

## The Fear of Uncertainty

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**Sermon Synopsis:** Uncertainty leads to fear which keeps us from approaching God in prayer. But learning how to slow down and listen can lead us to experience love

**Themes:** fear, love, listening

**Intro: ?**

### Everyone is stoked when things are good

And all were **astonished at the majesty of God** (Luke 9:43a, ESV)

Majesty (megaleiotēs) = power

Why is everyone astonished? Because they just saw a display of God's power.

He's doing powerful things. And in a way they can understand.

READ: **We have preconceived notions of how God must move based on what we think is a measure of success**

### God's plans don't always seem good to us

But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: **The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.**" (Luke 9:44, ESV)

In other words, he's saying, "I just want to get your attention with stuff like that, but there is an even deeper source of (megaleiotēs) power available to humanity...and it is going to be seen in me being handed over to die"<sup>1</sup>

We see their confusion:

But **they did not understand** this saying, and **it was concealed from them**, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. (Luke 9:45, ESV)

Not a lack of understanding in his content—oh they got it. They just couldn't put together how the deliver of Israel was going to die<sup>2</sup>—**that doesn't fit my idea of success!**

Who is keeping them from perceiving? God? Probably not.

1. Jesus seems to assume that they can understand if they just "let these words sink in"
2. "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:10)

It is likely "rooted in their failure thus far to embrace fully" the plan and kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, it just doesn't fit their future plans. This creates uncertainty. And uncertainty can lead to a dangerous detour...

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## **Uncertainty can lead to FEAR**

Like the disciples, we don't always know what's up ahead.

But we're control freaks. We want to plan it out.

When things don't go according to plan, we freak out.

**How is God going to move in my life if X is happening?**

**What's going to happen to me after X?**

Fear blocks us up from understanding, and asking

What's the opposite of fear? Intimacy.

Close familiarity or friendship—a loving relationship

## **Uncertainty can also be calmed with LOVE**

1 John 4:18 (NIV)

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.

## **How to move past fear into intimacy**

Jesus said to his disciples, **"Let these words sink into your ears"** (Luke 9:44, ESV)

Listen to Me. It's hard to do this when you're blocked up by fear of uncertainty.

Uncertainty leads to fear which keeps us from approaching God in prayer.

But perfect love drives out fear. Notice the trajectory in the disciples over time with Jesus...

**API!**

Luke 10:23 (NIV)

He turned to his disciples and said privately, **"Blessed are the eyes that see what you see."**

Luke 18:34 (NIV)

**The disciples did not understand any of this.** Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

Luke 24:16-32 (NIV)

**but they were kept from recognizing him.**

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

"What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. **The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.** And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself...**

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. **Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him,** and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "**Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road** and opened the Scriptures to us?"

#### Luke 24:44-49 (NIV)

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

**Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.** He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

The only thing that can save you from the gripping fear of uncertainty is a personal, interactive listening relationship with Christ. This is available to you now.

But you must practice slowing down and letting his words sink in. Listening.

#### **Let's start first with our hearts**

- What are you most afraid of right now?
- What are you uncertain about?
- What unanswered questions do you have?

Resist the urge to fix them. Simply acknowledge them and bring them into the presence of God in honesty.

I'll come back later to lead us forward in responsive corporate prayer

[Song]

After bringing our fears before God, let's now turn away from them and turn towards Him by confessing together where we've accepted those detours rather than life in Him.

### **A prayer of Confession<sup>4</sup>**

**ALL:** Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

We also remember that God does not leave us in confession, but forgives, restores, and lifts us up. Let's declare his love over us today.

### **A Prayer of Assurance**

**ALL:** The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103.8, 10-12)

<sup>1</sup> Garland. 404

<sup>2</sup> Bock. 177

<sup>3</sup> Green. 390

<sup>4</sup> <http://thirdmill.org/files/english/html/worship/pray.confess.html>