Fear Not, Don’t Stay in the Waiting Place!

Selected Verses

Today I am going to take a break from our study in the book of Romans and I am going to share a bit more about how I believe we, as Christians should be living. I’m not posing some methodical approach to doing everything right and making everyone happy. God knows that I have not come close to doing everything right and I definitely have not made all people happy.

As I thought about what I wanted to share this week, a lot of different things crossed my mind. The two things that stuck out to me was the importance of living life with passion and without fear. One Author said:

“To live ordinary life prudence is enough; to live extraordinary life passion is must.”

― Amit Kalantri, Wealth of Words

Another said:

“No one can predict the quantity of a lifespan but we can affect our quality of life exponentially.”

― Johnnie Dent Jr.

And one other wrote:

“... anything can happen at any time. Safety is not everything. There's more to life than being alive.”

― Nicola Yoon (Auteur)

The reason I have been thinking about this is because when some have asked me how I’ve been doing since Coronavirus I have told them I felt like I was trapped in the “Waiting place” in the Dr. Seuss book, “Oh the places you’ll go.” Which prompts me to give thanks to Mrs. Nybo, Ms. Neimann, Mr. Solberg, Ms. Hilden, and especially Sue Stewart. These were my Jr. High and High School English teachers. I don’t know how they put up with me and I’m so thankful to them, because I never would have guessed I’d be writing an 8-10 page paper every week. I said I am especially thankful to Sue Stewart because, for graduation she gave me the book “Oh the Places You’ll Go.” Maybe she gave it to everyone in her classes or maybe her criteria was the difficult ones…I’m going to read it to you now.

Oh, the Places You'll Go!

by

Dr. Seuss

Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You're off to Great Places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself

any direction you choose.

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.

About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."

With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,

you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.

And you may not find any

you'll want to go down.

In that case, of course,

you'll head straight out of town.

It's opener there

in the wide open air.

Out there things can happen

and frequently do

to people as brainy

and footsy as you.

And then things start to happen,

don't worry. Don't stew.

Just go right along.

You'll start happening too.

OH!

THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

You'll be on your way up!

You'll be seeing great sights!

You'll join the high fliers

who soar to high heights.

You won't lag behind, because you'll have the speed.

You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead.

Wherever you fly, you'll be best of the best.

Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.

Except when you don't.

Because, sometimes, you won't.

I'm sorry to say so

but, sadly, it's true

that Bang-ups

and Hang-ups

can happen to you.

You can get all hung up

in a prickle-ly perch.

And your gang will fly on.

You'll be left in a Lurch.

You'll come down from the Lurch

with an unpleasant bump.

And the chances are, then,

that you'll be in a Slump.

And when you're in a Slump,

you're not in for much fun.

Un-slumping yourself

is not easily done.

You will come to a place where the streets are not marked.

Some windows are lighted. But mostly they're darked.

A place you could sprain both your elbow and chin!

Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?

How much can you lose? How much can you win?

And IF you go in, should you turn left or right...

or right-and-three-quarters? Or, maybe, not quite?

Or go around back and sneak in from behind?

Simple it's not, I'm afraid you will find,

for a mind-maker-upper to make up his mind.

You can get so confused

that you'll start in to race

down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace

and grind on for miles cross weirdish wild space,

headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.

The Waiting Place...

...for people just waiting.

Waiting for a train to go

or a bus to come, or a plane to go

or the mail to come, or the rain to go

or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow

or the waiting around for a Yes or No

or waiting for their hair to grow.

Everyone is just waiting.

Waiting for the fish to bite

or waiting for the wind to fly a kite

or waiting around for Friday night

or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake

or a pot to boil, or a Better Break

or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants

or a wig with curls, or Another Chance.

Everyone is just waiting.

**NO!**

**That's not for you!**

Somehow you'll escape

all that waiting and staying

You'll find the bright places

where Boom Bands are playing.

With banner flip-flapping,

once more you'll ride high!

Ready for anything under the sky.

Ready because you're that kind of a guy!

Oh, the places you'll go! There is fun to be done!

