



# New Life Christian Community

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

Sunday, October 18, 2020

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## PASTORAL PONDERING

### A MILLION TIMES ... OR SO

How many mothers have told their kids, "I've told you a million times: Don't slam the door!" or something like that? Maybe it's, "Keep your room clean!" or "Don't leave your wet clothes on the floor!" or "Don't talk back to me!" or "Do your homework before you play!" After a million times you'd think we would have gotten the message. Or maybe "a million" is an exaggeration.

What if the number is only about 100 times? And what if the speaker isn't Mom, but God?

Over the past several months I've heard a wise man say several times that "Fear not" is the single statement God says the most in the Bible. In our English Bibles it appears as "Fear not," "Do not fear," or "Do not be afraid," but these three similar commands translate the exact same command in the original languages of both the Old and New Testaments. (In the interest of accuracy, there are actually two forms of the command in the Old Testament, but one of them appears only once.)

The command to not fear appears 98 times—75 times in the Old Testament and 23 in the New. The speaker was not always God, but the message was always God's message. Wouldn't you think 98 times would be enough for us to get the point?

There are many things we should not fear. The Israelites were not to fear the nations in the land the Lord was giving them. They were not to fear the armies of their enemies or even of super-powers who had the power to conquer them and take them into exile. They were not to fear the gods other people feared. Individuals were not to fear tasks given to them by God.

The underlying reason not to fear is that we are to replace our fear with trust in God. Jesus emphasized this with a particularly powerful and important version of the command in Mark 5:36: "*Do not fear, only believe.*" Is it not true that the main reason we fear is that we are not fully trusting God? Fear, then, should be an attention-getting reminder that we should confess our unbelief and focus our attention on seeking God and living by His word.

*"For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: 'Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.'" [Isaiah 8:11-13]*

*continued on next page ...*

If we fear anything other than the Lord or if we trust in anything other than the Lord, it won't matter who wins the election, to name one example that is causing some to fear today. Isaiah 33:22 says, *"For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us."*

I got to thinking about this because the sign out in front of our building gives people driving by the same message: "Don't be afraid." It also gives the reason to keep us from fearing: "Jesus is King."

An old friend of mine recently wrote, "What happens in the election does matter. What God is doing according to his own eternal purposes matters far, far more! The USA is important, but it's not the apex of history."

If we fear Covid, the outcome of the election, or what will happen with the appointment of a new Supreme Court Justice, what are we telling the world about our faith? What are we telling the world about who God is? Will unbelievers be convinced that Jesus is worthy of their eternal trust if we fear things that ultimately will not matter?

There are statements in the Bible that appear only once. For example, we dearly love Hebrews 13:8 which says, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."* The Holy Spirit inspired that to be written only one time. How then should we respond to an inspired command that is written 98 times?

Jay Swisher



## MINISTRY DIRECTORY:

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Pastoral Eldership Team:

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### This Week's Scheduled Events:

Tues	Men's Bible Study-6:30 am
Wed	Every Man's Battle-6:00 am
Wed	Immerse Studies-6:15 pm
Thurs	Men's Bible Study-6:30 am
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study-12:00 pm
Thurs	Ladies Study-Mattfnew-10 am
Thurs	Ladies Study- 6:30 pm

### October Memory Verse:

1 Peter 1:22-23

*"...love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God..."*  
ESV

### October Fellowship Tip:

Have you recognized a spiritual gift in someone? Consider how you can encourage the use of these gifts Christ has given by His Spirit for the purpose of building up the body.

### Sunday Meals and Fellowship:

For the immediate future, meals will be served on the **1st and 3rd of each month**. As the teams grow and volunteer base increases, we can move to sharing a meal every Sunday. Contact Barbara Judkins if

➤ **Every Man's Battle:** Brothers consider attending a new Men's group meeting **Wednesdays 6:00 - 7:30 am** at the building. The mission of this group is not to focus on a particular sin but to point men towards Christ, with a specific focus on building one another up in Him and battling together in the fight against lust - in all its forms. This group will involve candid discussion, study, accountability, and prayer. Contact Marc Vanderhoof with questions 802-779-2793.

➤ **Wednesday Night Immerse Classes** are in full swing. Take advantage of this opportunity to participate in these classes. These nights are one of many ways at New Life to invest in the lives of this local body (children and adults); together being taught, equipped, and sharpened in the Word as well as opportunity for inter-generational relationships to be formed. **Classes meet from 6:15-7:30 pm.**

➤ **Immerse Teacher(s) & Assistant(s) Needed:** There's an opportunity to serve on Wednesday evenings. Please contact Ana Smith at 715-566-3740 if you are interested.

➤ **Sunday Morning Prayer Time:** Every **Sunday morning from 8:30-9:00 am** in the large classroom we have a time of prayer. Everyone is encouraged to come even children! Specific topics to pray for are: ministry teams, missionaries, bible studies, immerse classes, and really anything impressed on our heart. We serve a gracious God who hears our prayers! Let us make every effort to gather often and pray.

### *Today is Sunday Meal and Fellowship*

Please stick around after service and enjoy an extended time of fellowship over a delicious lunch. The Sunday Meals Leadership team and team assistants have been working hard to make this time of fellowship possible. Thank you! There is however, still much need for volunteers to join the meal teams in order to have ample help in serving the food and tasks of clean-up afterwards. If you would like to serve in any fashion to help continue make these meals possible please reach out to Barbara Judkins. You can find her contact information in the newsletter.



Today's Passage:  
Pastor Paul's message is from the  
New Testament book,  
**TITUS 3:9-15**

Sermon Notes: