

“Fear’s Antidote”

Luke 24:36b-49

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It should not come as a surprise to us that the disciples struggled to believe in the Resurrection. We understand them, don't we? We want to believe, but even here within the walls of Christ's church, we live somewhere in between belief and non-belief. So, the question is, why? Why are we, good church going folks, somewhere between belief and non-belief?

A sad event occurred at the zoo in Omaha, A decade or so before we lived there. The zoo's wallabies encountered a pack of stray dogs and all 23 of the lil Kangaroo like marsupials died. Ironically, the dogs never touched the wallabies the dogs were unable to get inside the enclosure. You see, they didn't have to.... Overcome with fear, the wallabies died from crashing into the fence and one another. They were literally scared to death. These poor, cute lil wallabies affirm the consuming strength and intensity of fear.¹



In my counseling and coaching I've known husbands and wives who were afraid to stand up to their spouses, employees afraid to stand up to their employers, sales people who have failed in their work because they feared rejection. I know of young people who have messed up their lives because they were afraid to say **"No."** Married folks who have gotten caught up in infidelity out of fear that they are no longer desirable, Old people who have given up on life because they no longer have confidence in their abilities. The list goes on and on of the lives that fear has crippled.

When we have fear, we have a false view of reality. Fear makes us give up before we even begin. It causes us to take an alternate route rather than the road that leads to our destination. It makes us see obstacles rather than opportunities.



Some of you may have read about the hysteria that swept our country 70 some years ago when towns began fluoridating their water supply. The health office in one small town received dozens of complaints that the fluoridated water was discoloring their saucepans, that it was giving them digestive troubles. One woman complained that the **"fluoride water"** had caused her dentures to crack. But all of these complaints came in (wait for it) 😊 before the city even began to fluoridate. 😊 Fear is our enemy. It distorts reality. When it becomes a pervasive influence in our lives, it becomes destructive.

Knowing this, Christ asks, ***"Why are you fearful?"***



Consider the African impala which can leap to a height of over 10 feet and cross a distance of greater than 30 feet. Yet these creatures can be kept in an enclosure with a mere 3-foot solid wall. You see, an impala will NOT jump if it can NOT see where its feet will land.²

Christ adds to, *"Why are you fearful" - "look at & touch my hands and feet"*



I was interested to read a little tidbit recently about

General Norman Schwarzkopf. Someone asked the General how he was adjusting to retirement. *"One year ago,"* he answered, *"I could issue an order and 541,000 people would obey it."* 😄 *Today I can't get a plumber to come to my house."* 😄 General Schwarzkopf is finding out what it's like to feel powerless, at least relative to his former post as commander of our troops. Many people today feel that way; not only with regards to getting a plumber, but in dealing with all of life. They feel overwhelmed, defeated, powerless. They are troubled by their inability to get control over their own lives.



Christ adds to, *"Why are you fearful"* and *"look at & touch my hands and feet"* - *"have you anything to eat"* and then he eats the boiled fish!

Just 3 or 4 years ago Jen went to a parent meeting at **Omaha Country Club**. Josh was going to be a caddy there that Summer. Now Jen hardly ever texts me, but she did as soon as she walked in the door. She texted, *"Just walked in the door with Warren Buffet...."* Oh and just in case you're wondering, Josh never caddied for the Sage of Omaha, Warren goes there to play bridge.

But that got me to thinking, visualize in your mind that Warren Buffet comes to you and says, *"I have decided to legally adopt you."* Then he adds, *"That means that someday everything I have will be yours."* Think how your life would be changed.



Now imagine that the Creator of Heaven and Earth comes to you and says the same thing.

I'd like you to meet my new friend, Coleen Briggs! I reached out to her to ask permission to use the art you see on the bulletin cover and or on your screen. It's profound, don't you think? Well, just wait until you hear the story that inspired it. I have just a snippet of it, Colleen's writing a whole book about it. I encourage you to sign up for her newsletter to find out more and help her along the way. There's a link in the worship invitation email.



Coleen writes, *“There, in the open space of a dirt volleyball court on the edge of Nairobi, with my head between my knees, I wept inconsolably.”*³

Yes, it was yet another delay in the grueling 5 months she had been waiting to adopt their daughter from a Kenyan orphanage. But more than that, it was being robbed along with 20 other adoptive parents by their first lawyer. It was the whispers that the Kenyan courts were no longer granting guardianship to foreigners and news that Kenyan laws were being rapidly re-interpreted. It was the days of waiting turning into weeks, and weeks stretched into months. It was being separated from her husband and 7-year old son who remained in the US for work and school. It was her adoptive daughter's hits, bite attempts and incessant cries typical behavioral patterns of a child who has lost birthparents all previous caregivers thereafter and is fearful of attaching again. It was maintaining two households exhausting their resources to the point of being homeless. It was lying in a bed her Kenyan friends gave her listening to rats rummaging through the plastic bags where she stored food overnight. It was their lawyer's news of one more delay that crushed her, pushed her over the edge, causing her to utterly free-fall into a dark, fear-filled abyss of a suffocating nightmare.



On the day that her last shred of hope faded away, when fear of losing everything threatened to overwhelm her, Colleen came to realize that she was being carried. She was being carried by a God, who had shielded her last flicker of hope. She was being carried by a God who had provided for her and her families every need through their new Kenyan family. She was being carried by a God who had adopted her as God's own daughter.

Coleen thought she was there to adopt their fourth child, which they eventually did, but what she got was something we **all** desperately need, Coleen got to know deep down in her gut what it's really like to be God's adopted daughters and sons.

That's what Jesus is saying with all this talk about the law and the prophets, and suffering and rising and repentance and forgiveness. That's what Jesus is saying when he says, stay here until you have been clothed with power from on high!

Friends, Fear is our enemy whenever we experience it, we need to pause, we need to pray so we are reminded, deep down in our guts that we are God's adopted daughters and sons clothed with the power from on high. Knowing that, believing that, having faith in that deep down in your guts is Fear's Antidote.

Amen?!

¹ Robert Handly and Pauline Neff. BEYOND FEAR. (New York: Rawson Associates, 1987) p. 12

² King Duncan. *Freed from Fear*. Collected Sermons.

³ <https://colleenbriggs.com/2013/05/08/carried-a-moment-in-our-daughters-adoption/>

