

Message Transcript

WHY YOU ARE AFRAID AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT | THE URGENT KINGDOM | CARL KUHL | JULY 18 & 19, 2026

Traders, it is great to be back here. I love this church for so many reasons. I love your pastor. He's a good friend of mine. But I love this church very deeply. I love a church that has a true hunger for the Word of God that says, "Hey, we're going to study one book of the Bible and if it takes us a year, that's fine. We're going all in." I love that.

I love the Difference Makers around here. I love seeing the people who are wearing the Traders Point Kids' t-shirts getting ready to serve. Love you guys. Let's give it up for those people. I love the generosity that this church really sets the pace for in the American church at large.

If we haven't met, my name is Carl Kuhl. I was here back in February. I've got a wife, Lindsay. I've got four kids from a sophomore in college through eighth grade this year. And last summer we got to do something that was kind of a dream of mine for many years. Our family got on a plane, we flew out west, and we hiked the Half Dome in Yosemite National Park.

Now, if you are not familiar with this, the Half Dome is a domed mountain that geologists say thousands of years ago a glacier came through, cut off half of it and created what we now call Yosemite valley. The hike is an eight mile, 5,000 foot ascent hike to the top, punctuated by a steep climb up the Dome, itself, using a cable system.

So, my family gets up at 3:58 p.m. We load up as much water as we can carry. We turn on our head lamps and we start going. Now, I've just got to get out of the way that I knew one day my kids would pass me by in physical ability, I just didn't expect it to happen in my 40s. Because I'm ashamed to say that we took a lot of breaks and most of them were my fault. I'm old and I'm slow, you all. It surprised me.

But we saw amazing waterfalls. We had great views. We had some good conversations and the best of God's creation. Then we got to the Dome itself. And it is so steep. It's 60 degrees in some places. They have drilled cables into it that someone who is not a real climber really needs to use to get to the top. So, we start and go slow.



And my middle son is pretty intimidated. I mean he's outwardly afraid. He's got his Good Good golf hat on. And some college guys coming down at the same time we're going up could just see the fear on his face. So, they try to give him a pep talk. They say, "Good Good. What's up Good Good? What's your handicap?" And he was 12 at the time. And he goes, "Three point one." They said, "Good Good. You're good. What's your Instagram?" "My dad won't let me have Instagram." "Oh, Good Good you've got to find more followers."

They could tell he was scared. They said, "Good Good, you can't wear that hat and be scared on this mountain. You've got to just go and smile, man. This is what Good Good is for." And that helped to encourage him on.

We finally made it to the top. We take some pictures. We read a Psalm out of the Bible together. We're kind of hanging out basking in the glory and awe of God. And I am in awe of my feelings. I'm experiencing the best of God's creation with my favorite people on the planet. Then we hike back down nine miles. We stuff our faces with pizza. We collapse into bed at the end of the night utterly exhausted.

Now, that was all amazing. Two weeks later a buddy of mine from out of town was passing through. He stayed at my house. And we were talking about our summer. He said, "Oh, a couple of weeks ago my family went to Yosemite. I said, "Awesome. What did you think?" He said, "Man, the Half Dome was amazing." And before I could ask any more he said, "Nobody in my family wanted to hike it so I didn't go up, but it was beautiful."

I was speechless. Because in my mind I'm thinking, "You missed it. You've got to go back. Experience the mountain with fear and exhaustion and awe."

"And one of us took pictures while we sipped a latte."

My oldest son has a name for people who don't climb the mountain. He calls them valley dwellers. The people who settle for a view of the mountain instead of experiencing the adventure of the mountain, who want to stand in awe of the mountain but don't want to be vulnerable and to be put in their place by the mountain.

And I don't want you to be a valley dweller in God's creation. But, most important, I don't want you to be a valley dweller in your walk with God. I think there are several reasons captured in that story that can make you a valley dweller with God.



One is that you have people who hold you back. Some of your friends will show you your future. If you surround yourself with people who are lazy, evil, content to coast you'll do the same.

They've actually replicated this study multiple different ways and multiple different times. They do it again every three years or so. Researchers can look at the lives of your 10 closest friends and not even know anything about you and you are the average of your 10 closest friends.

So, your fitness level is the average of your 10 closest friends. Your social media use or how often you play video games is the average of your 10 closest friends. They've even done this with income. If you average your 10 closest friends income, it's your income, which means we all need to go find ourselves richer friends. That's our take-away from church today.

