

A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

"Do It Scared" 5/18/22

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged,
for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. (Josh 1:9)*

How often have you thought, "I can't do it. I'm scared." As you look at your options, your chance of failure, the accomplishment you could reach, as you weigh the do - don't do, you realize - the fear may not go away – you'll just have to do it scared.

"If only I had courage," said the cowardly lion. Then he sets off with Dorothy on a journey, facing danger, persisting, standing up to the challenges, keeping focused on the goal, and - arriving at Oz. The wizard has to tell the lion, "Courage is not the absence of fear – it is doing the thing in spite of being afraid." And our friend - is king of the jungle.

Life - is - not - easy. Decisions can throw us, do I - don't I, what if I make the wrong choice? If I do this, this could happen, but If I do that – oh, I, I, I can't. We are afraid to go forward, and afraid fear will stifle us, and we will not accomplish anything.

When Marcus Aurelius was told he would be the future emperor, he was overcome with fear. Kings are terrible people, doing awful things. He'd rather sit in a library than in a palace. But the crown awaited him. Unto the breach. Being King is what he was meant to do, and he would go forward and do it scared. His preparation took over and he became one of the good Roman emperors. Though that may be up for debate, he served Rome well.

Twelve years ago, I was married and happy with my life. I feared the thought of someday losing my husband, having no means of support, no profession, facing the unknown alone. Then my husband died unexpectedly. My fears became my reality. I was too scared to even face the next day. But I had to. I had no choice. I turned to God, who was closer than I could imagine, just as He'd promised. Saying fear not and do the next thing, now.

I found jobs, met my obligations. Gave thanks for what I did have and worked for didn't have. I was able to fulfill my dream of being a pastor. I went to seminary and was ordained.

I had to learn to pay my own bills, find a way – or a person – to fix what was broken. I made plans and found a way forward – still afraid but walking in faith and hope. Yes, I struggled with the mixture of both, but, as scared as I was, I heard God say, "Fear Not. I have called you by name and you are mine. I will be with you through the fire, upholding you in the floods. I will keep you safe in the storm." And this was a storm.

You can't let fear freeze you. Hold on to God's promise of presence. Turn to God, discover, and rely on the gifts God has given you and - be who you were created to be. You'll also learn your limitations, we all have them, but they too will not stop you from accomplishing, from attaining, from being who God called you to be.

Don't let fear keep you from being kind. Don't let fear hide you in your back room. Don't let being afraid stop you. 365 times in the Bible, we hear God tell us to "fear not." That's once for every day of the year. Every day we are encouraged to go forward, to face our day, to witness to God's love, to be who we were created to be.

Please pray will me.

Loving Lord, thank You for Your presence and the peace You give us when we face the unknown. When we fear moving forward, we thank You for giving us the strength to do so. You tell us every day to fear not. You come into our darkness and shine a light, so we can go forward, being the people, You created us to be, loving You and one another.

Amen