

Place: Lurgan Baptist 12:6:2011

Reading: 2 Timothy 2:1-12

GRAPPLING WITH THE GIANTS

4. THE GIANT OF FEAR

Ten henpecked husbands formed themselves into a sworn society for the resisting the poisonous oppression of their wives. At the first meeting they were sitting relaxing, talking over their problems when suddenly the ten wives, who had got wind of the movement, appeared on the scene. There was a general stampede and nine of the husbands bolted like rats through a side door, and only one remained to face the music. The ladies merely smiled contemptuously at the success of their raid, and went away. The nine husbands then agreed that the courageous tenth man, who had not run away, should be appointed their president. But on coming to offer him the post, they found that he had died of fright. Clarence Macartney said, “ *From the cradle to the grave, fear cast's its baleful shadow.*” He also said that “ *fear is man's greatest adversary.*” Ann Landers who has written an advice column for over three decades in the U.S.A. reports that she receives more than 10,000 letters a week. She said that she receives more mail concerning fear than any other matter.

My does this not amaze you ? More than finances, children, stress, or marriage the thing that she receives the most mail about is fear. Howard Hughes was so

afraid of germs that he used 4 boxes of Kleenex each day wiping off everything he touched. Evil Knievel was not afraid to try and jump the Grand Canyon on a motorcycle but he was terrified of flying. President and Mrs. Benjamin Harrison were so intimidated by the newfangled electricity installed in the White House they didn't dare touch the switches. If there were no servants around to turn off the lights when the Harrison's went to bed, they slept with them on. People are filled with fear about many things. *Some are fearful of not getting that job promotion. Some are fearful of losing their job. Some are fearful of their children turning out wrong, or coming down with cancer. Some are fearful of war and terrorism. Some are fearful they will never find someone to marry.* You may be like the fellow I heard about. He was called **Farmer Joe**. He had been involved in a serious accident and decided his injuries from the accident were serious enough to take the transport company to court.

In court this firm's lawyer was questioning farmer Joe. “ *Didn't you say at the scene of the accident, I'm fine,*” said the lawyer. Farmer Joe responded, “ *Well I'll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favourite mule Bessie into the,*” The lawyer interrupted, “ *I didn't ask for any details just answer the question. Did you not say at the scene of the accident, I'm fine,*” said the lawyer. Farmer Joe said, “ *Well I had just got Bessie into the trailer and I was driving down the road,*”

The lawyer interrupted again, “ *Judge I'm trying to establish the fact, that, at the scene of the accident this*

*man told the policeman that he was fine. Now weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. Please tell him to simply answer the question.” By this time the judge was interested in Farmer Joe and he said to the lawyer. “ I’d like to hear what he has to say about his favourite mule Bessie.” So Joe continued, “ Well I was saying, I had just loaded Bessie, into the trailer and was driving down the road when this huge truck came through the lights and smacked me. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurting real bad and couldn’t move. But I could hear old Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she was in terrible shape. Shortly after the accident a policeman came on the scene. He heard Bessie moaning and went over to her. After he looked at her he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the policeman came running across the road with his gun in his hand and he looked at me. He said, “ Your mule was in such bad shape I had to shoot her. **How are you feeling ?”***

There’s no feeling quite like the icy grip of fear. Fear has been described as a small trickle of doubt that flows through the mind until it wears such a great channel that all your thoughts drain into it. Tiny fears, almost unperceived, can build up day by day until we find ourselves paralyzed and unable to function. Do you know what I’m talking about ? Are you being hounded by the giant of fear ? Lets look at this matter of fear from a biblical standpoint this and notice,

(1) THE FACT OF IT

Look if you will at (1:7) Now there are many kinds of fear. The Greek word for “ *fear*,” is “ *phobas*,” from which we get our word “ *phobia*.” Someone has said that there are over 700 different kinds of phobias. There is claustrophobia which is the fear of enclosed places. There is acrophobia which is the fear of high places. There is ergophobia, the fear of work. There is gamophobia the fear of marriage. A fear many of the saints have is ecclesiophobia, the fear of churches. A phobia is what results when fear and reason don’t keep in touch. Now, when we turn to the Bible we see that,

(a) *THERE IS A HOLY FEAR:*

We read in the Decalogue, “ *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve Him.*” (Deut 6:13) “ *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.*” (Prov 1:7) This is a holy fear, a fear of the Lord. This fear, of course is a proper respect and reverence for God. It’s not the crippling fear of a slave before a brutal master, but the proper respect of a son before a loving father. The fear of the Lord has a way of keeping us close to the Lord. In a negative sense there is a fear of what God will do to us, but in a positive sense there is a fear of what we will do to God. A young girl was out with some friends and they were trying to get her to drink. She refused. One said to her, “ *What’s the matter. Are you afraid your parents will find out and hurt you ?*” She replied, “ *No I am afraid my parents will find out and I will hurt them.*” My “ *the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.*” (Prov 8:13) The fear of the Lord is love on its knees. Have you this holy fear ? To abstain from

everything that displeases Him and do everything that please Him.

