if we don’t perform well. Fear is often taught into us. Our fears of other peoples’ reactions or potential rejections are often from bad memories in the past. Relational fears can drive us away from people and away from God. They must be healed. So what is the answer?

Let’s now look at the passage for today’s sermon. Please open up your Bibles to Romans 8:12-17 and read along with me...

Romans 8:11-17 – If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Let’s read verses eleven through fourteen again...

SLIDES THREE AND FOUR

Romans 8:11-14 – If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Let me give a brief summation of the Gospel of Jesus, also known as The Good News: We were once bent on sin and controlled by our own fleshly desires. Our priority was ourselves. Other people and works were all meant for our own gratification. Our selfishness made us sinful. As much as we could try, on our own we could not make ourselves clean and sinless. We needed a Savior. Jesus came and lived with us as a human, but He was sinless. He overcame sin through a perfect life and overcame death by being resurrected from the dead. So whoever puts their faith in Him can also be freed from sin and death, because He has overcome both. When we put our faith in Christ Jesus we are filled with the Spirit of God. He comes and He lives inside us. This is how we overcome.

The Holy Spirit living within us is proof that we are now family with God. But because we still live in a sin filled world, we still battle with our past temptations and struggles. Sometimes we can have trouble identifying what is of God and what isn't. If we are not moving by the Holy Spirit, then sin will continue to have influence on our lives. So how does the Spirit move us? Let me read Romans 8:14 again...

SLIDE FIVE

Romans 8:14 – For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Spirit Leads, Devil Drives

The Spirit leads. The devil drives. Are you being led? Or are you being driven? When I counsel people this is one of the things I look for. Is the person being led by the Spirit? Or is the person being driven by some sort of fear rooted in a personal insecurity or the manipulation of someone else?

The Spirit of God led Jesus into the wilderness. The Spirit of God led the apostle Paul to go to Macedonia. The Spirit of God led the apostle Peter to preach to non-Jewish people. People led by the Spirit are at peace. They are confident that God is behind what they are doing and they don't have to prove anything or do anything on their own.

The devil on the other hand drives people. He pushes them. When Jesus came upon a heavily demonized man in Mark 5 we read that the man was driven by the spirits to live among tombs and to strip himself of all clothing. He was in a horrible state. When Jesus cast the demons out of him the demons went into a herd of pigs and drove the pigs down a steep bank into the sea where they all drowned. The devil fills people with fear, causing them to be wild and fanatical.

When we allow fear to compel us to do something, we are actually allowing the devil to take driver's seat of our life. And the end will not be good. I have seen people out of fear of never marrying give up their values and settle for someone that God had not ordained for them. While there is temporary pleasure and relief in breaking the fear of never marrying, because they settled and married someone outside of God's blessing many of them have struggled as time has passed. For some their faith has weakened and they live more for their spouse than

for God. For others they regret their choice and live with the difficulty of trying to obey God with their life while their spouse has no interest at all in God.

For some people as they grow older they can hit what is called a “mid-life crisis.” They suddenly fear they have missed out on life and that they are getting old and out of touch. For many people, their mid-life crisis drives them to spend lots of money on a new car, crazy vacations, or other things that aren’t necessary. And while there is initial pleasure and fulfillment in giving in to their compulsions, many of them later regret these decisions.

Remember, fear is faith in the wrong god. The devil only comes to steal, kill, and destroy. While he masquerades as an angel of light, in the end his fruit is poison for the soul.

We must be led by the Spirit. We must never be driven by fear, or by anything else. We must learn to wait on the Lord. He will be faithful! He will come through.

Let’s read Romans 8:15...

SLIDE SIX

Romans 8:15 – For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

The Spirit of God came that we might be free from fear. God wants for there to be zero fear within us. **This means that we should have zero compassion for those struggling with fear.**

No Compassion for Fear

That last statement surprises me too, but it is true. We should have zero compassion for those struggling with fear. Fear is of the devil. When I say we should not have compassion for fear that means we are not meant to coddle or baby someone struggling with fear. Fear is meant to be driven out. Love does not show compassion to fear. **Love drives out fear!**

Often we think that if someone is struggling with fear that we shouldn’t push them. We tend to baby people, especially those who are younger or who have gone through a difficult time. But God doesn’t want a bunch of fearful babies. God has come that we may have life and have it to the full! We need to be led by the Spirit and lovingly cast out fear!

One of our leaders here, Mijeong, began mentoring a girl in her children’s home years ago. She mentored the girl through college, and there would be different late nights that the girl would call her and cry about how hard her life was. The girl was having to work all day and attend classes and study all night. She had no family and little time for any friends. For someone in her situation I think all of us would feel compassion and would want to just comfort her. But as Mijeong would try and comfort her, the girl would actually cry harder. Mijeong’s comfort was actually demonstrating that the girl was indeed in a difficult, horrible situation. At one point the girl became hysterical in her crying and her despair. The fear and desperation of her situation were consuming her. At this point Mijeong changed her tone completely. She began speaking firmly to the girl to stop crying. Mijeong basically rebuked the despair coming out of the girl. Mijeong began speaking truth over the girl with a strong voice. She began establishing the girl in strength, rather than in weakness. For most of us, we would assume Mijeong’s harsh tone would cause the girl to run away from Mijeong, but instead it endeared the girl to Mijeong. The girl’s attitude began to move away from fear and

hopelessness into a place of faith and hope. Rather than focusing on all the tough things around her, she began to see God even in the little things. Life began to fill her. Her grades went from being very low to nearly perfect. The changes in her inspired us to create Oak Tree Project, our scholarship and mentoring program for orphans. Praise the Lord!

