

## Wesley Celebration

July 19, 2009

### Freedom from Fear

I was looking online at work the other day, doing... research, when yahoo came up with this interesting article about fears of famous people. I had to check it out, it was very interesting to find out what freaks people out. I thought you might find these interesting. Here's some of what I found: Cameron Diaz is afraid of door handles, she won't touch them but turns it with her elbows; Billy Bob Thornton is afraid of antiques- not just any antique, French antiques creep him out.; Daniel Radcliff is afraid of clowns along with Johnny Depp; Christina Ricci is afraid of house plants. She says they are dirty and is freaked out if she has to touch one. Matthew McConaeghey is afraid of revolving doors and tunnels. The last one I thought was weird was Nicole Kidman is afraid of butterflies? How can someone be afraid of such a beautiful delicate creature? Those were just a few I thought were interesting. But fear is a very real feeling that we acquire over years of different experiences. Some fear is healthy; it's what keeps us safe. But some fear is paralyzing and can rule our lives to the point of bondage and that is not living at all.

What are the things you fear? Are they butterflies and antiques or are they more "normal" fears like: failure, disappointment, being hurt- maybe physically, emotionally or perhaps both. Maybe you fear never getting what you really want, what you really desire: love, marriage, children, peace, or \_\_\_\_\_. We are not meant to live this way, if you have acknowledged Christ in your life then you are one of God's children and he has higher plans for you than to be stuck in the past or fixated on the future. Which is what fear does, we are either afraid of what has happened before to happen again or we are afraid of what is going to happen or not going to happen. But we are called to live for today, right now in the present. That's why in the Lord's Prayer that we say each Sunday morning it says, "Give us this day our daily bread." It doesn't say give me today's and tomorrow's and the next days; but enough for today. No matter how hard we try we can't change yesterday and we can't control tomorrow so we have to live for today.

So, how do we get this freedom from fear? What do we do, not do, or let go of? One way is by turning to a book that holds many truths, many comforting words, the bible. Yes, I am one of those crazy Christ followers that believes what the bible says and takes it as truth and believes it's here as a tool to help guide us through our lives. So, by each day learning more about the kind of life God has for you and how he is willing to take care of you, you will be able to learn to let go of those fears that haunt you. For me, I know memorizing verses helps me focus. For example in Isaiah 41:10 is says, "**Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.**" There are many times that I have called upon verses that I have memorized to comfort me in times of great fear. I can remember when I was about 11 years old

and one early morning I woke up because I felt a pillow being put on my head and held there. I immediately woke up to my bed bouncing like someone was jumping on it. I was so afraid that I screamed but nothing would come out of my mouth. So, I did the next thing that came to mind to say a verse that I knew, "For God has not given us a spirit fear, but a sound mind." I also kept repeating flee from me, you have no power over me. I was so scared, it finally stopped and at age 11 I got in my parents bed and couldn't sleep the rest of the night. Even at a young age I knew the power of scripture, I believe it got me through that horrific ordeal, as it has on many occasions since that night.

This leads me to another way to find freedom from fear which is prayer. Prayer is not a laundry list of the things that you want but it is a time to communicate with God what is on your heart and what you are going through; much of what you would do with your best friend or your spouse. God seeks to have that close of a relationship with you that you share those deep dark secrets with him and that he can speak back into your life. I am not talking about an audible voice, but if he does, good for you. But I am more speaking of the way he communicates to us through other people, songs, experiences, and of course through his word. I have talked about prayer many times and believe in its power. In Isaiah 34:4, "**I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears.**" If you pray he will answer, it may not be immediate, or the answer you want but he will answer you and will free you from your fears as long as you let him.

The next piece is to talk about it. By keeping it tight in your heart you allow the fear to overwhelm you. But when you give it a name or when you speak about it, suddenly it's not all that bad. I think this is the case for many of us because we think we are the only ones who feel this way. By finding that trusting person and talking our fears out, it allows us to work through the fear and why we feel that way. It also might be an opportunity for you to connect with another person who is going through the same issues or has gone through it and they may have some insight for you. Secrets are powerful until they are told and then they have no power. God calls us into fellowship with one another; even in the beginning with Adam God wanted a partner for him, someone to help him. We are not alone in our journey if we will only reach out to one another; we are the body of Christ. I do realize that what I am saying to do could be for some of you one of your fears. But I say again live in the present not the past. I am not discounting the hurts you may have experienced but it's time to stop living in fear and start living in freedom.

I also don't want you to think that these are pat answers or some super spiritual advice. I am not here to show you how to put a band aid on an open wound. But I just know for me, my family, and many of my friends this is how we have experienced the freedom that Christ promises because we are his. In Isaiah 43:1, "**But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.'**" I don't stand here today and say that I am free from all fear; it's like anything in life. Once you learn a lesson there seems to be another on the way. My fear that I have been fighting is that we will never conceive again. I struggle daily- but daily

I remind myself of what the Lord has promised in 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:18-19, **“<sup>18</sup>There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.”**

He demonstrated that love to us when he went to the cross for all of us. Tonight we are going to celebrate that love again with communion. To me this is the perfect way to start anew accepting the love and gifts Christ offers through his sacrifice. There is no fear in love.