The Fear of Failure, Part 1

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 September 2025

Preacher: Kevin Smith, Senior Pastor

[0:00] John chapter 14, beginning at verse 25. Jesus is speaking. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.! But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name,! He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled.
Neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, I am going away and I will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced. Because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.
And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming.
He has no claim on me, but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.
[1:14] Rise. Let us go from here. That is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. Heard a funny story many years ago when I was a kid.

I thought it was funny. I hope you'll think it's funny, but I thought it was funny. A guy was living in this particular neighborhood, and his buddy comes to him and says to him, hey man, I know you're concerned about getting mugged in this neighborhood.
I know you're worried about that, but here's, I'm going to give you some advice. Here's what you do. You know, I want you to get a bunt, get a sock, and fill it with silver dollars. Just pack it full and keep it in your pocket.
And when the mugger comes up to you and says, give me your money, you whip out and you knock him out and then run like crazy. Well, a week goes by and he sees his friend.
His friend's all beat up, bruised, got his arm in the sling and barely walking. And he says, so what happened to you, man? Didn't you take my advice? He says, you know how afraid I am to carry money.
[2:33] So I put a bunch of money orders in a sock. And what I found out was when you hit a mugger with money orders, it doesn't do much, just makes them mad.

Some people are afraid to fail so they don't even try. I mean, he didn't even give it a really good shot. He didn't try. I'm sorry, I got this from Mad Magazine years ago, so forgive me.
And sometimes as Christians, we are afraid to fail. We're afraid to try. We're going to get knocked out. We're afraid to get knocked out. We're afraid that someone, that people won't take us seriously. We're afraid of failure. We're afraid of doing the right thing because we think we can't do it. We're afraid of sharing our faith with people because we think people are going to reject us and people won't listen.
We're afraid. Because nobody wants to fail at anything. If you want to fail, I think there's probably, we got to talk.
[3:39] Let's have a moment together. We all want to succeed in whatever we do. And that includes being a Christian. We want to be faithful. We want to be God's man, God's woman.

We want Jesus to be the center of our joy. We want to follow Jesus. And we want to follow him wherever he leads us. But there's that thing nagging in the back of our minds.
Fear. The fear we just won't get it done. The fear that we're going to mess up. Jesus understands our fear of failure.
And he's given us resources to combat it. Jesus gives us the help we need so we don't have to fear failure.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-06 05:39:59

That's why, that's one reason the spirit has been given to us. Keep in mind where we are. Remember, this is Thursday night before Good Friday.
[4:47] And Jesus is giving his last teachings to his disciples before his passion. And you think that might be important. If this is what he's thinking about before he goes to the cross, you think these things are very important.

And he's been talking to them, as we know, about what the spirit will do. That he has to go, but the spirit is going to come in his place and do a work of the disciples and help them live for him.
And we looked at much of that last week. But I think there's something going on here. You ever teach somebody to ride a bike? A child likely to ride a bike?
Like, you know, as long as you're holding on, that child, my daughters, when I talked to them, as long as I was holding on to the seat, they were, yeah, they were riding, pushing hard, making me run to keep up.
But then when I took my hand off, that's when things could happen. Yeah, that's when things could happen.
[5:50] Either they crash or they fall because they're terrified that my hand isn't with them, that I'm not with them. And the disciples are experiencing this.

They're experiencing a sense of fear because Jesus is not going to be with them. Remember, Jesus told them, you are going to do my works and even greater works.
And it's just right above this passage. And then he says, I'm leaving. A moment, please. As long as he was with them, his hand was on the seat.
Yeah, we can do anything. But then he said he was leaving. And all of a sudden, I think our Lord is dealing with that in this portion of this discussion.
He's dealing with that, dealing with their sense of fear of failing to be faithful disciples of the one they love most. They want to succeed.
[6:57] But he's not going to be there physically with them. So Jesus says to them, don't fear failure. That's my words here. For the Spirit is with you to equip you.

Verse 26. Here's how he's going to equip the disciples. The helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
Hmm. First time, I think, in the whole Gospel of John that he actually calls the Spirit the Holy Spirit. He's been the Spirit of Truth, the helper.
Now he's honing in. The Father is sending them help in the person of the third person of the Holy Trinity to be with them.
But he's got a certain assignment he's going to do. He's going to equip them to do the work that Christ has called them to do.
[8:05] And first of all, he will teach the apostles. And he will remind them all that Jesus said. Now keep in mind, remember in that culture, remember, if you were a rabbi or rabbi, you had students.

