

# A Word on Wednesday from Pastor Tonia

## "The Other Side of Fear" 9/21/22

*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned,  
in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.* (Philippians 4:11)

Paul knew suffering, he faced fear, he understood difficulties and hard decisions. He had been shipwrecked from a storm, spent years in prison, he had been bitten by a snake, and carried a thorn in his side until his martyred death. But he never lost sight of the fact, God was present and so, he remained content.

We all face unwanted – and unneeded – setbacks in life. We face the future with fear, fear of the unknown, the different, the “what in the world”ings, which pop up uninvited into our lives. So, do we flee or fight or freeze, how do we face them? People who have faced their fears, and shared their wisdom leave us words of encouragement.

Facing fear, realizing it is not the enemy, garnering fortitude, allows us to reach our potential, endure the situation, accomplish our goal. No night is so dark it can hinder the light of the next morning’s sun. Aviatrix Amelia Earhart left these words of wisdom, “The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.” Forward, ho.

The monster under the bed always grows 10-fold when the lights go out. Our mind makes bad things, scary things, bigger than they are. Author, Paulo Coelho, said, “Tell your heart the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself.” When we are actually faced with our fears, our heart and our mind will come up with a plan of attack. We will turn to God, listen to words of encouragement from others, we will look at all sides and realize – “I CAN do this.”

Fear is usually more debilitating than the actual event, procedure, difficulty, duty. One of the biggest fears is public speaking – while it can be embarrassing, people rarely die from it. As a director I always told my actors – “If you don’t have stage fright, you won’t perform at your best.”

A bad diagnosis will put fear in your blood system. It spikes in your head, and you can’t hear or think. Then you start to come down and wonder what can be done, and eventually you’ll want to know how you can beat it.

Fear of pain can stop you from trying. Fear of falling will hinder you from the joy of climbing. Fear of drowning will stop you from sailing the ocean blue. Fear of death will keep you from living.

As George Adair, a real estate developer in the south following the Civil War, said, “Everything you ever wanted is on the other side of fear.” How will you face your fears. Will you flee or freeze or fight? Will you climb that mountain, receive the applause of an audience, feel the sun on your face, view the vistas, live your life to its fullest.

In reality, Fear is usually worse than the thing of which you are afraid. As you face it, you come to realize how strong you are and how close God is. The size of our fear cannot become too big to prevent God’s grace from reaching us. We are reminded of God’s goodness in Paul’s words to the Romans, “For I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Rom 8:18) It is all a matter of perspective.

We can rest in the knowledge, “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you.” (1 Peter 5:10) So decide to do the thing which scares you the most, because after that - the rest is easy.

## **Please pray with me.**

God, You have not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a clear mind. I thank you for Your presence as I face difficulties, as I face my fears for the future, for my health, my finances, my loved ones, my safety, my life. Help me to be content, to have a clear mind, knowing You are upholding me, that all will work together for Your good. Give me Your power as I step out to live my life for You. **Amen.**