

THE BIG IDEA: Bravery recognizes fear but doesn't authorize fear.

The Take-Off

Did you know that if looked up a list of all phobias, you'd find there are hundreds of them?

Some seem funny, like amnesiphobia - the fear of amnesia. It's funny to me because you wouldn't remember having it. What about some of these?

Amychophobia- Fear of scratches or being scratched. (you'll be safe if you also have...)

Alektorophobia- Fear of chickens.

Apeirophobia- Fear of infinity. (couldn't you think about that forever)

Bibliophobia- Fear of books.

Decidophobia- Fear of making decisions. (this one was just added after much debate)

Gnosiophobia- Fear of knowledge. (but, wouldn't you have to study to find out you have it)

Hippophobia- Fear of horses.

Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia- Fear of long words.

And some of you are currently experiencing homilophobia - the fear of sermons!

I'm not making light of fear, but rather pointing out how many of them there are and setting up the fact that God has something to say about it

In fact, my guess is that you're afraid of something because fear is common to mere mortals like us

If it wasn't, there wouldn't be enough "Do not fear" commands in the Bible for every day of the year

That's right - 365 times God tells us not to fear

So we don't come in here acting like we're never afraid, instead we come in here declaring that we are brave

Bravery recognizes fear but doesn't authorize fear

Think about that for just a minute. We don't like to recognize fear because we think it makes us look weak, but the very reason we are afraid is because we are weak!

If a man twice my size came in here yelling at me and rushing toward the platform, I'm going to feel some fear because, well, look at me! I'd be tiny in comparison.

But we focus so much on the fact that we shouldn't feel fear that we miss the choice we have in that moment: to be brave or be cowardly

This is huge, because when the Bible speaks of not being afraid, it is dealing with action more than emotion

Feeling afraid is natural. Living unafraid is supernatural.

When we say we are brave, we're declaring His power over our weakness.

This morning, I'm going to challenge all of us to be brave in 4 areas:

1. We're called to be brave in what we do

- a. Bravery isn't a thought.
- b. We can think encouraging and exciting and courage-building thoughts and pump ourselves up, but at the end of the day, **we're called to be brave in what we do.**
- c. **1 Chronicles 28:20 (NIV)** / David took care of all the details and gave the plans to Solomon and then went Nike on him - be courageous and DO IT
- d. The cowardly choice is often to do nothing
- e. The brave choice means doing something

2. We're called to be brave in what we say

- a. Sometimes the thing we have to do involves saying something
- b. **We're called to be brave in what we say**, and if you've ever needed to say something hard to someone you love, then you get why bravery is so necessary
- c. There's a powerful example of this in 1 Kings 22
 - The kings of Judah and Israel want to go to war and the prophets tell him to do it
 - One man - Micaiah - tells the truth to the kings, at the cost of his own freedom
- d. Some speak truth to power because they want power; God speaks truth to power because He wants truth
- e. The cowardly choice is often to say nothing
- f. The brave choice means saying something

3. We're called to be brave in how we lead

- a. We're called to be brave in what we do and say, but **we're also called to be brave in how we lead**
- b. Let's squash the lie that we aren't all leaders right away, okay?
- c. If you're breathing, someone's watching you - you are influencing someone for good or bad
- d. Leadership will at times put us in seasons that call for courage
- e. Esther is a great example of this
- f. We may know the famous line from **Esther 4:14** - you were born for such a time as this
- g. The NIV says "who knows but that ***you have come to your royal position*** for such a time as this?"
- h. Her position demanded courageous action, and **verse 16** she would act even if she died
- i. We lose the influence of our position when we don't walk in the integrity demanded of our position
- j. Leadership costs us greatly - courage is required
- k. The cowardly choice is to stop leading
- l. The brave choice is to lead anyway

4. We're called to be brave in how we love

- a. Finally, **we're called to be brave in how we love**, and there is no better example of this than Jesus
- b. **John 13:1 (NIV)** / "He loved them ***to the end***"
- c. What's that look like? From that moment forward, he served communion to the one who betrayed Him, washed the feet of the one who denied Him, sweated drops of blood as His closet friends slept through His need, and endured a painful and lonely death for something He didn't do.
- d. I'm sure that all of us can relate to some part of what Jesus experienced even if we haven't experienced it to the degree He did.
- e. But we can recognize that it takes courage to love the people who let us down
- f. The cowardly choice is to stop loving
- g. The brave choice is to love anyway

The Landing

I mentioned how many times the Bible talks about not fearing and the most common Greek word is "phobia"
Almost every occurrence of the word fear in the NT is this one and it means "to fear, to hesitate to do something"
Phobias go beyond fear and are often irrational (except to the ones experiencing them)
But many times the fear poses no actual threat or danger, but the person is overwhelmed by fear nonetheless
Frozen. Over and over the Bible says don't be so afraid that you can't move, so afraid you forget your God is bigger!
But in one verse - the most famous one, probably - a different Greek word is used. Only once. Only in this verse.
2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV) - that word for fear means "cowardice"

The temptation to choose not to be brave is counteracted with the power of the Holy Spirit

We know that we are brave, so let's end this morning asking God to fill us with that dynamite power!

Let's pray.