(b) THERE IS A HEALTHY FEAR:

Franklin D. Roosevelt shortly after becoming President of the U.S.A. in 1933 said, “ *We have nothing to fear but fear itself.* ” Now that is a famous quote, but there is one thing wrong with it. It is not true. The Lord Jesus taught us there are some things we ought to fear. He said, “ *And 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.* ”

(Matt 10:28) There are always certain things we need to fear. A smart electrician better fear electricity if he is going to be around for supper. An airline pilot will have a form of fear that causes him to double check all the instruments. A doctor should have fear of a wrong diagnosis if he wants his patients to get well. My if we had no fear, we would be liable to injure ourselves constantly or kill ourselves. God has given us a sense of caution that can protect and preserve us. We instil into our children a healthy fear.

(c) THERE IS A HARMFUL FEAR:

There is a fear that is destructive and hurtful. In (1:7) Paul spoke of the “ *spirit of fear.* ” He was speaking of the presence and power of fear in ones life. The fear that paralyses people, the fear that gets into the heart and mind and creates tension and worry and keeps a person from enjoying life and doing his best. Have you ever know that kind of fear ? I have. My it is these hurtful fears that victimise us, neutralise us,

monopolise us, and immobilise us. Do you recall the Children of Israel ? On the border of Canaan, about to go into the promised land ? God’s mandate was clear. “ *Here is your land. Here is my gift to you. Now go grab it.* ” But they didn’t cross the finish line. They couldn’t take a stand against the final obstacle. Do you know what that was ? **Fear.** Do you recall the Disciples of Christ ? The Lord told them to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. (Matt 14:22) Suddenly a storm came from nowhere, and the disciples found themselves in a fight for their lives. Even when they saw the Lord Jesus approaching on the water they were terrified. They thought He was a ghost. (Matt 14:26) They let fear get the better of them. **Hurtful fears.** Are they handling you right now ? What is that fear that is *tormenting*

You ? (1 Jn 4:8) Is it the fear of ill-health ? The fear of loneliness ? The fear of failure ? The fear of your children turning out wrong ? The fear of not finding the right partner in life ? What is your fear right now ? That which is defeating you, distracting you. and destroying you ? That which is making you shake in your boots ?

(2) THE FRUIT OF IT

The story is told of a peasant, driving into a European city, who gave a lift to an aged woman. As they drove along the peasant became alarmed as he learned that his passenger was the plague, cholera. But she assured him that only ten people in the city would die of cholera. She even offered the peasant a dagger, saying that he could slay her if more than ten people died. But

after they reached the city more than one hundred people perished. As the angry peasant drew the dagger to deal a death blow, the plague lifted her hand and protested.

“ Wait I killed only ten people, fear killed the rest. ”

Isn't that story so true to life ? My fear has a greater effect upon us than we imagine. Listen, fear will affect us,

(a) SPIRITUALLY:

Look if you will at (1:6) Now Timothy was a very gifted man, unusually equipped and anointed to do the work of God. He had a remarkable gift of God but he failed to use it. His fervor had cooled. And why did he fail to use the gifts that he had ? He'd forgotten. Now, says, Paul *“ I put thee in remembrance. You've forgotten who you are. You have forgotten your heritage. You have forgotten what God has done for you and what God wants to do through you. Timothy, you're a very gifted man, but you've forgotten it. ”* Now what caused him to forget ? What caused him to neglect his gift ? Fear. Do you see how (1:6-7) are connected ? They are connected by that little word *“ for. ”*

