

January 24th, Thinking Clearly

Part 4 in the series 'Feeling Good: Living a Life Fully Alive in Christ'

How does fear often present itself as truth?

[A: It doesn't see what is unseen, it only sees and tells part truths. But it presents that half truth as a whole truth.]

What are thought distortions?

[A: The subtle lies we believe about life, about others, about ourselves, about God.]

Can you remember any of the more humorous thought distortions Jim gave as examples during the message? Can you think of any others?

[e.g. *I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes or 75% of your body heat escapes through your head. Therefore, you should be able to go snow skiing in a bathing suit as long as you have a good hat.*]

Can you remember any of the examples of lies Jim shared from Dr. Chris Thurman's book 'The Lies We Believe'? Remember the 4 categories: self lies, worldly lies, marital lies and religious lies.

[A:

Self Lies

I have to have other people's approval in order to be happy.
It's easier to avoid problems than to face them.

Worldly Lies

You're only as good as what you do.
Life should be easy.

Marital Lies

If it takes hard work we must not be right for each other.
My spouse can and should meet all my needs.

Religious Lies

I must earn God's love.
It is my Christian duty to meet all the needs of others.]

If you are comfortable sharing, are there any thought distortions or lies such as these that you find yourself believing?

Why do you think more people seem to be afraid of perishing in a plane crash than by a vending machine accident?

What are some toxic emotions, feelings and behaviors that can result from fear?

READ 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)

“We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17** For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18** So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Why do you suppose Paul chose the words: ‘fix our eyes’?

Do you think it’s often easier to see the things that are wrong or the things that are right?

What kind of eyesight or insight do you think God wants His children to develop? What does He want His children to see?

[A: He wants us to develop a vision for what’s redemptive, what’s good, what’s *true*.]

What do you think Paul would say to someone who says “I’m a realist! I just look at things the way they really are, and things are NOT good!”

[Maybe: You’re not a realist. You’re actually being short-sighted, if not nearly blind because you are just looking at what’s right in front of you and not what’s beyond you. You are looking only at what’s obvious: only what you can see with your physical eyes. You’re not seeing the bigger picture; what is unseen, what God is up to, His plans and purposes which He is bringing about by His awesome power.]

READ John 8:31-36

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” **33** They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”

34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

What truth is Jesus talking about when he said ‘The truth will set you free’?

What are some of the more important, consequential truths we can remember when we are struggling with fear?

READ 1 Timothy 1:3-7 (NLT)

3 When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. **4** Don’t let them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations, which don’t help people live a life of faith in God.

5 The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. **6** But some people have missed this whole

point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. 7 They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.

What happens when we take relatively meaningless discussion and elevate it to the position of consequential truths to do with God?

What are your thoughts on verse 5?

Why do you think the people described in verse 7 want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses?

When we are afraid, how is turning to God us choosing love and choosing truth?

What do you think of the statement, 'We may fool a lot of people but the one person we fool more than anyone else is the person in the mirror.'?

What truth did Jim say that we, as followers of Jesus, should commit ourselves to as part of our New Year's resolution to feel good?

[A: "I will not lie to myself even when the truth makes me feel bad about myself."]

Why would we do that if God wants us to feel good?

[A: In that moment or season of facing a difficult truth about yourself, you are perfectly positioned to receive and experience God's amazing, incomparable love and grace and forgiveness which feels so very good.]

Have you come across any difficult truths about yourself recently that you would like to bring to God in prayer? Only share if you feel comfortable.