



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC From Fear To Freedom

SPEAKER DSP Edric Sng

THEME Good News of Great Joy

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

DSP Edric Sng opened with the various kinds of fears that are commonly encountered and broadly categorised them into three categories of fear. These include the fear of death, people and the unknown. He asked us to reflect on what we fear in our daily living. For physical fears, it may be avoidable but social fears are the ones that affect people the most.

THE KEYS FROM FEAR TO FREEDOM

A) ZECHARIAH

In Luke 1, DSP Sng shared on the various fears of Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary. When the angel told him that his wife, Elizabeth, will bear him a son, Zechariah asked the angel how he could be sure of this for “I am an old man and my wife is well along in years (Luke 1:18)”. It is clear he had the fear of:

1. disappointment (what if it doesn't happen),
2. death of a dream (what if I never have a child) and
3. death (what if my desires are not fulfilled within my lifetime)

As a result, Zechariah was silent and was not able to speak because he did not believe the words of the angel and did not receive the word of God with faith even though he was a priest. He let the human in him take over his responses. However when his mouth was unmuted, the first thing he said was the song of the current year where he was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied in Luke 1: 67-79. He praised the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come to his people and redeemed them. Zechariah has been set free to see the hand of God at work, free to serve God without fear and free to spread the good news. The name Zechariah was symbolic as it meant “the Lord has remembered”.

B) ELIZABETH

When Elizabeth was pregnant, she remained five months in seclusion. She said “The Lord has done this for me. He has taken away my disgrace among the people.” (Luke 1:25). Elizabeth has the fear of:

- disgrace (what will they say about me);
- failure (why am I not like everyone else);
- abandonment (why does God help everyone else but me)?

In Luke 1, we see the blessing of Elizabeth as seen from Luke 1:43 “But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”. She has been set free to encounter the Holy Spirit, free to experience God's

favour and free to enter into God's promises. The name Elizabeth means "my God is an oath" and this is reflected in Luke 1:45 "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her."

C) MARY

Gabriel, an angel from God, went to Mary and said "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at the angel words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus."

It is clear that Mary only has fear of the divine i.e., the fear of God and this is the only fear that comes from the Lord. Luke 1:46 – 55 is the song of Mary where she says "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant". She transitioned from fear to freedom as she is free to rejoice in God's goodness, free to receive blessings and free to reap blessings for generations. The meaning of Mary's name is love out of bitterness.

CONCLUSION

The keys for moving from fear to freedom is:

1. When we see and understand the heart of Father God:

- Zechariah saw the power of God: "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us from the royal line of his servant David" (Luke 1:69)
- Elizabeth sees a promise-keeping God: "You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said." (Luke 1:45)
- Mary sees a personal God: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant." (Luke 1:47-48)

2. Encountering the Holy Spirit

- Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. His mouth was opened, his tongue set free and he began to sing praises to God. (Luke 1: 67)
- When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 1:44)
- When Mary asked the angel "How will this be since I am a virgin?", The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. (Luke 1:35)

3. Revelation that is all about Jesus

- Zechariah prophesied that his child will be called a prophet of the Most High; will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. (Luke 1: 76-77)
- Elizabeth exclaimed: "But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43)
- For Mary, the baby she is expecting is the holy one to be born and will be called the Son of God. (Luke 1: 35)

In conclusion, when we see the heart of Father God, when we encounter the Holy Spirit and when we turn our eyes upon Jesus, that's when we move from fear to freedom, from disappointment to delight and from regret to rejoice. For God did not give us a spirit of fear but of power, of love and a sound mind.

QUESTIONS

1. What is a fear that you struggle with in your heart? How has this fear affected your lifestyle or the choices that you have made in your life?

2. What do you think a life free from this fear looks like and in what ways would be it different from your current life? How can you apply the 3 keys mentioned to move from fear to freedom?

3. As you now embrace your fear and resolve to move from fear to freedom, prayerfully select some verses from the bible that you can hold on to to help you stare down your fear.