

**Fear**

**Have you ever been afraid?**

**I think most of us have at some point in our lives**

**I looked at this on the internet**

**Professionals boil fear down to 4 or 5 categories**

**All our fears flow from one of more of these**

**And then there are phobias**

**Taking a legitimate fear to a high level**

**Any of these are enough to paralyze us**

**Both physically and spiritually**

**They can keep us from growing**

**From truly developing the gifts God has given us**

**And don't be fooled**

**Satan knows all of this**

**And he is a master of manipulating our fears**

**So we turn inward to where we feel safe**

**Fear has been a part of the human condition since the beginning**

**There is an antidote to fear**

**And that is faith**

**In our first reading**

**Jeremiah knew fear**

**He knew those that spoke God's word**

**His prophets would be opposed and hated**

**He was charged with a difficult message**

**Telling the Jewish people that God's judgment was coming**

**Things they did not want to hear**

**His enemies wanted to silence him at all costs**

**And he knew this**

**His fear was legitimate**

**But he found courage in the Lord**

***But the Lord is with me,***

***like a mighty champion:***

***my persecutors will stumble,***

***they will not triumph***

**His faith is the source of his courage**

**A courage that allowed him to face his detractors**

**To overcome his fear**

***Sing praise to the Lord***

***For He has rescued the life of the poor***

***From the power of the wicked***

**St Paul also knew what it was to be persecuted**

**And how not to allow the fear of this to paralyze you**

**God's message has always stirred up resistance**

*Through one man sin entered the world*

*And through sin, death*

This is one of our primal fears

And affects us both physically and spiritually

It can make us want to silence God by silencing His messengers

But God does not leave us in our sin

By His grace and love

He has restored life to us in Jesus Christ

The disciples also knew fear

Our Gospel today comes just after the calling of the 12

Now they are being sent to preach the Good News

Jesus gives them their instructions

Fear no one

Fear is not an excuse for not taking part in the mission

Recall the parable of the talents

Do not be like the third man

Paralyzed by fear, he buried his talents

He refused to take a risk

For the most part our culture only wants to hear what it wants

It wants to be reassured it is doing good

It doesn't want to be called to conversion

But we need to hear what stirs our hearts

**What makes us uncomfortable**

**And that is our mission as Christians**

**To take the Word of God into the world**

**Even when we are afraid**

**Because we are often afraid of the wrong thing**

***Do not be afraid of those that can kill the body***

***But cannot kill the soul***

***Rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul***

**Jesus knows his message is an outrageous message**

**It will be opposed by powerful forces**

**But nevertheless**

**It is a much needed message**

**It is the message of salvation**

**A message Satan wants hidden and behind closed doors**

**So although we will be opposed**

**Have courage**

**See how many sparrows are in the world**

**And yet not one falls to the ground without the Father's knowledge**

**Even the hairs on your head are counted**

**This gives us courage to be his disciples**

**To be his witnesses**

**Even if bodily persecutions come**

**The Father is well aware of our needs**

**And He will give us what we need**

**Have courage**

***Everyone who acknowledges Me before others,***

***I will also acknowledge before My Heavenly Father.***

***But whoever denies Me before others,***

***I will deny before My Heavenly Father***

**Words of comfort and a warning at the same time**

**Is fear a part of your life?**

**Christ gives us the remedy in our Gospel**

**For every mention of fear**

**He mentions the Father**

**The mercy of the Heavenly Father**

**This is the antidote to earthly fear**

**St John Paul II tells us:**

***Do not be afraid***

**Do not be afraid of your past**

**What lies hidden in your life**

**We all have these things in our lives**

**Past sins**

**Secrets we are ashamed of**

**And we can let Satan blackmail us with these**

**Afraid everyone will know how weak we really are**

**These can terrorize us**

**And keep us silent**

**Hoarding the talents we have been given**

**Do not be afraid to speak in the light**

**What you have heard in the darkness**

**In Christ's darkest moment**

**Upon the cross in Calvary, he called out:**

***My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?***

**Not a cry of misery, but one of mercy**

**True fear is separation from God**

**The times we let our sin and our ego lead us into isolation**

**But Christ gives us the courage to confront these things**

**Even the painful truth of ourselves**

**So we can live in His glorious truth**

**We live in a fragile world**

**A world that is fraught with danger**

**A world that desires us to be silent**

**We see it in the persecutions of Christians in the middle East**

**We see it in court decisions here in the United States**

**Attacks against marriage and the family**

**Attacks against the Church with the clerical abuse scandal**

**When fear reigns**

**Turn to the Father**

**And so we will close with a prayer of St Theresa of Avila:**

***Let nothing disturb you***

***Let nothing frighten you***

***All things are passing away***

***Patience obtains all things***

***Whoever has God lacks nothing***

***God alone suffices***

***Amen***