

March 15, 2020

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Isaiah 41:10-13

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Overcoming Fears

Introduction:

Last week there was an rare run on a very common substance call hand sanitizer. Panic over the coronavirus or Covid 19 has caused a run on hand sanitizers. Now, sanitizers from Purell and other brands are exceedingly hard to come by if you can get them at all. Where it isn't sold out, stores and sellers are charging outrageous prices simply because they can. If you don't have any hand sanitizer, you're not likely to get it until the manufacturers create enough supply to meet the frenzied demand caused by the panic over the coronavirus. We are seeing people storming stores for water and other products all because of the panic and fear.

Fear is a difficult issue of life and many proved that last week. We live in times when fear of the unknown can scare us.

There are times in our life that we all face fear, but fear is not something that should be easily accepted in the Christian Life. But 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

Fear is a part of our lives. 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. "Hydrophobia" is the fear of water; "tachophobia" is the fear of speed; and "claustrophobia" is the fear of tight places. Today we are aware of the newest fear mysophobia or germaphobia. There are more than 1,000 different kinds of human fears. All of us, men, women, children and the best of us, have fears. When fear walks in, strength runs out, strength returns when we turn to God.

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

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

1. 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 that 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 fear is their response. In this passage we find fear affects us in at least two ways.

2. 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 it 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? We see this with the covid -19 scare. I remember back in 1968 when the Hong Kong flu pandemic hit America there was not this kind of panic. It was a time when people trusted and had a greater faith in God and prayers made a difference. Today in our culture there is not this kind of relationship with the Lord because we as a nation lack

being a nation of prayer and godliness. Telling you stay calm, remain calm, yes that is good advice along with the practical things...But staying calm is very hard without the one who does the calming, the Comforter. Jn 14:16,26

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).

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 overlook 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- **F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal. 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.

III. So...How do we Alleviate Fear

1. Remember God's power. To calm their fears, Moses tells the Israelites the LORD shall fight for them (Ex. 14:14). Just as Isaiah said in 41:10-13. Then, the Lord tells Moses to lead the Israelites to the Red Sea and raise his rod over the sea, which will divide and allow the Israelites to cross on dry land (Ex. 14:15-16).

2. The secret to alleviating our fears is found in a great Bible verse- 2 Timothy 1:7.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

From this verse we find God, through the Holy Spirit, supplies us with three things to alleviate our fears. God supplies us with His power. Without God's power we will constantly be victimized by fear. In 1 Samuel 17 we find the story of Goliath, David, a young shepherd boy, understands the power of God. Armed with only a slingshot and five stones, David goes out to fight this giant. Daniel faced some lions, Elijah faced the prophets

of Baal on Mt. Carmel and on we could go. To overcome fear we need courage because we have God on our side. When our faith is placed in our God, courage, grit, it is more than a match for fear. It is inner strength that comes from God and knowing who you are in HIM.

3. According to 2 Timothy 1:7, God does not give us the spirit of fear he supplies us with the spirit of power and ... God supplies us with assurance of His love. God's love helps us overcome our fears. The Bible tells us there is no fear in love. Instead, I John 4:18 tell us:

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.

4. Fear is the result of our lack of faith in God's love for us. As Christians we should never, fear the future because of God's power and love for us. We can alleviate any fear if we focus on God's incredible love for us.

God supplies us with a sound mind. This literally means God gives us self-discipline or self-control. We don't get hysterical or become paralyzed by fear when serious problems come. The Holy Spirit enables us to keep cool heads when the monster "giant" fears come.

To know how to alleviate fear, we must remember God's power and...

None of us live in a vacuum. Therefore we must put something in place of the fear that we come to reject. May I suggest we replace it with the promises of God. The Bible has a perfectly matched promise for every fear we will ever face. Therefore, find a Bible promise that expels your fear, and memorize it so it's readily accessible. We are created for the best and the worst that life can give, providing we allow our faith to go deep in God.

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 prayed 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.

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