So, people can hold you back. Another thing that can hold you back is prior decisions. If you've neglected your physical health for a decade you can't climb the mountain. And past decisions, regardless of health, can hold you back from what you want to do in the present in all kinds of ways.

But the biggest thing that holds us back is fear: fear of the unknown, fear of what could go wrong, fear of just doing something new. Fear.

There is actually a study that UCLA does every year. They have been doing it for decades. They ask 10 to 24-year-olds, ages 10 through 24, this question: What is most important to you? They come up with a big list and every year for decades the top three answers in some order: something about finding my purpose, something about success and money, and something about having close relationships. What's most important?

This year for the first time ever the result was different. When they asked 10 to 24-year-olds: What is the most important thing to you in life? Here's the number one answer this year: To be safe.

And that makes sense because people might freak you out about how we handle COVID and helicopter parenting and safe spaces and everybody gets a trophy. What's that at work? It's fear.

Scripture talks a lot about fear. You may know that the number one most repeated command in all of the Bible is simply: Do not fear. But how do you do that? Because you've got a job interview this week and you need that raise. How do you deal with what the company decides?



You're close to retirement. You are not sure if you have enough. You're afraid. There is that girl that you are friends with. You want to ask her out. Your palms get sweaty just thinking about it. You need to confess that thing. You know. But what if? You want to ask your spouse to go to marriage counseling. Maybe they will blow up.

We all feel the fear. And fear keeps us from experiencing the life that Jesus promises us.

So, providentially, we are coming to a passage in Mark, chapter 6 today. It's a story about Jesus and it's going to show us how to deal with our fear. Interestingly, we won't get rid of it, but we will redirect it onto something else. And if you are able to redirect your fear, you will not be a valley dweller, but will experience the full life that God has for you.

So, let's look at the Scripture. Mark, chapter 6, verse 45:

"Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home." (NLT)

So, remember... If you've been here you know where we are catching up from. Jesus' cousin and His forerunner in the ministry, John the Baptist, died. Jesus wants to get away. He is grieving. A big crowd finds out where He is and follows Him—5,000 people. Jesus has compassion on them so He spends all day teaching them. Then He has compassion since He kept them so long that they are hungry, so He finds one boy with a lunch. He multiplies it miraculously, and uses that one lunch to feed 5,000 people. That's where we are picking up from.

"After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray." Mark 6:46 (NLT)

Jesus knows He needs a minute. He's exhausted in all of the ways. He knows that to love your neighbor as yourself means that you've got to take care of yourself: heart, soul, mind, and strength. So, He sends His boys, He sends His disciples on ahead. He says, "Hey, I need to recalibrate—47:

"Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, Jesus was alone on land. He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water." (NLT)

This is wild. This is awesome. I hope in heaven... I don't know if this is how it works, I hope in heaven we get to ask Jesus questions like, "Jesus, can You tell me what was going through Your mind in this moment?" Because we know He was fully man and fully God.



I want to know if He was thinking, "Oh, the guys are going to love this one." Or, was it so fun that He was literally laughing as He's walking on water? He's like, "I'm walking on water!" Or, because He made the water was it like no big deal at all and He's as excited to do that as we get excited when we get to walk on a sidewalk? I don't know. I want to find out.

I did see this AI video that showed an Olympic swim race and Jesus was in it in a robe. And they blew the whistle, or gun, or whatever, and all the swimmers jump in and Jesus runs across and Jesus won the race. It was a world record. It was awesome.

But I want to ask Jesus about this one. I love this next phrase too. He's on the water:

"He intended to go past them," Mark 6:48 (NLT)

Like, isn't that hilarious? He knows they are struggling. Seems to me like, "I've got TSA pre-check. So I hope you make your flight." He's just going. It goes on, verse 49:

"When they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in fear thinking he was a ghost." (NLT)

I'd be terrified too if I saw something walking on the water.

There is a debate in my family, my broader family, siblings and parents, about the existence of a ghost in the guest bedroom of my parents' house. Now, just to put it out there, I am on team, "All of y'all are crazy." But my sisters and my mom are all on team ghost.

And it started because in the closet and in the drawer of the cabinet sometimes there is a knocking sound. And my sister, when she spent the night there, thinks there's a ghost there and the knocking kept her up until two in the morning. And finally, she said, "Stop. I'm going to sleep now." And she says it stopped.

And then one time, her little daughter, my niece, was spending the night there and the next morning she said to my parents, "Who knocks in that bedroom at night?"

And at one point there was a family discussion about it and my mom said, "I think my mother has come back from the grave to haunt me." And somebody said, "Well, do you have anything of your mom's in there?" And she said, "Yeah, my mom's wedding dress is the closet."



