



Sermon 6

Facing Fear in Your City

By: Pr. S. Yeury Ferreira

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”

Introduction

When Franklin D. Roosevelt became President of the United States on March 4, 1933, the country was in turmoil due to the crisis, and it needed a dose of hope after over three years of decline. On that day, Roosevelt delivered a speech that is still talked about and mentioned in books and articles, for a phrase that resonates deeply: “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

With those words, Roosevelt made it clear that the number one enemy was not the unstable economy but fear itself. Fear, as Cuban psychologist Mira Y. López put it, is a monster that sends shivers down your spine. Fear steals your thoughts and can hijack your dreams and willpower. It makes you forget what you know and lose sight of who you are. It makes you feel out of control and that you can never regain it. It makes you distrust the very people you should trust without hesitation. It makes you demanding rather than humble and serving. It makes you think that God is insignificant in the face of your problems and challenges. It makes you search in people for what you can only find in Jesus Christ.

Development

I. Fear in the Cities

Fear in cities is a complex phenomenon that affects both young and old and can be related to several contributing factors. Here are some of the main factors:

- **Crime and urban violence:** The perception of insecurity due to crime and violence in cities is one of the primary factors contributing to fear. Crimes such as robberies, assaults, and homicides can generate fear in the population, especially in areas with high crime rates.
- **Transportation problems:** Insecurity in public transportation, such as robberies or sexual harassment on trains or buses, can increase fear in cities. This can limit people's mobility and affect their quality of life.
- **Social and media pressure:** The constant spread of news about violent incidents and crimes in the media and on social networks can increase fear in society. Overexposure to scary stories can contribute to a distorted perception of safety in the city.
- **Distrust in institutions:** Lack of trust in government institutions responsible for maintaining security and public order can lead to increased fear. The perception of corruption or inefficiency can undermine the sense of security in the city.

Faced with the wave of fear that exists in cities, what can we do?

II. Overcoming Fear with Faith

Although the Bible is not a psychology manual or a treatise on the brain, it delves deeply into the subject of fear. In fact, the phrase “do not be afraid” appears about 365 times in Scripture, making it the most repeated message throughout the Bible. Furthermore, the words “fear” and “terror” are mentioned over two hundred times, while “dread” appears over one hundred times. It might be surprising that a book recounting the deeds of historical figures talks so much about fear, but the Bible records that more than two hundred of its characters experienced it!

So, is there a solution to something as overwhelming as fear? Can we overcome our fears? Is it possible to live without fear? Many have sought answers through psychologists and therapies, trying to change their thinking and behavior logically. Others have turned to medication, viewing fear as a kind of illness. However, over time, they discover that, while these therapies and medications can help, they are not the only options.

If we cannot eliminate or ignore our fears, can we manage them in some way? The answer is a resounding “yes.” According to the Bible, we can face and overcome fear through faith. Yes, dear young person, faith is the divine antidote to eliminate all our fears, but what is faith?

The Bible defines faith in this way: *“Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance*

about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1, NIV). In other words, faith is trusting in God. The Bible tells us later:

“And without faith, it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6, NIV).

It is important to note that not just any kind of faith overcomes fear. **The faith that truly conquers fear first accepts the existence of God.** Believing in God is the first step toward living a victorious life. Those who believe in God have a compass that guides them through the difficulties of this world. On the other hand, for those who do not believe in God, this world can seem strange, confusing, and discouraging. Life becomes complicated and directionless.

Secondly, the faith that overcomes fear not only accepts the existence of God but also seeks to develop a special relationship with Him. It is not enough to know that God exists; it is necessary to come to know Him. God Himself urges us in His Word not to boast of our wisdom, power, or wealth but to boast of knowing Him and understanding that He acts on earth with love, justice, and righteousness (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Before continuing, it is important to note that when we talk about knowing God, we don't mean comprehending Him fully. As human

beings, we cannot fully grasp an infinite being due to our mental limitations, moral problems, and limitations in divine revelation. However, when we speak of knowing God, we refer to establishing a relationship with Him in such a way that what He is affects who we are.

Third and finally, the faith that overcomes fear is one that leads us to trust God completely.

Someone once said that faith involves trusting that God will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. The essence of true faith involves taking God's Word and trusting that He will fulfill His promises. When we trust in God, our perspective on life completely changes. Trust in God transforms everything. It frees us from the negative effects of the past and from negative emotions. By trusting that everything is in the hands of our Creator, we live without fear, knowing that nothing happens without His consent.

Conclusion

Harriet Tubman was an incredible woman who lived in a time when slavery was a nightmare in the United States. Imagine being trapped, without freedom, living in constant fear. Harriet experienced that since she was a child, but she never gave up.

From a young age, Harriet experienced the cruelty of slavery. But as she grew, so did her determination to escape and help others do the same. Her secret: a powerful faith in God that gave her courage.

When she was 27 years old, Harriet made a brave decision. She escaped from the plantation where she was enslaved and ventured north, following the stars and trusting her intuition. On her journey, she faced dangers like slave hunters and tracking dogs, but her faith in God never wavered. Every step toward freedom was an act of faith.

But Harriet didn't stop after achieving her own freedom. Despite the constant risk of being captured and returned to slavery, she returned to the South several times to help other slaves escape through the Underground Railroad, a secret network of safe routes and hiding places. Her trust in God grew even stronger, firmly believing that God was guiding and protecting her in her dangerous missions.

Once, while leading a group of fugitive slaves in the middle of the night, they came across a wanted poster with her own face on it. Instead of giving up, Harriet prayed to God and pressed on, leading everyone to safety. Her faith and courage overcame fear.

Harriet Tubman, known as “the Moses of her people,” helped more than three hundred slaves reach freedom. She became a true heroine in the fight against slavery. Her story demonstrates that faith in God can help you conquer fear and accomplish extraordinary things.

Today, dear young person, you may find yourself dealing with fear in your city due to insecurity, social pressure, and other challenges. However, like Harriet Tubman, **faith and determination can be your allies in overcoming these fears.**