And the students would follow you wherever you go. And you would teach and walk and they would memorize your teaching. They would memorize it and then they had an ultimate goal to be just like their rabbi.
To be just, to not only just live with him, but live like him. Jesus says the Spirit will come so that you don't, so that you are being taught even while I am away from you physically.
And everything that I said to you. Because how are you going to remember all this stuff? I mean, think about, read the Gospels. Think about, and we don't even have everything that he said.
But just read the Gospels. How are they going to remember all of this teaching? Jesus said, you're going to remember it because the Spirit is going to help you remember it.
[9:23] The promise here is particular to them. It's important for us to remember, but it's particular to them. They were the ones who would write Scripture. John would write Scripture.

Peter would write Scripture. They would give input into the writing of Scripture. It was so important. Matthew. That these guys would be able to remember and write down exactly what Jesus wanted them to say.
Well, application real quick. You can trust the Bible. You can trust the New Testament, but particularly the New Testament we're talking about here. You can trust the New Testament because the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father to make sure they got it right.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-06 05:39:59

The New Testament is the Word of Jesus. All of it. From Matthew to Revelation, it is all the Word of Jesus. Not just the red letters, if you have a red letter Bible.
The red letters are not more important than the rest. It's all the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of truth transmitting through the apostles the teaching of Jesus.
[10:37] So we can trust it. The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to remember, to understand, and to write God's revelation.

But they knew something else too. That the Old Testament was done the same way. The Apostle Peter will say this in 2 Peter 1.21.
For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
So the Old Testament, when Isaiah sat down to write, it was the Spirit of God shining on him, shining in him, so that Isaiah used his language, he used his metaphors, he used poetry, and all kinds of things, but he wrote exactly what God wanted him to say.
Another application helpful, I hope. When you read and study the Bible, when you open the Word of God, no matter where you are, you know that God is speaking to you through the Word, and you know if you ask him in particular, the Holy Spirit will help you to understand and even remember the Word when you need it.
[12:06] See, we call this, we call what happens to us illumination. The text is illumined. Our hearts are illuminated. Light shines.

But the apostles were inspired. That's inspiration. They wrote directly from the Holy Spirit what God says.
Now here's the thing. Here's a way you can know that you're born again. Here's a way you can know that you've met God, that Jesus has transformed your life.
Here's how you know. When you come to the Bible, it speaks to you. When you come to the Bible, you can't help but take it seriously now.
You see, before, before you could say take, you could take it or leave it. If you ever read it at all. Like me, I didn't read it at all. But once the Spirit of God came into our lives, when we opened this book, God is speaking.
[13:11] This is important now. This is true. I need to understand this better. You want to sit there. You want to memorize. Oh, oh. You might want to memorize some things.

When I was a kid, I'll never forget. I didn't want to write in my Bible. So I kept a sheet of paper and I would write down scriptures that jumped out at me.
And it got unwieldy. The books I'm writing down, it got scriptures folded up in the back of my Bible. And then one day I got free and I could actually write in it.
And underline. By the way, here's some help. But use color pencils. Never use those highlighters. Horrible. Bleed through the page. Color pencils. I discovered this 30 years ago.
Magnificent. And you can highlight and note things as God is speaking to you. And here's the thing about this, about what happens here. You can read a passage 10 times over a course of three years maybe.
[14:17] And all of a sudden you read it that 11th time and you're like, wow. I didn't see. You see, that's the work of the Spirit helping you to understand when you need to understand that passage.

It's beautiful. But here's, I got a, there's a little bit of a problem. Psalm 119 helps us and tells us a problem.
I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119 verse 11. Later on. I will meditate on your precepts and fill my eyes, fix my eyes on your ways.
I will delight in your statues. I will not forget your word. You know what it means to store the word in your heart?
It means to memorize it. In other words, God helps you remember what you put in.
[15:28] Here's the problem. If we don't put much in, there isn't going to be much to remember. So it's incumbent upon us to really take the word seriously.

And as it's, as God speaks to you, here's a good thing to do. That passage, memorize it. It's not the, maybe not the whole, maybe the whole thing, maybe a portion, maybe one verse, whatever it is.
If, memorize it. Take the time to store the word of God in your heart so that when that time comes, when you need that word, the spirit of God will remind you.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-06 05:39:59

It's what said, I think it's what Matthew says in Matthew chapter 10, 19 and 20. Jesus is speaking. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say. For what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. It is not you who speak, but the spirit of your father speaking through you.
[16:36] In their case, it could have been direct word. In our case, it's the written word that the spirit will give you when you need it.

