



Fear Not Exposure

by Pastor Doug Lutz

I heard it said that there is a “fear not” passage in the Bible for every day of the year. Whether this is true or not, here’s one for today.

I guess I’ll start from the beginning: Genesis. The first mention of *fear* in the Bible comes after Adam and Eve ate forbidden fruit. We are told that when they heard God walking through the garden, they hid themselves out of *fear* of being found naked (Gen. 3:8).

The next “fear not” takes place much later. I had to fast-forward about 2000 years from the time of Adam and Eve’s first experience with fear before finding the words “fear not” spoken to a guy named Abram. In Genesis 15, Abram argues in a dream with God about being childless; without an heir to his name.

I don’t know about you but arguing with God would be my flash point for fear. But Abram seems to be more afraid of being an heir-less nomad—an un-father—than he is with risking God’s ire in an argument. And maybe that’s the point I should learn.

Abram was confident enough in his relationship with God that his only true fear was not possessing what God promised in the first place—a blood-born heir. Perhaps “fear not” is more about trusting God and His promises than it is a scolding command to get with the program... or else! Then again, perhaps it was a sort of reminder to Abram not to take matters into his own hands—a temptation of *non-trust* that makes us all nakedly vulnerable... and which got our first parents into the hot mess where we often find ourselves.

Fear not exposure.

Prayer resolve: Today I choose to trust Jesus over my greatest vulnerability.

Hungry for Life!

Things I'm Thinking About

Here is what I am hearing, learning and thinking about as we move through our current crisis into a re-calibrated future and beyond. Although we don't know for sure when we can meet again face-to-face, we need to prepare ourselves now for what might be different later. So here is this week's thought I want to put forward for consideration and prayer.

Disrupt or Be Disrupted

If we're learning anything from this global disruption, we're learning that the church's mission doesn't change even when life as "normal" does. I'm hearing stories about people reaching out in new ways. Many are learning new things about their neighbors because they're actually talking. Several anti-internet folks are gathering online for the first time. Still others are volunteering to help people they don't know and making new friends along the way.

While innovation and experimentation has been a top priority for the past several weeks as businesses and churches scrambled to meet the needs of their "clients" and stay afloat, the human contact radius and impact on our community has expanded exponentially beyond business as usual. If anything good can be said about this pandemic, it is that many of us have actually got out of our "comfortable pew" to reach outward in ways we either hadn't considered or pursued before now.

So, you will understand when I say that one of the worst things we can do as we talk about physically coming back together is to abandon what we have learned and assume that we can go back to doing things the way we did before COVID-19. If we don't begin to intentionally disrupt our routines in an effort to stay on mission, the unwanted disruptions that inevitably come our way will catch us off-guard and unprepared to respond more quickly and naturally in missional ways toward our neighbors.

What can we do to intentionally disrupt our past or "normal" routines in order to stay on mission? Here are at least 3 ideas I'm thinking about:

1. **Be Pioneers not Settlers.** As we move toward a future that is different from the past, *what* or *how* we do what we do isn't as important as *why* we do it. But if we aren't clear about *why* we do what we do and for whom we are doing it, we can easily become *settlers* that take the path of least resistance making a home for ourselves rather being *pioneers* on a mission to create an outpost for others. Pioneers are disruptors, forging new paths for others to follow. Pioneers ask: What obstacles can I remove to prepare a way for others to follow?

2. **Take Responsibility not Opportunity.** It has been said that obstacles of the past become opportunities for the future. While there is some truth in the statement, real heroes of the faith view their deeds of valor as a responsibility of good stewardship, not simply an opportunity to be heroic. That said, a responsible disruptor would not wait for obstacles to appear before acting. Responsible disruptors ask: What can we do now to pre-empt obstacles to mission before they arise?

3. **Focus on Mission not Methods.** I know I probably sound like a broken record on this but unless we are intentional about disrupting or at least experimenting with our methods, we will inevitably fall into what Peter Greer calls "mission drift." Mission drift is the gravitational pull of every organization to fade off course from the original mission of its founders. Missional disruptors ask: Are we watering dirt or bearing fruit consistent with our mission mandate?

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