

Facing My Fear

“The fear of the Lord is life indeed; filled with it one rests secure” (Proverbs 19:23)

It's good to be back home after being away on vacation. I want to thank all of you who took charge of leading and serving in my absence, including especially Bev Squirrell and Mike Davault for preaching and leading worship the last few Sundays. It's wonderful to see people step forward and use their S.H.A.P.E. for the glory of God.

I can't tell you how much I appreciate the ability to be away for a few weeks in a row during the summer. Something I discovered about myself a few years ago is that when I'm away for just a week or less, my mind doesn't really detach from work very well, because I'm usually thinking ahead to what I need to do when I get back. When I'm able to take more than a week away, I'm much better able to unplug and disconnect from my usual work routines. Not only that, you need to know what an excellent job you do of respecting your pastor's time off by waiting to send that email, text message, or phone call. Believe me; it doesn't always work that way in other congregations.

There are many stories I can share about our trip out West, but one in particular stands out. It has to do with facing my fears, which was, of course, one of our themes from my last sermon series.

Last Friday, my boys and I rode in a van with a tour group up to the summit of Pike's Peak (14,115 feet above sea level) and then rode bicycles down to the bottom. While this adventure was exciting for my boys, I have to admit that the thought of it was anxiety-producing for me. You may remember me saying that I have a fear of heights! Well, once I got used to the feel of the bike and its disc brakes (Praise God!), I began to enjoy the ride down. At one point, when the road straightened out for a bit and I felt it was safe enough, I completely let go of the brakes, which I used a lot during the ride, and allowed the bike to run at full speed. In that moment, I felt truly alive, taking in the beauty of the mountain landscape all around.

There is no doubt that I experienced "the fear of the Lord" that day, which made all my other fears seem very small by comparison. Even though you weren't there with me, I could sense your collective voice encouraging me to face my fear of heights. Now, I'm not saying that I'm ready to go skydiving tomorrow, but please know that this was a very big step for me! Likewise, I hope we can continue to develop into a community of faith which encourages one another to face our fears, whatever those fears may be.

Looking forward to being in worship with you Sunday!

Pastor David Rittgers