In our current world, there are several systems of oppression that keeps our society from achieving a true peace that aligns with the Kingdom of God. Systems like White Supremacy, Capitalism and Sexism are some of the few examples of why our society cannot achieve the balance it needs to bring peace and justice. These systems bring an unholy advantage to a certain group of people and target the rest for subjugation and abuse. White Supremacy has created a culture where white people are the dominate race and non-white people are to be the permanent underclass. While capitalism has been hailed as the preeminent economic engine for success, the intrinsic flaw of its zero-sum element creates a level of poverty that is so disgusting that it even promotes an anti-Catholic message of preferential option for the RICH! And sexism has been ingrained into the fabric of civilization for so long that we often ignore the suffering of our own mothers, sisters and daughters.

One of the weapons used to conquer the victims of these unjust systems is fear. This fear can be manifested through several means. One of the most common is the threat of death. The threat of death not only can control people but can compel them to a way of living that is unnatural to them. However, an even stronger threat is the ability to control their very lives, not just physically but mentally, spiritually and emotionally. It is a power that is worse than death because while you still breathe, your life is taken from you. This creates for the oppressed a sense of powerlessness. The model for slavery in this country, and colonialism in other non-white countries, was not just physical bondage but an indoctrination of inferiority. Our culture in this country praises the rich and demonizes the poor by creating a narrative that they are the cause of their own conditions. And our women have been forced in a role that places them under men, and not beside them, because of a intentionally misinterpreted biblical narrative of Eve being the world’s first sinner.

Jesus in our gospel reading gives us instruction on how we can overcome this power of fear by our oppressors. As he is talking to his disciples, he starts off by telling them that the unknown will be known. One of the intrinsic fears we have is fear of the unknown. He reminds them that God has already, or will reveal, the secrets concealed by those who use worldly power over the marginalized. He then points out that physical death should never be feared when it comes to maintaining a spiritual life in this world. He preferences this by also saying that one should be afraid of something that kills the soul as well. This is a reminder that our physical lives are not our own because we do not know when we will pass on from this life. However, God has given us the power of freewill which resides within our spirits. He then explains to the disciples about their value and God’s work in creation. Jesus tells them that the Father is concerned about sparrows falling to the ground, yet he reenforces that they are worth more than the sparrows. Jesus reminds them that the Father knows about you and your condition, even the number of hairs on your head. He then reminds them of their divine covenant passed down from their Hebrew ancestors about them being acknowledged by God if they acknowledge God as their protector.

In a world where majority of relationships are based on control through fear, Jesus informs his disciples, as well as us, that faith in God is the only way we can overcome fear. And to obtain this faith, Jesus invites us to acknowledge the Father so we can be ‘Children of God.’ As parents, we are tasked to protect our children from danger and harm. God being our father is the ultimate parent, which makes him the ultimate protector as well. Faith in our fathers helped us handle our fears and God as the father of those who are under the threat of physical, mental and spiritual death will be no different. The thing we must ultimately remember is that faith and fear cannot reside in the same space. We must choose one.