

April 22, 2018-

Isaiah 41:10-13

- “Fear Impedes the Church”

### Introduction:

Our Senate and Congress are in the process of the confirmation of Mike Pompeo as our next Secretary of State. An overwhelming number of Evangelical Christians share Pompeo's belief that marriage is between one man and one woman. Mr. Pompeo is facing stiff opposition for his long-standing faith. People like Cory Booker have stated, Pompeo does not deserve to be confirmed." It's becoming increasingly difficult for people of the Christian faith to practice their religion in the public marketplace. Religious liberty is under attack—as evidenced by the very sordid congressional hearing. The cold, hard reality is there are some in Congress who believe that Christians who believe in the Biblical definition of marriage should not be allowed to bake cakes, sell wedding dresses, own flower shops or become secretary of state. Sen. Booker publicly tried to shame Mr. Pompeo because of his deeply held religious beliefs. That is disgraceful and it's downright shameful and un-American. I was very proud that Mr. Pompeo did not give in to fear of reprisal or fear of losing this confirmation. Fear impedes change and fear impedes progress, the same is true for our church.

**In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. Ps 56:4**  
**It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. Psalms 118:8**  
**We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29**

There are times in our lives that we all face fear, but fear is not something that should be easily accepted in the Christian Life. Over 182 " times God tells us to fear not" or the equivalents there-of is in the Bible. That is one for every other day of the year.

**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**

### I. Fear Affects Us - (Ex. 14:1-3).

1. There are more than 1,000 different kinds of human fears. The Greek word used in the NT for “fear” is “Phobos” from which we get our word “phobia,” a term we use to describe all kinds of fear. Recently I learn of some interesting new ones like: Gamophobia; fear of marriage, homilophobia, believe it or not is fear of sermons. Last, A rac hi-butyro phobia is the fear of peanut butter's sticking to the roof of one's mouth. All of us, men, women, children and even the best of Christians, have fears. Officially, about 8 percent of adults suffer from one or more phobias. The nature of these disorders reflect the landscape of worry and stress of 21st-century life. However, as Christians we can overcome many fears.

2. The only fear that God encourages in a Christian's life is the fear of the Lord. Heb. 10:31- Fear of people does not come from God. The problem is that many Christians fear people more than they fear God. In Matthew 10:28--- Jesus said, **fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**

Fear is one of Satan's most effective weapons to keep us from fulfilling God's purpose. The more Satan tries to dump on you the more you must claim the promises of God. That's why God says **"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 14:27

3. A great example of the effects of fear is the reaction of the Israelites when trapped by Pharaoh during the Exodus. When the Israelites leave Egypt God tells Moses to travel in circles so Pharaoh will think: They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in so this means the Lord leads them into a cul-de-sac. Mountains were on one side and the Red Sea on the other close in on the Israelites. They look up and saw Pharaoh with his army approaching them from the west and that is their response. In this passage we find fear affects us in at least two ways.

4. Fear cripples our faith. It is lurking in the shadows around every corner, if you allow it to fear will poison your inner peace and sleep. It works its evil in the shadows and in the darkness. How many of us have laid awake at night in fear of a medical exam or test results or what our kids are doing? Young people you have fears too...

The Israelites have already witnessed God working in their behalf with the Ten Plagues in Egypt. Then, as they leave Egypt, the Lord continuously leads them with a miraculous cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21-22). Thus, the Lord has a continual presence among His people. Psalm 105:39 describe this **"He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night"**.

However, fear cripples their faith. They want to know why Moses brought them out of Egypt and even accuse him of bringing them into the desert to die (Ex. 14:11). Like the Israelites, fear cripples our faith and...

## II. Fear changes our focus.

1. Moses is leading the Israelites to freedom and blessings in the Promised Land. They had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years. As slaves they were treated with cruelty and forced to make bricks and do all kinds of back-breaking work in the fields (Ex. 1:13-14). However, fear has made them change their focus. The Israelites tell Moses in **Exodus 14:12-13...**

2. That isn't true. When Moses first told the Israelites the Lord had sent him to lead them to the Promised Land, they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord (Ex. 4:31). Fear causes us to resist change and want to live in the past. The Israelites want to go back to the "good ole days." You remember the "good ole days" when we didn't have indoor plumbing. The Israelites thought they preferred the brutal slavery of Egypt because fear caused them to change their focus.

Fear changes your focus and causes you to miss God's protection, peace and purpose for your life. Look with me at what Isaiah said in 41:10-13. That is powerful. What do you fear right now? Losing your job, aging, declining health not being able to pay your bills? Someone once wrote, "Fear is- **False Evidence Appearing Real**. We are born with only two fears: the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. All other fears are learned they can be unlearned.

### Illustration:

J. C. Penney wrote a book entitled, *The Ninth Decade*". In that book Mr. Penney told about having had a nervous breakdown from fear when he was but a young man in his early twenties. He had one small department store at the time in a little town in Wyoming, not far from Denver. The business had become too much for him, causing his breakdown. As he was recovering in the hospital, one Sunday afternoon he heard through the open door of his room some Christian young people singing, "God Will Take Care of You".

From his hospital bed, Mr. Penney said something like this to God, "is that just a song, or is it true?" Then he heard God say trust me; I'll take care of you. J. C. Penney said, "God, I'll make a deal with you right now. I'll take you as my senior partner, and I'll turn the business over to you and run it for your glory. We will be partners, and I'll turn over to you the burdens and problems that I am unable to carry if you will heal me and give me strength." Mr. Penny told in his book of how healing began on that day, as God gave him strength. He went on to become very successful, with some 1,600 stores across America. The turn-around came when he turned his cares and his fears over to God.

### III. Fear stifles Church Growth

1. When we are challenge by the Spirit of God to serve Him in a certain ministry we should not allow fear to stop us. However, that is what often happens in churches. Fear impedes church growth and progress just as we witnessed with the Israelites. Has God called you to work in the Jr. Church program? Maybe he has called you to become a missionary are you obeying or is fear keeping you from God will in your life?

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: Philippians 1:6

2. Do not give in to fear, with God you can rise above it... Is. 41:1 - "repeat until they get it!" Have you allowed fear to keep you from being a witness and sharing the gospel with your friend or partner, mom or dad, neighbor or sibling? If God has laid that on your heart don't let fear keep you from it. You will regret not sharing if they pass on unexpectedly... I have.

### Conclusion:

When the Evil One tries to put fear in your heart, you can drive it away with a Bible promise. When you're afraid, remember fear cripples our faith and changes our focus.

**And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Psalms 50:15**