
Fear Not

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

Why do people fear? Where does it come from? What exactly is this devastating emotion? We see the evidence of it on every hand. People are afraid to leave their homes at night. They fear being mugged, raped, beaten and robbed. They become vicariously involved with other people's tragic happenings, fearing the same might happen to them. We meet people who fear death or being in a helpless condition dependant upon others before death. Many senior citizens live in fear of their money not holding out to the end. We are living with a fearful generation.

Scriptural Demonstrations

It may surprise you to learn that FEAR is declared in various ways in the Bible more than 500 times. God's Word clearly defines it along with many examples of its exploits and its tragic consequences.

Fear first showed its ugly self within the heart of Adam and Eve prior to their being driven out of the Garden of Paradise by God. Be sure to count the personal pronouns in Adams' reply to God's call for an accounting. "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I WAS AFRAID because I was naked, and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10).

Fear is the automatic consequence of unbelief. Adam, in order to hear his wife's conflicting voice, had to refuse to believe and obey God. Listen to his explanation. "And the man said, The woman whom thou gayest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). Hear God's rejection to His excuse of such damnable action. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; and in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:17).

Fear—Lack of Faith

It is just this simple! I will show this truth as plainly stated in the Bible. Are you ready? Will you accept this Scriptural fact if pointed out to you? If you will not be honest about your personal position in relationship with fear, you might as well lay this message down and start reading the funny page or look at the idiot box. We are guided into the comprehension of Truth by the Holy Spirit. (John 16:13, 14) If a person is not open to Truth about himself, no time will be wasted by God revealing His provision.

The connection between fear and faith in the Bible cannot be missed or mistaken. "But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole" (Luke 8:50). Christ was asleep on a pillow in a boat in the midst of a storm. The disciples awakened him with a dumb question. "Carest thou not that we perish?" After producing a great calm by ordering the winds and the waves to be still, he said unto them, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:40). Here is the Lord's plain appraisal of the condition of fear. It is the lack of faith.

Definition of Fear

Of course there are two definitions of this subject matter. I am not talking about awe of profound reverence toward God

as The Supreme Ruler. I am speaking of a painful emotion indicated by alarm, dread and anxiety. Most fears are imaginary. This paralyzing emotion is usually the consequence of thinking what could or might happen. Ninety percent of that which we are fearful of never comes to pass. We fear only that which we do not have control over. Yet our Heavenly Father maintains absolute control over all our environmental factors. Some people have a dreadful attitude against their Heavenly Father as though He will not do the right thing in their behalf. So they live in a world of fear, which is nothing more than an accusation against God, who has already declared Himself in two wonderful verses. Read and believe them. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalms 84:11).

A Commandment

Have you forgotten the subject of this message? FEAR NOT! It is a command that goes through the entire Bible. It is included as part of the great commission of Christ. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:20). One writer indicates that 365 times in the Bible we are admonished to stop fearing. Think of it, a command for every day of the year. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6).

Our loving Lord had just fed about 15,000 people. Here comes Christ walking on the water. What should be so strange about this action? Was He not Master of the sea, earth and the heavens? He still greets His disciples of today as He did them. "It is I; BE NOT AFRAID" (Matt. 14:27).

The exercise of fear is a flat denial of faith and confidence in the promises of God as clearly outlined in His Word. Resignation to the accomplishment of God's will and purpose in no way relieves us of temporary grief. But to be fearful of a remote possibility of God not having His way, and our suffering independent of His will, is an exercise not becoming a Christian.

Motivation of Fear

How can we be fearful of death? "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:15). How dare a Christian be afraid of dying when God says it is far better and is gain and Christ will be magnified in our body whether it be by life or death. (Phil. 1:20-23).

The fear of man is very evident within many lives. What will others think? Is that more important to you than what God knows and has declared? "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

Many people in this pill age are fearful of physical afflictions. We should expect them. The Bible is full of such happenings to the Lord's servants. If God was to bring upon people what they are fearful of receiving, I would spend all my time conducting funerals. Better watch those fears! Such exercise is a sin and God may bring to pass that which you are anxious about. "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me" (Job 3:25).

Here is one serious insertion in this sermon. If you are fearful, better stop to check if you are in God's family. A person full of fear will not go to Heaven. In Rev. 21:8 we read that the fearful (listed first) plus the unbelieving, the abominable, etc., shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The individual possessing this horrible emotion must assume personal responsibility for it. God has not given such a devastating exercise. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). Listen to the consequence. "Fear bath torment" (I John 4:18). A Christian must work diligently to become fearful. He must by-pass many verses of clear demands in the Bible. Three times in Psalms 37 we are commanded to: "Fret not thyself." If we become troubled, it will be our deliberate course of action. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God believe also in me. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:1,27).

Solution to Fear

The disciples were entertaining fear regarding sufficient food and clothing. Was not God able to care for the birds of the air, etc? Here is Christ's promise. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). Trust and dependence will not mingle with fear. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Psalm 56:3).

The abiding presence of God dispels fear. (A fact in the Bible to be believed!) "And, behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Genesis 28:15).

Few people possess the provisions of the Psalm they can quote from memory. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

The God of love will never give us fear. We will steal that emotion from someone else. God's love is implanted deep into the heart of His children. "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). Possession of God's love means fear must be cast out. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:18). Fear if the evidence of an immature concept of God's love. Just how great is your Heavenly Father's love? Sufficient that you have no reason or room for fear? "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Psalms 34:4, 5).

Let Us Be Honest

It is not easy! Pride resists such action! It may be the first time in your life that you became absolutely honest about possession of that which should not be in your heart and mind! Do you have sufficient courage to admit your secret fears, unconfessed to anyone yet? Most of your close friends already know about them for the emotion of fear is almost impossible to conceal. Your complete honesty need not be acknowledged before people. When your fears are let go, everyone will see the difference in your personality and mental attitude. God is the only One you must confess your fears to. He is the One you have failed to lean on. A revelation of His greatness automatically relieves you of stress and strain from all areas.

Just how great is your God? Is He powerful enough to handle every situation you face? Does He still control life and death? Will

He make a mistake when He takes a loved one away from you? Has He committed Himself for your eternal benefit? Do you know His Promises already declared in His Word? Do you read them often? Will your God do the right thing by you?

Just in case you are willing to be honest about the horrible exercise of fear, here is a good way to begin: O God, this instant I confess that up to this minute you are not great enough to keep things from happening. For years I have possessed the dreadful thought that you are my enemy and may desire bad things to happen to me. I am sick and tired of fearing about things that you have maintained complete control over. I confess my dreadful sin of fear that has caused me to worry. I believe Thee to forgive and cleanse me of this sin of unbelief according to thy promise (I John 1:9). From this moment on, no longer shall I fear evil; for I believe thy promise, that Thou art with me (Psa. 23:4).

If God is not your Heavenly Father, it is because you are not in His family. He has provided a way for your abundant entrance. Down from Heaven came His Son, sent by God. If you will receive Him into your heart and life, His resurrection power will so change your life that God will adopt you into His family. "But as many as received Him (Jesus Christ), to them (the receivers) gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). It is your relationship with God that assures you of all of His promises becoming a reality within your heart and life.

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