How many times has that happened? I mean, my gosh, you're talking to somebody, a Christian maybe, and you want to encourage them, and you're thinking, all of a sudden something comes to your mind.
Boom. You might not even remember where the passage was, but you can quote it. And you begin to share with people what the spirit of God is bringing to your remembrance, but you've got to put some in.
For the apostles, the spirit came to remind them and to teach them. For us, the spirit has come so that we open this Bible or we hear it explained to us.
The spirit is teaching us through the word, through our brothers and sisters, teaching us so that we might remember what Jesus says.
[17:40] So when you go home, or you go to work, and you go to school, and the enemy starts to come at you, you've got something to say.

Didn't Jesus do the same thing? In Luke 4, in Matthew 4, when he's being tempted in the wilderness, he'd been fasting for 40 days, which is, don't do that, by the way.
It's called death for you, just so you know. And his was total, without water it seems as well. And so that's death, don't do, don't. But he did it.
Supernatural fast. And he's fasting. And he's weak. He's got to be weak. I mean, physically, I can only imagine. Have you ever fasted and felt weak? I've been there.
And the devil himself, not a demon, the devil himself comes to tempt him. I can imagine him. See, we have a picture of Jesus sitting there going, it is written.
[18:43] It was probably more like this. It is written. You see, when the word is in you, when you are weak, the spirit of God will stand up in you and remind you of the word that you need to stand against the temptations of the flesh and to speak life to those around you who are in need of hearing a word from God, whether they know it or not.

Don't fear failure because the spirit has come to equip you by helping you, by teaching you the word and helping you remember the word. Second thing, don't feel failure because Christ's peace guards you.
Peace I live. Verse 27. He said, peace I live. I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled.
Neither let them be afraid. Again, this is the work of the spirit. There seem to be two aspects of peace that our Lord is promising here. The first he says, he says he leaves his peace with us. This could be a reference to peace with God that he will accomplish for all of us who trust in him by dying for our sins on the cross. We have peace with God.
[20:10] Romans 5.1 puts it this way. The apostle Paul. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, that means you've been declared righteous. You have been declared in.

What's the well-known phrase? You're not a lawbreaker. You're a lawkeeper. That's what it means to be righteous. You are a keeper of the law. Justified, but not by your actions, but by faith.
By the way, that's faith in Christ's actions. He kept the law, and your faith is in him who kept the law, not faith in yourself, because you're a lawbreaker.
You got it? Okay. By faith. Then he says, because of this, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace with God. In other words, when you, when the Spirit of God comes and saturates your heart, and you believe in Jesus, you now, the war with God is over.
Before that, the war with God continues. And your arms are much too short to box with God.
[21:19] Amen? The war goes on. But now, but now the war is over. It's, it's, it's like, now you're at peace. It's, it's, it's, it's, we're praying for an end of war around the world with nation against nation.

We know of nations that are combat, combatants and fighting one another. But here's the thing about humanity. It's, it's worse. I know you, I know we look at the war in Ukraine and Russia and Israel and America, and that's bad.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-06 05:39:59

It's horrible. Don't get me wrong. But there's a worse war being waged that causes the other wars. The worst war is that humanity is at war with God.
I know we tell, when we think about God, we tell God, I don't need you. Show up when I need you. Talk to the hand.
But when I'm in trouble, oh God, and then we get mad when God don't show up. That's, that's when you're at war with God.
[22:29] When you think you're in control and he's at your beck and call. That's real, that's a serious battle because he's never at anyone's beck and call. But when you have peace with God, now you know him as father.

Father, not judge, father. You know, Jesus as the son, he's your elder brother. And the war with God is over and he welcomes you into his family and will never let you go.
He will never turn you out. He will never reject you. He will never disown you. Because the war is over. And Jesus has ended the war.
And all his disciples are free. You see, so that's the first thing. He says, this peace, I leave you. Peace with my father. But then he says something else. My peace, I give to you. Whew. Now we're moving into personal peace.
[23:37] Jesus is saying to his disciples and all who follow them that I am giving you my personal peace. It is the kind of peace that will allow Jesus to go to the cross the next night.

The next day when Jesus is standing before Pontius Pilate. And Pilate has the ability, the governor of the area has the ability to free him. And Jesus says, do what you want.
He looks him in the eye and tells him that he is a king. And his subjects could fight to free him. But that's not what he came to do. He looks him straight in the eye and doesn't flinch. Pilate gets nervous. Because his wife is having dreams about this Jesus.
And she tells him, listen, have nothing to do with that good man. That righteous man. And Pilate's nervous now. He's, oh my goodness. Wife. Remember, the Romans were very superstitious.
[24:44] So he's really nervous. He had a dream. What am I going to do? And he's trying to free Jesus. But Jesus doesn't want to be freed. The peace of God. His peace allows him to face the cross.