Jesus showed no compassion for fear. In Matthew 14 we read of Peter walking on water with Jesus but soon sinking in the water because of his fear of the waves and the storm around him. When Jesus pulled him out of the water I thought Jesus would say something like, “Well done, Peter. You were doing great. It’s okay, I’m here now.” Instead, Jesus’ words for Peter were simply, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” I used to think Jesus was a bit harsh, but now I understand that Jesus would not tolerate even a hint of Satan’s influence. We are not meant to have any fear or doubt within us. We are meant to know love and know it completely.

Let the Spirit Dictate

If you allow fear to dictate your behavior then you will never overcome it. Let me say that again: if you allow fear to dictate your behavior then you will never overcome it. The fear will only continue to grow. We have to let the Spirit dictate our behavior. We must stand on the Word of God, on testimonies, and the encouragement and support of others to overcome our fears.

When I was young I used to have a great fear of roller coasters. As a young child I had heard a story of a roller coaster coming off the track at some amusement park and I vowed in my heart I would never ride one. I remember my parents forced me to ride a little dinky one when I was 10 or so and I was terrified the whole time. I trusted more in the roller coaster not being safe than in my parents’ comfort. They didn’t push me after that. A few years later I was humbled by my fearless younger sister, just 8 years old or so, riding all the roller coasters I was terrified of. But I still had a few friends who were also scared of coasters, and I would stick with them at the amusement parks. Finally, in 8th grade, my friends and I decided to go for it. I had seen too many people, including my little sister, love riding the roller coasters. And my friends deciding to do it too gave me the encouragement I needed. I remember that day we rode the roller coasters from morning to evening, riding them over and over and over again. We loved it!

Now I love going to amusement parks with the kids from my orphanage. I make it a point to get at least a few kids who had never ridden a roller coaster before to ride with me. I never force a scared kid, but I encourage them through my own stories and by pointing at other kids who had ridden for the first time the year before and had loved it. The testimonies and the encouragements will often enable some kids to overcome their fears; kids who were much younger than I was when I overcame my own. For those that absolutely refuse like I used to, I won’t force them to do things until they are older and I am 100% certain they can handle it. Fear is meant to be overcome! 두려움을 극복하세요!

The encouragement of others, their testimonies, the Word of God and the Spirit of God... these are the things that lead us from fear into faith. It is God’s Word, His Spirit, the testimony of others and their encouragement that enable us to overcome all our fears. What it comes down to is this: **true family removes fear.**

Let me read Romans 8:15-17...

SLIDES SEVEN AND EIGHT

Romans 8:15-17 – For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

This passage isn't just about us being filled with the Spirit to overcome fear and sin. It is also about the Spirit of God making us family. It's about the power of being adopted into God's family, having an intimate relationship with God and with fellow believers, and no longer being driven by fear or sin in this world.

For most of us who grew up in a family, we acted the most like our true selves around our family members. We treated our siblings different from our friends. Unless you grew up in an abusive or very strict household, you likely felt the most free to express yourself amongst your family members: whether expressing silliness or expressing frustration or expressing other emotions. With family there is a deep sense of belonging that enables us to act out more than we would with others. With family you're all meant to have the same last name and identity.

In this passage Paul writes that we have been adopted by God into His family. This is powerful! Under Roman law if a child was adopted from one family to another then all debts were wiped and all rights of the old family were lost. The old life was completely wiped away with nothing from the past counting against the child. The child would receive the name of the new family and become an heir and be considered equal to any brothers or sisters. There was no inferiority for adopted children.

So what Paul writes in Romans 8 is extremely powerful for us! Not only have we been redeemed by God and filled with His Spirit, but we are now marked as His family. We belong to Him, 100%. Nothing from our past can be counted against us. Nothing of this world can lay claim on us. We are now equal to all our other brothers and sisters in Christ, including Jesus!

Romans 8:17 says that we are now “fellow heirs” with Christ. The term “fellow heirs” is actually one word in the original Greek. Heirs usually receive a split of an inheritance. So if there are two heirs to a fortune, they could each claim half. But this term, “fellow heir” or “joint heir” actually means that each heir has full ownership of the inheritance. Each heir can say, “This is fully mine.” This means that everything that has been given to Jesus has been given to us as well. We lack nothing! And we are all in this together. We are family!

In a true family there is a collective identity. In a true family there is trust and acceptance. In a true family there is the freedom to be oneself and to not fear judgment or rejection. In a true family there is loving discipline that corrects and strengthens. In a true family there are responsibilities, but there is also a deep knowledge that our standing is not based on our responsibilities. In a true family there is protection and provision. In a true family there is no room for fear.

God has made us for family. God is Father, Son, and Spirit. God made Adam and Eve to multiply and to create families. Jesus died on the Cross that we might be one with Him and

with the Father. Jesus died on the Cross that we might be family again. He died that we might receive the spirit of adoption and be freed from all fear.

There is no fear in love!

Conclusion

I am proud of this church campus, New Philadelphia Sillim. I am proud of the community groups, the families, and the ministry teams and how each have family aspects to them. I am blessed by the love and connection I witness among the members and leaders of this house. And I know God's desire is to only increase His love here and drive out every last bit of fear in each and every one of us. There will be no more fear to be oneself. There will be no more fear of rejection. There will be correction and discipline, but always from a place of love. We are all family!

*Possible altar call for those struggling with fear or those from broken families?