And somebody said, "Well, move it downstairs and see what happens." So, she moved it downstairs and the next time we were together my mom said, "There was knocking in the basement this time." I think they are all crazy.

Now, really quickly, I tell this because we know from Scripture, ghosts are real. Number one, in the book of Samuel, Saul uses a medium to call up the spirit of the dead Samuel and communicate with him.

Number two: When Jesus raises from the grave and sees the disciples, here's what He says:

"Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do." Luke 24:39 (NLT)

He didn't say, "Guys, I'm not a ghost. There is no such thing as a ghost." He says, "I'm not a ghost because look at this."

So, I'm not here mocking that there is an idea of a legit spirit realm that God warns us not to meddle with. I just think that it is highly unlikely that my grandmother decided to torment my mom with little knocks. I mean, I'm not going to spend the night in that room, over my dead body.

But these disciples are the same way and say it's a ghost. I don't know. Verse 50:

"They were all terrified when they saw him. But Jesus spoke to them at once. 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'Take courage! I am here!'"

I love this. Jesus says, "Don't be afraid of the unknown because you have Me. He replaces their terror with His presence, 51:

"Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were totally amazed, for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves." (NLT)

Turning one boy's lunch into enough to feed 5,000.

"Their hearts were too hard to take it in." Mark 6:51-52 (NLT)

Sometimes our ability to sense God isn't based on what He's doing now rather about how we've hardened ourselves when He tried to speak to us in our past. Next verse:



"After they crossed the lake they landed at Gennesaret. They brought the boat to shore and climbed out."

Look back at verse 50. This is our key verse.

"They were all terrified when they saw him. But Jesus spoke to them at once. 'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'Take courage! I am here!'"

They were terrified of a ghost. He tells them to change that.

I read a book two or three years ago called Surprised By Fear and it really messed with me. In it the author argued that the number one missing thing from Christians in the western world is a fear of God.

After reading the book I thought, "I need to do a deep dive on this myself to see if the author is crazy." I bought a new Bible for that year and I spent the entire year underlining everything the Bible says about fear. And even just flipping through the Psalms it's everywhere.

"Your terrors have paralyzed me." "Let them be terrified forever," the Scriptures say. "No wondered You are greatly feared." "All the kings of the earth fear Him." "May they fear You as long as the sun shines." Almost, literally, every page.

1 Peter 2:17 is a powerful verse on the fear of God. It says this:

"...fear God, honor the king." (NASB)

And what we do is we reverse it. We honor God. We sing songs to Him. We serve at church. We are respectful of how we talk about Him. And we fear what is in front of us. We fear the prognosis. We fear the public opinion. We fear the Instagram comments. We fear the jury's decision.

Peter says, "No, no, no, no. Fear God, honor the king. Fear God, honor what is in front of you."

See, what I've been learning in the Scriptures is that if I fear God I don't fear anything else. If we put God in His right place, everything else gets put in its right place.

Mark 6: Why should they not be afraid? Because Jesus had shown up and He said, "Be a lot more terrified of one who walks on water than what that water can do to you." You will fear something. It will be God or it will be what's in front of you.



I've had a lot of well-meaning Christians over the years say, "Well, when it talks about fearing God, it's about awe or reverence or just taking God seriously."

"Fear (Greek: "phobos") God, honor the king."

But in Peter, the Greek word for it is phobos. It's where we get our word for phobia. It's overwhelming fear. It can be translated as dread, or terror. And it's not how we think of God. Sometimes it's not how we want to think of God. But I think it makes sense.

I remember when I got certified to scuba dive years ago. We did most of our training in a swimming pool. But then our final check out dive was in the ocean itself. And as we went out on the boat the instructor explained to the six of us he said, "Hey, here's the deal. There is no reef here. There is nothing interesting at the bottom. So, there won't be any fish here. We purposely brought you to a space here where you don't see anything to do some technical things as a final test. We're going to go down 40 feet below at the sandy bottom."

And one of the things he was having us do was take off our mask, have it fill up with water, and then put it back on and fill it with air and give him a thumbs up. He would give us a thumbs up.

We go down to the bottom. Like he said, nothing around. No fish, nothing. And one by one we're just doing the technical things. And when it gets to my turn, I take my mask off, it fills with water. I put it back on. Clear it. I can see.

And when I looked at my instructor he's not looking at me. I look at the other divers. They are not looking at me. They are all looking over here. I look over here and about 40 feet away is a fully grown hammerhead shark just lazily swimming by. And we were all captivated. And we stared at it until it just disappeared into the mist that is the ocean.