Trusting in his father. And he says, listen, y'all, this is good to me. I don't know about you. But that's the peace he's given me? In Mark 4.37.
There's something on the screen, but you can turn there if you want. Jesus has been teaching all day. Remember, he's still human. He's human yet divine.
We can't understand it, but that's the way it is. And he's human. And he's been teaching all day. The crowds were huge. And so he got into a boat near the shore so he could be lifted up a little bit and project, probably project his voice better.
And so he's preaching and teaching the crowds. He does this all day. So at the end of the day, he's tired. And in verse 37 of Mark, I don't say method, Mark chapter 4, they decide to go to the other side of the lake, Jesus says.
[26:08] Let's go to the other side of the lake. Verse 35, excuse me. So, okay, they get in the boat.

They're going to cross the lake now. Jesus is exhausted. A great windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling up.
But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. I hope you can visualize this with me a little bit. The boat going down, y'all. Boy's back there bailing. They got the buckets, man. We're doomed. We're done.
It's over. And Jesus, so exhausted physically from teaching all day, he's asleep.
[27:07] Water must have been hitting them, splashing them in the face. He's asleep. When you can sleep in a storm, like when you can sleep when the Titanic is going down, you got some kind of peace or you're drugged.

Wasn't drugs. And I love what happens. They woke him up. Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?
Jesus, don't you care we're dying here, man? We're going down. Get up and bail. Do something. I don't know what they expected him to do other than help them bail.
And you know what happened. He woke up, rebuked the wind. And he said to the sea, peace, be still. And the wind ceased.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-06 05:39:59

And there was a great calm. He says, why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?
[28:21] What manner, King James, what manner of man? In other words, what kind of human being is this? We ain't seen nothing like this before. Jesus, when he gives us his peace, you can sleep at night.

Because the Bible says, he that keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. That's so you can. When we enter into his peace, we can sleep.
Sometimes you got to fight for it. I'm with you. I know that. But his peace will allow you to sleep. And watch this. His peace is so powerful, he can calm the storm in your life.
that's causing you to lose sleep. You got to understand something. These disciples were about to enter the greatest storm they had ever faced.
When Jesus gets arrested, tortured, crucified, and buried, they needed peace.
[29:27] But they didn't really know who he was. Jesus calls us, Paul wrote it, Philippians 4, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
This may not be a one-time prayer he's talking about. This may be a prayer where you are praying all day, into the night maybe.
I don't know. But you may have to pray several times before that peace comes. But God is holding it out to you.
The peace of Christ, the peace of God, the peace, his personal peace that he leaves for us, is ours, is our inheritance.
[30:36] But will you cry out for that peace? Will you fight with the forces of darkness that threaten to cause you to fear, and to fear, not just failure, but fear, period, that life won't, you can't make it.

That all, everything's gonna fall apart. That's when you need this peace. And Jesus promises that he will give it, that the spirit will give us the peace that we need.
Well, I remember, when I was a kid, I was afraid of the dark. Okay, so were you. And I'll never forget, my closet looked like the gateway to hell.
I don't know, and if I hung, if I hung something on it, on the robe, you wake up and you go, like someone's in the room with you. So I was afraid of the dark. And I, many nights, I wake up and creep down the hallway to mom and dad's room.
It's funny, when you get to mom and dad's room, your fear goes away. The closet was still there.
[32:03] The scary robe on the door was still there. And it was still dark, by the way. Matter of fact, mom and dad's room was dark too. But mom and dad were in the room.

You see, when the darkness falls, saints, you gotta remember, dad's in the room. You gotta remember, Jesus is in the room. You gotta remember that, yeah, it's still dark, but you got support. There's somebody there who will not leave you, who will not forsake you. There's somebody there that can say peace. Not just to your heart, but peace to the very storm itself.
And family, that's the peace that we really need in these days. It's yours. It's yours in Jesus' name. It's yours. Will you go to him for that peace? Will you keep going until he gives you what you need?
[33:13] And he will. Father, we are, we're grateful that your spirit lives in us, the spirit of Christ.

And that even that spirit teaches us and reminds us of the truth so that we can stand against the darkness that threatens us. But thank you even more, Lord, that you are with us in the dark.
That you're with us and you will never leave us or forsake us. That the spirit of Christ will give us the peace that we need. Thank you that the war is over between those who trust in Jesus and you. Thank you. And thank you for giving us pardon. Because, Lord, the war was our fault. for we rejected you. But thank you that you subdued our hearts.
You conquered us with your love and your kindness and brought us to Jesus. Now as we face the dark, may we walk in the peace of Christ.
[34:20] May we face whatever we're facing knowing that we're not alone. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-06 05:39:59