There are points to be scored. There are games to be won.

And the magical things you can do with that ball

will make you the winning-est winner of all.

Fame! You'll be as famous as famous can be,

with the whole wide world watching you win on TV.

Except when they don't

Because, sometimes they won't.

I'm afraid that some times

you'll play lonely games too.

Games you can't win

'cause you'll play against you.

All Alone!

Whether you like it or not,

Alone will be something

you'll be quite a lot.

And when you're alone, there's a very good chance

you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants.

There are some, down the road between hither and yon,

that can scare you so much you won't want to go on.

But on you will go

though the weather be foul.

On you will go

though your enemies prowl.

On you will go

though the Hakken-Kraks howl.

Onward up many

a frightening creek,

though your arms may get sore

and your sneakers may leak.

On and on you will hike,

And I know you'll hike far

and face up to your problems

whatever they are.

You'll get mixed up, of course,

as you already know.

You'll get mixed up

with many strange birds as you go.

So be sure when you step.

Step with care and great tact

and remember that Life's

a Great Balancing Act.

Just never foget to be dexterous and deft.

And never mix up your right foot with your left.

And will you succeed?

Yes! You will, indeed!

(98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)

KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!

So...

be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray

or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,

You're off the Great Places!

Today is your day!

Your mountain is waiting.

**So...get on your way!**

I read this to you today to introduce my sermon and to confess to you that in some ways I’ve been letting myself be stuck in the waiting place. And maybe, in light of the times, you have too. But you don’t have to.

Our lives are meant to be lived! Fear should not keep us from living. There is a lot at stake. Wear your mask, stay 6’ apart, wash your hands, and cover your cough, but I would worry a little less about the affects of Coronavirus and a little more about the affects of complacency. As Erwin McManus once wrote:

“The tragedy of a life that is never fully lived is not simply the loss of that one life. The tragedy is the endless number of lives that would have been forever changed if we had chosen to live differently.”

As another author wrote:

“One who is not afraid to die lives, and one who is afraid to live dies.”

― Matshona Dhliwayo

A writer named Karen Essex had one of her characters say:

“All my life I have known fear. But I have acted in spite of it. I urge you to do the same…it is preferable to die rather than to live fearing death.”

― Karen Essex, Pharaoh

We, as Christians, should be a steady example to the rest of world. We should be steadfast in living without fear.

Don’t put your life on hold, live it well and do not be afraid. I know I haven’t quoted the Bible yet today but there are no shortage of verses that talk about living without fear.

Isaiah 35:4

4 say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.”

John 14:27

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Joshua 1:9

9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Matthew 6:34

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Isaiah 43:1

1 But now, this is what the LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

Psalm 23:4

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 34:4

4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

Psalm 94:19

19 When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.

Romans 8:38-39

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalm 27:1

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?

1 Peter 5:6-7

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Psalm 118:6

6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

2 Timothy 1:7

7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Psalm 115:11

11 You who fear him, trust in the LORD— he is their help and shield.

Psalm 103:17

17 But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’s love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children’s children—

Psalm 112:1

1 Praise the LORD. Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands.

Deuteronomy 31:6

6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

1 Chronicles 28:20

20 David also said to Solomon his son, “Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished.

Psalm 56:3-4

3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. 4 In God, whose word I praise— in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

Isaiah 41:10

10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:13

13 For I am the LORD your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

Matthew 10:28

28 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.

1 Peter 3:13-14

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats ; do not be frightened.”

Romans 8:15

15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

1 John 4:18

18 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.

It’s true all of these verses have different contexts, but they all drive home the same point. Do not be afraid.

If you are living dominated by fear, than you aren’t living. Live well, in spite of fear.

God’s love for us can cast out all fear and open up the abundant passion that life is meant to be lived with.

Seek justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God.

Love your neighbor, let your gentleness be evident to all, make disciples as you embrace and enjoy life. Do whatever you do for the glory of God…And do not fear, because His perfect love for you has cast out every reason for it.

Satan is a thief who wants to steal, kill and destroy. Don’t let Him do it. Trust Jesus and get out of the waiting place.