

Let us pray,

May we learn to be brave for the Gospel, despite our fears of the world.

Amen.

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Jesus says; Do NOT be afraid

Well I tell you what, when it comes to proclaiming the Gospel, I am always a little afraid.

I really don't like conflict.

It gives me indigestion.

But the Gospel seems to always stir up conflict.

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But first, I need to define what I mean by the Gospel.

I often hear preachers, especially online, say that they are defending the Gospel.

And they do it by bashing other groups of people, usually minorities or specific sins that are done by the minority.

The Gospel so often is portrayed as yet another law in the big book of laws that is Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

However, the Gospel transcends any levitical or deuteronomical law.

The Gospel fulfills them.

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Because, the law is but one of the avenues in which we are made right with God.

The more we lived the way God wants us to live, the closer we get to God.

At least that was the prevailing wisdom of the Jewish scholars and religious of time of Jesus and before.

But Jesus comes along proclaiming this Gospel.

In English, Good News.

And what is this Good News?

That we are no longer bound by the law, that all are saved and that all are given the love, the promise, the sanctity and the name, child of God, purely because God said so.

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And to proclaim that on the pulpit, I am not going to lie is scary.

See us humans like to create dividing walls and borders.

We are really good at saying who is in and who is out.

We do this naturally in smaller scales.

We start out life with just our family, and many of us don't really like allowing new people into our family.

But then we are thrown into a school environment.

Well we have no friends, so we get friends.

But then once we have friends, what do we usually do?

We close it off.

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These are my friends, I like this group, and I don't want new people because they might screw it up!

Humans are welcoming when we need to be, but are closed off when we can be.

And we see this then go up to the greatest heights of human leadership, government.

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Are you with my group or with that deplorable other group?  
And in religious spheres, are you with the one true church or  
those other heathens?

We love drawing lines in the sand.

But Jesus comes along and gives us the Good News.

The Good News that we are no longer bound by what we have to  
do, but by what God has already done for us.

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Our sins are no longer a determining factor on whether or not we  
are worthy of making it to heaven.

Existing is enough for God for him to reach out his hand and say,  
come home.

And it is scary to say this, especially when I mention groups of  
people that the world maybe doesn't like.

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The Good News that Jesus brings is Good News for everyone.

And Jesus says that it is especially good news for the poor, the immigrant, the outcast, the leper, and all of those that the church and the world think are less than or “sinful”.

Because the Good News that Jesus brings is for EVERYONE.

But too often we hope Jesus means, everyone, but only those we like.

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Do not be afraid, my little flock, says Jesus.

Sell all of your possessions and focus not on the world but on the world above.

Focus on what is spiritual, for there is where your true treasure is.

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I wish it was this easy, I really do.

And I am sure Jesus would say, it is easy chad!

And he is probably right of course, but it isn't easy for me.

I do care what other people think, I do care when people get mad at me, when they get mad at the gospel, when they fight amongst themselves instead of love one another.

I Care.

I get upset when people create in and out groups.

I get upset when we persecute minority groups, when we as a society are racist, homophobic, xenophobic, aporophobic.

And I get afraid, when I preach the good news, and they contradict our human natured divisions and phobias.

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Because I know that we love to hate more than we love to love.

This is a problem that has plagued humanity since the fall of Adam and Eve.

This is not unique to us.

Cain and Abel, were the first humans outside the garden, and immediately found ways to hate one another.

And to kill.

But Do NOT be afraid, little flock.

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I am afraid Jesus!

I am afraid that our love for things of this world out-way our love for things above this world.

I am afraid that our love for wealth and power, out-ways our love for the poor and the needy.

I am afraid that our love for being right, out-ways our love for relationship and companionship.

I am afraid, that our love for hating people who are different than us, out-ways your command to welcome and love the stranger and those not like us.

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The Gospel, the good news, is suppose to be liberating, freeing, the ultimate sense of peace and joy.

But it can and has turned into a way to control, create dividing lines, and judge those that we do not like or agree with.

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But Do NOT be afraid, little flock.

I am afraid Jesus.

But I don't want to be.

The Good News, the Gospel, is the ultimate statement from God that says our sins are not greater than God's love.

Hallelujah!!

Thanks be to God!!

And because of this good news, there is no more sin.

I mean no sin, that will separate us from the Grace of God.

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DO NOT BE AFRAID, little flock.

When we notice ourselves judging, condemning, criticizing.

May we be reminded of the Gospel.

May we be reminded of the Grace and Mercy that was given to us in our worst moments by our God.

That we may be reminded, to be just as Gracious and Merciful to those around us.

I am still afraid, but thanks to God, I can be brave.

Be brave, be loving, merciful, gracious, even when the world says we should be acting counter.



May God's love never feel far away and may you never be afraid of the Gospel.

Amen.