I had two reactions at that moment. One is, "Wow!" I was in awe of God's creation. He is so creative to place such a powerful creature in its natural habitat. My second reaction was maybe not terror, but terror. Like, "Does he have a brother somewhere around?" I kept looking around. I was ready to get back up in the boat sooner than later.

But that experience captures what we experience when we encounter the living God. Terror. Because He holds the world in His hand. Who has known His mind? We are nothing. He could crush us. And at the same time wonder and awe because He is the most beautiful, kind, tender, and loving thing that we have ever experienced.



Psalm 34 talks about the fear of God. I'm going to show you verses 7, 9, & 11. "For the angel of the Lord," The angel of the Lord is Jesus. Jesus "is a guard. he surrounds and defends all who fear him."

"Fear the Lord, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need."

"Come, my children, and listen to me, and I will teach you to fear the Lord."

So, he goes, "Eyes up. Fear the Lord." I want to skip to three verses earlier. Verse 4 of this same Psalm:

"I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears." (NLT)

So, in verse 4 he says, "God makes me not afraid of anything." Then in verses 7, 9, & 11 he mentions four times that it is good to have a fear of God. So again, you see the same thing. You will fear something. You can fear what's in front of you or you can let the fear of God drive out fear of anything else. It's like Psalm 118, verse 6 says, "What can man do to me?"

My favorite verse on the fear of God actually comes in Genesis 31. It's said by Jacob who is the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham. And he's taking an oath. He wants to prove he's very serious. Kind of like he's preparing to tell the truth in court. Here's what he says. He refers to God as:

"...God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac..." (ESV)

There is something in the way his father lived that when he said, "I need deliverance, I need to make a true statement and swear upon the living God. He calls Him capital F, "Fear of my father."

You know, one of the things I love about Pastor Aaron so much, I think you're the exact same, is his boldness. And I've thought before, "How can I be bold like Aaron?" Well, it's not a boldness that he pursues to be bold. It's a fear of God that he pursues that results in him being bold.

He fears God more than he fears Instagram comments. He fears God whether what people think about this church is cool, or whatever that would mean. He fears God more than he would my or your feelings or reactions. And that's why we love him.

So, I want to go back to Mark 6 and I want to show you three things that happen when you fear God. Look at verse 50 again. Jesus says, "Don't be afraid, take courage. I am here." That phrase, "I am here," in the Greek is simply I Am. Jesus says, "Don't be afraid. I Am."



And what He's doing is a call back to Exodus, chapter 3 in the Bible where Moses was out in the desert minding his own business. He sees a bush that is on fire but it's not burning up. Jesus calls to him from within the bush and He says, "Moses you are My guy. I'm sending you to Pharaoh in Egypt to tell him, "Let My people go. And you're going to take them from slavery to the Promised Land."

Moses argues. He doesn't want this assignment. And then one of the things he asked is, "Well, who are You? What's Your name? When people say, 'Who sent you, Moses?' what do I tell them? And God says, "My name is I AM."

So, when Jesus shows up among lightening and wind and waves, and He wants to tell them to not be afraid, His phrase to command their attention is, "I AM." In other words, "I am the Creator, you are my child." Because when they fear God they are reminded, "I am a child of the one who created water and walks on water and the One who holds the universe in His hands and the One through whom everything was made and is held together. And that person calls me child."

Therefore, and I want you to write this down:

When I fear God my identity is restored (Mark 6:50)

When I fear God my identity is restored.

In 1990 one of Michael Jordan's teammates on the Chicago Bulls was a player named Stacey King. And Stacey King did not score a lot of points. In fact, there was one game in particular where he scored a single point. When he was later asked what the favorite game of his career was he referenced that game and he said, "My favorite game in my career was when Michael Jordan and I combined for 70 points."

And that's how it is with us and God. I'm not much, but together we make a pretty good team.

But do you know what I do? I still get my identity confused. I think my identity is how my kids behave themselves in public. My identity is my ability to provide for my family financially. I say it's not, but if we are over budget and I don't have cash at the end of the month I'm depressed because a real man can provide. My identity is my failure to resist temptation of unhealthy food because I rationalize. I go to the gym, I eat healthy a good portion of the time, but when I look in the mirror and see that last 10 pounds I don't lose, the message that I believe is, "You are lazy and undisciplined and that's in every area of your life."



