Welcome to the final week of our FEAR series.

Before I get started, I want to make sure everyone is awake and engaged, and I thought we could wrap this series up on a positive note. So everybody pull out your phone and type in the number for our **Anonymous Text Line** **214-856-0550**

I want you to text us a fear that you have successfully been able to overcome.
Maybe the fear of texting in church…

We’ve spent this month talking about fear, and today I want to tell you:

**FEAR CAN BE DEADLY**

Fear is a tool of the enemy; it didn’t come from God.

**2 TIMOTHY 1:7** For God did not give us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Jesus tells us that the enemy comes to kill, steal, destroy

1st week we talked about how fear is positional; it tries to position itself behind you

Fear often pushes you toward what you are afraid of

**FEAR BRINGS YOU CLOSER TO WHAT YOU FEAR**

That’s why we watch scary movies and go to haunted houses. Fear can be attractive.

But even when we don’t want it to, fear brings us closer to what we’re scared of, or brings it closer to us.

Horror movie example: Running, twists ankle, takes wrong turn

But in the real world: Stage fright.

Fear of being lonely/alone. Fear of bad relationships/bad breakups.

Fear of dogs.
Fear of heights.
Fear of germs/illness.

Fear of clowns. –example

Fear of groups of people

Let’s look at three very common fears:

**Common fears: The Unknown, Being Known, Death**

Fear of the Unknown – Cancer, shadows – You don’t want to find out so it stays unknown

Fear of being found out – You try to cover up or hide but it makes you look more suspicious

Death is a very common fear.

Primal fear – We are alive and we want to stay that way.
We are afraid of that changing, what happens after that changes, and things that could make it change.

Lots of fears trace back to a fear of death: snakes, spiders, germs, heights, water, the dark, pickles…

**Fear Brings us closer to Death**

Stress damages our bodies, takes years off our life

Fear disables us – “paralyzed by fear” – fear can disable us in dangerous situations

Scared to death

But fear can bring us closer to death in another way:
Fear, Anxiety, Stress, Worry… over time these can cause us to shut down, to give up, to stop caring,
in a way we can die inside.

It might pertain to a specific area of life: finances… health… you give up and are just waiting for the inevitable.

You might already be there with politics. No matter what happens on election day about half the country is going to be very upset, and I suspect a lot are going to shut down and not want to think about it for a while.

But it can also be more general: you are just emotionally dead inside.

A few years ago we did a series about “The Living Dead” and that’s what I’m talking about. You may be alive on the outside, but you are emotionally dead on the inside.

We don’t talk about it very much, but I think it is more common than we realize.
The news oversaturates our emotions, while we’re told that our feelings are simultaneously very important and not important at all.
It is easy for Christians to fall into this state.

I know because I lived like this for several years.
As a child I had lots of fears. In High School and College I just shut down emotionally.

In some ways it is much easier to live like this. You don’t have to worry; You don’t have to care.
But there are important things you can’t do.

**The Dead Cannot Love –** You can be nice, but if your heart is dead, then you cannot truly love others.

Is this a problem? For Christians this is a huge problem. Jesus commands us to love. We are called to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves.

**The Dead Cannot Forgive –** If you’ve become numb to prevent other people from hurting you, can you really forgive them? How can you forgive hurts that you don’t want to acknowledge? Is this a problem?

Again, for us as Christians this is a huge problem. Jesus says we are forgiven as we forgive others. If we do not forgive, God will not forgive us.

**MATTHEW 6:12 NLT or ISV** “and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.”

On top of that, why would we seek forgiveness? If we have become numb and don’t care about how we hurt others, why would we care if they forgive us?

We need forgiveness. And we need to forgive.

**The Dead Cannot Live (without God) –** People who are dead inside will do all kinds of things to make them feel alive: Fancy sports car. Fancy vacations. Fancy foods. Fancy experiences.
Maybe they get immersed in TV shows full of drama and sex and violence. Binge on Netflix. Or videogames.
Maybe dumping their old boring a young new GF/BF.
It can lead to substance abuse. It can lead to drugs. It can lead to pornography. Or worse.

But no matter what people try to use to “feel alive” there is only one person who can give life: Jesus Christ.

Now, just because you know Jesus, that doesn’t mean you’re alive inside.

As I said, I know Christians can fall into this trap. I was one.

We’ve been preaching all month about how fear is bad.
That doesn’t mean we should try to shut it down and not feel it.

“Perfect love casts out all fear.” But that doesn’t mean we should shut down that part of ourselves.

We can get fooled into thinking if we don’t feel it, then we have solved the problem. Being dead is the problem. If our fear and negative emotions push us into a state of living death there is still a problem.

But again, it does make some things easier. Living in a hurting world is much easier if you don’t have to care about others.

Before this series we did the “Help” series, and one Sunday Pastor Chris read all those statistics of people suffering and dying in the world today. I will admit, I was tempted to shut down.