And your identity is your job review. And your identity is your grades because when you get a B you are depressed. And your identity is your score if you get benched you feel worthless. Your identity is your kids' sports because if they are not performing what does that say about you?

Your identity is your ability to manage a team for results and how many likes you get on a post. It's your ability to out-argue others. It's being noticed as the smartest person in the room. It's the funniest person in the room. It's the most beautiful person in the room. And we know these things are empty, but they are a silent song that draws us in.

But when I properly fear God I'm reminded that because of Jesus He calls me child. Therefore my identity is not in what I do or who I am, it is what Jesus did and who He makes me to be.

When I fear God, my identity is restored.

Now look at verse 52:

"...for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard ..."

A hardened heart means you have purposefully ignored God in the past, which makes it hard to hear Him in the present. Here's the way I say it:

When I fear God, my sin is exposed (Mark 6:52)

I am not what you would call a handy person. I don't fix things. But several months ago my wife said, "Hey, the wipers on my van need replaced." She knew, "Even my husband can do that one." So, I got the wipers. I grabbed one of my sons who hadn't done this before. We go out to the garage, pop off the old ones, put on the new ones. I walked back in and I'm like, "I'm a man. I'm raising up the next generation in how to do things like this."

Four days later, I'm in my office and I can see through my window and there is a torrential rainstorm outside. And about this time I get a text from my wife that had no words just a video to show me the effects of my handiwork. Here's the video [a picture of the windshield wipers haphazardly and ineffectively moving across the windshield in the rain]. Okay. You can stop laughing. My handyman skills were exposed that day.

And when you fear God, your sin is exposed.



Here's what I mean. When you stand at the edge of the Grand Canyon, and you realize how arrogant you are to think you could ever create something big. It's when you watch that old movie The Passion of the Christ and realize you don't ever take repentance seriously. It's when you are reading about the fear of God, the Fear of Issac referenced in the Bible, and you know your kids would never refer to God that way. It's when you try to sit before Jesus in silence for three minutes and realize you are a victim of distraction.

See, again. When I fear God it puts Him in His right perspective, which puts me in my right perspective, which puts my sin in its right perspective, which leaves me being desperate for God.

Here's the problem. We get that intellectually, "Oh, yeah. I should fear God. I know, if I'm a believer, that I should stand in awe of God and His power and His majesty and His glory." But we fall into the same trap of honoring God and fearing what's in front of us.

So, what do we do. Well, we can't always will our emotions to go to a certain place. What we can do, though, is put ourselves in an environment the natural result of which is that it takes our emotions where they need to go.

I mentioned national parks already. I love going on epic hikes in national parks. I was hiking Angels Landing in Zion, going to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, and doing the Half Dome in Yosemite. But I have this thing my family kind of laughs at me about. Whenever we go to national parks I always, a couple of days before, will google the phrase: Death in "Blank" National Park. Because people die in these parks every year and I want to find out how so I don't do what they did. So, I will know, "We're not going close to that cliff." Or, "Be careful when we are near that view," or something.

And every park, when I get near a 1,000 foot drop off, or when there is a rail next to a waterfall, I get a legit fear of falling off or falling over. And every time, without fail, I realize, "God, you didn't just make this 1,000 foot cliff, You made the universe and I have sweaty palms right now thinking of You. God, like the psalmist, I fear You." Because remember the word for fear. It's a phobia, a terror.

Occasionally somebody may feel like, "I just don't feel like I love God enough." And I'd rephrase it to say maybe you just don't put yourself in environments that naturally result in: Are you fearing God enough. Part of spiritual growth is recognizing those environments and putting yourself in them.



For most men that I know, it's somewhere in nature. So, for me, it's the Rocky Mountains. It's the beauty, the power, the size. When I'm literally in the shadow of a mountain I feel overwhelmed by the power of God.

For my buddy, Scott, it's going to the ocean. When he goes to the beach he gets up earlier than anybody else so he can have his time with God. And he sits in a chair in front of the ocean and if it's calm he's overwhelmed in his soul with the peace of God. And if it's rough he's overwhelmed with the power of God.

For my friend, Matt, it's backpacking in the wilderness. He does it every year because his soul needs it. It's just him and the elements. And nature beats him down and it puts him in touch with creation and more specifically, his Creator.

I know some people who, for them it's reading a thick book on theology. Now, if I read one of those books it puts me to sleep. I have a small number of friends who, when they read that, it just expands their mind and they tremble before God.

For my wife, it's when she holds a newborn baby. And yes, her heart is gushing with compassion and love, but it also in a little bit of awe and fear of God because, "How does He create life?"

I've talked to surgeons who, after they do surgery, will reflect and say, "The human body just makes me fear God. How did He do that?"

What is it for you? I think a great question to ask on the car ride home from church with those you rode with is, "Hey, what makes you fear God? What's that environment for you?" And just articulate it. Because a trap we fall into is: Honor God and fear something else. What is it for you?

One more application, verse 51, Jesus:

"...climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped."

The last thing to write down:

When I fear God, my storms are silent (Mark 6:51)

Notice that the storm didn't stop the moment Jesus appeared. The storm kept going. I wish as soon as you gave your life to Jesus that all of the storms stopped. They don't. He can stop them. He will stop them one day when He returns. So, the point here is not that storms don't happen to people who fear God. The point is simply that when you hear the voice of God, even as lightening flashes and waves test and wind howls, all you hear is the voice of my God saying, "Do not be afraid. I Am."



When I was at Yosemite I told you about my son with the Good Good hat being a little scared, but his younger brother was even more scared. And when we were set to start our hike, just up the cables, the steepest, most dangerous part, my youngest son, 11 years old, was sitting down. He kind of had his head down. He wasn't looking at me. I thought maybe he was tired. Maybe he was scared.

I bent down on one knee and I could see two tears just coming down his face. He was terrified. And he thought if he didn't go up his dad would be disappointed in him. I gave him a pep talk. I said, "Declan, here's what we are going to do." I said, "I'm going to make you start. We don't have to finish." I said, "You know from some other past hikes we've done that if I sense it's dangerous we will turn around. You know I will do that. Right?" Head nod.

"So, here's what I'm going to challenge you to do. I want you to take one step at a time. I don't want you to look up at how far we have to go. I don't want you to look down at how steep it is below us. There are going to be lots of other people passing us and coming down from the top. And we're not going to pay any attention to them. If they want to pass us, that's fine. If they are going slower than us, that's fine.

"And a lot of people will probably say things to you up there. They may give you advice. I don't want you to listen to them even if it sounds like good advice. I want you to tune out every other voice and listen to the voice of your father. And I'll tell you when to put this hand here and where to step with that foot next. And you listen to my voice and we'll just see how far we get. Can you do that?" Head nod.

So, we set out in a crowd of people. Slick granite. I coached him the whole way and he made it to the top. And he experienced something he never experienced before, which was some of the best beauty of all of God's creation.

Here's what I believe. I know in our rooms today there is all kinds of heartache and it's paralyzing, the fear. It's fear of a diagnosis. What's going to happen? It's fear for your marriage. Is divorce eminent? It's fear for that relationship that seems broken beyond repair. It's fear for your own companionship because the loneliness is oppressive.

And I believe what God wants you to know today is this. You don't need to look to the left or the right. It doesn't matter what other people are doing. It's their journey. It's their business. Don't worry about how far you have to go. Don't look down at something that will make you scared. When other voices try to seep into your life ignore them. Because there is one voice that matters. And it's your Father's.



And He's saying, "Listen to Me. Fear nothing but Me. Focus on one step I tell you to do at a time. And if you do that, I will take you where I want you to be and then you will experience the best part of all I have to offer and it will be worth it. And Mark 6 says the way you do that is by ignoring the lightening, the wind, the waves and listening to the One who says, "I Am."

Father in heaven, I confess to You, even as we are worshipping this morning, that I know there is something I fear more than You. I repent. You are our God. And God, we don't want to be scared of the thing in front of us. We really don't. We don't like it. And that's why we're here. We need to recalibrate.

So, Jesus, thank You that You are our God. Thank You that You are the One who died on the cross for our sin even though we didn't deserve it. And, God, we've had these moments of fear like when the disciples saw your body thrown in a tomb. It felt like it was over and pointless. So, God, thank You that Easter Sunday was a moment in history where You breathed again and You stood up and You walked out of that tomb because the Father had raised You to life.

And, Jesus, thank You that You promise life to all of your children who put their trust in You. Jesus, thank You that You are a good Father who wants good things for Your children. Thank You that our identity is not what we've done or haven't done, but it is simply, "I am Your child and You love me and You bring me joy."

Father, may we walk out of that identity so that we listen to Your voice and Your voice alone. The voice of the great I AM who says, "I am your comfort. I am your purpose. I am your direction. I am the One who puts the childless in families, who gathers the lonely in community, who restores the broken, and who does not hurt those who fear.

God, we worship You. We thank You. You are our God. We will fear You alone. It is in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.