But Jesus calls us to life, not to death. Jesus is the way, the truth, and **THE LIFE.**

**Don't be Afraid to Live**

We can be tempted to remain dead inside and not care.
In that case, we are afraid of **LIFE** not **DEATH**. We’re afraid of being hurt, of being sad, of caring.
Life in this world is painful, but we are called to live. Jesus says God is the God of the living, not the dead.

How ridiculous would it have been if Lazarus had stayed in the tomb?

Everyone is gathered around. Jesus has them roll the stone away. Then he calls out, “Lazarus, come forth.”

… Then out of the tomb: “Nah, I’m good.” “Life is hard out there. I think I’ll just stay in here.”

What?!! That’s crazy!!! But that’s what we’re choosing if we choose to stay dead.

Instead we need to turn to Jesus, because He is the only one who can give us new life.

Your heart may be cold and dead but Jesus can give you a new heart, a living, loving heart.

**EZEKIEL 36:26 NIV** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

This world is a scary, painful place. And we are called to live in it.

**JOHN 16:33 NIV** “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. **But take heart! I have overcome the world**.”

Take heart – get it? Be alive. Have courage.

Jesus is our example. We are called to be like Jesus.

Jesus overcame the world, but first he had to live in the world.

Jesus experienced fear. Jesus experienced anxiety. Jesus experienced sorrow.
But he didn’t run from them. He lifted them up to God.

Jesus also died. But he didn’t stay dead. And we shouldn’t stay dead.

**ROMANS 6:4 NIV** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life**.

**LIVE! LIVE! BE ALIVE! BE ALIVE IN CHRIST!**

Our baptism is a symbol of passing through death – dying to sin – and stepping into a new life in Christ.

But when we have received a new life in Christ, that doesn’t mean we never experience fear.

Jesus experienced fear.

Don’t let fear defeat you. Don’t give up. Don’t shut down. Jesus is with us.

We may still be afraid sometimes. That doesn’t mean you’re a bad Christian.

Jesus is our example. Jesus experienced fear, but when He did He reached out to God.

**When Afraid Draw Closer to God**

If we’re alive in Christ, then our fear should push us toward God.

The presence of God with us and in us should give us new perspective on our fears.
Just like when you’re afraid of shadows and you turn on the light, allow Light of Christ to illuminate the fearful parts of your life.

What should we be afraid of? Jesus tells us

**MATTHEW 10:28 NIV** Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Jesus says, if we’re going to be afraid of anything we should be afraid of God, because there is nothing more powerful than He is.

The Bible also says “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.”
And “The fear of the LORD leads to life.”

**When Afraid Draw Closer to God**

Remember, fear can bring us closer to what we fear. If these subjects make you nervous or fearful, draw near to God. Read His Word. Reach out to Him in prayer.

You will discover that God doesn’t want us to be afraid of Him. He loves us. And that perfect love can cast out fear.

So, let’s revisit some of the other common fears.
**Common fears: The Unknown, Being Known, Death**

**The Unknown** – you may be facing a situation and you don’t know how it is going to go.
Uncertainty can be scary. But remember, even though it is unknown to you, it is known to God.
And He has promised to be with you no matter what you face. He is already there making a way for you.

**Being Known** – you may be embarrassed; you may feel guilty. But you need not worry about being revealed. God already knows your past. He knows you better than you know yourself. And He loves you anyway. You don’t have to hide anymore. The Bible says that if we confess our sins, then he is faithful and just to forgive us.

**Death** – Death has been defeated. Jesus Christ is alive!
We need not fear death. We should be dead to sin, but alive in Jesus. Jesus is the source of life.
And when go from being dead inside to living a new life in Christ, we overcome death as well!

So what are you afraid of?!?!

**When Afraid Draw Closer to God**

Again, I’m not saying that you will never ever experience fear once you have come to faith in Jesus.
I’m not saying that if you ever get scared, then you are a bad Christian. You are doomed.

But let your fears move you closer to God. When you are afraid push in toward God. Reach out to Him.
Use those moments to grow in your faith.

Nothing you fear is more powerful than God. Don’t lose heart. Don’t lose faith. Don’t shut down.
Keep walking with Jesus, even when you are afraid.
The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

And even right now, you can take steps to overcome your fears. At the end of service every week we invite everyone to spend a few minutes talking to God. We open the front of the church and welcome everyone to come forward. Leaving your seat might make you nervous or uncomfortable, but I encourage you to take that step today. If you’re dealing with some of the fears we talked about today, lift them up to God. The unknown is known to God. You are known to God; you can open up to Him. He has overcome death for you. And if you realized that you are dead inside, God wants you to LIVE! Please talk to Him and let Him give you a new life. If you want someone to pray with you, then stand within two feet of the steps and we would be glad to pray with you. But please don’t be afraid, open your heart and talk to God.

**REVELATION 21:4** NIV ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.