Now the idea is that fear had caused him to forget. When you focus on fear then that takes all of the blue out of the sky and you don't see, you don't understand who you are or what you can do. *And that, fear just causes you to forget all the blessings of God.* Many of you to whom I preach are immensely gifted, tremendously blessed, but have fears that stifle you and

keep you from receiving all that God has in store for you. In fixating on your fear you tend to forget God and all his blessings. Now Timothy at this time didn't have much to be afraid of. If anybody had anything to be afraid of it was Paul who wrote this. Do you know where Paul was when he wrote this ? Paul was in prison. Do you see what he says in (1:8) Now Paul was a prisoner of the Lord in a metaphorical sense in that he was a bondsman to the Lord Jesus, but he was also a prisoner in the literal sense in that he was in prison. Paul was in prison when he wrote this. Perhaps, waiting to be executed. But Paul is not afraid. He says in (1:12) *“ For which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day. ”* Paul says, *“ I know whose I am. I know what I've committed to the Lord. Sure I'm in prison, I am shut up, but it's alright. ”* Paul had not forgotten who God was and how great God was. Paul had his eyes focused on the Lord and even though he was writing in prison you could just feel the breath of heaven flowing through that prison. My has fear affected your spiritually ? Have you failed to utilize the gifts God has entrusted to you ? Have you forgotten who God is and who you are ?

Do you recall the parable of the talents that Christ told ? The man with 5 talents turned it into 10 talents. The man with 3 talents turned it into 6 talents. But the man with 1 talent buried it and hid it in the ground. Why ? *“ I was afraid. ”* (Matt 25:14-30) Fear had kept him from doing what his master wanted him to do. Investing his talents. My what about you ? Has the

fear of water kept you back from baptism ? Has the fear of ruin kept you kept back from tithing ? Has the fear of what others think kept you back from membership ? Has the fear of what it will cost you kept you back from crowning Christ Lord ? Have you been neutralised by fear ? (a)

(b) VOCATIONALLY:

Do you notice how Paul links (1:7-8) ?) Was this Timothy's fear ? The fear of standing up for Christ ? Paul was in prison. It is possible that Timothy was fearful the same thing would happen to him. Fear had paralysed Timothy and shut him up. Dr. Roland Q. Leavell in his book, “ *Evangelism: Christ's Imperative Commission*,” writes that fear is the number one reason for Christians not witnessing. My one of Satan's chief weapons to keep us from standing up and speaking out for Christ is fear. We are afraid of letting people we work with know we are Christians. We are afraid to talk to others about Christ. No doubt the reason we can't muster too many believers to do door to door work from this church is fear. Yet is this not our vocation? To make Christ known. My fear can take so much control of you that you become so afraid to do anything that you wind up doing nothing.

There was a farmer once who was sitting in front of his shack smoking his pipe. A stranger came by and said, “ *How is your cotton coming along ?* ” The farmer said “ *I don't have any cotton. I did not plant any because I was afraid of the boll weevil.* ” The man said, “ *Well, how is your corn doing ?* ” He said, “ *I didn't plant any corn, I was afraid of the drought.* ” The stranger said,

“ *Well, how about your potatoes ?* ” The farmer said, “ *I don't have any potatoes, I was too scared of the potato bugs.* ” The stranger said, “ *Well, just what did you plant ?* ” The farmer said, “ *Nothing, I just played it safe.* ” Is this you ? Never accomplishing anything, for the Lord, never reaching your full potential because you are haunted by the ghost of fear. (a) (b)

(c) PHYSICALLY:

Do you recall what Paul said to Timothy ? “ *Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.* ” (1 Tim 5:23) No doubt Timothy had health problems. Now was he afraid because he was sick ? Or was he sick because he was afraid ? Whatever, it has been said that fear is directly responsible for a large proportion of the ills of the human body. Dr. R.R. Grinker has said, “ *Fear produces emotional stress and the inevitable consequences of high blood pressure, heart trouble, migraine etc.;* Do you recall what Eliphaz one of Job's friends said, “ *Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up.* ” (Job 4:14-15) In other words when fear gripped him, his emotions were upset and he became tense. My has this not been your experience ? Has that fear of yours not robbed you of sleep and made you hard to live with ?

I heard about a lady who had this fear that a more attractive woman would rob her of her husband, She constantly charged her husband with philandering,

ultimately with adultery with this imaginary woman. Finally, she made life so unbearable for him he cleared out. But there was no other woman, his life was pure, but an unfounded fear had wrecked a home, destroyed her happiness and in due course ruined her life. Is the fruit of fear evident in your life ? (a) (b) (c) How can we enjoy freedom from the bondage of fear ? Well notice, not only (1) (2)

(3) THE FREEDOM FROM IT

There's a little phrase in the Bible, it's a simple phrase, and one that the Lord sees fit to repeat so often, all through the Scriptures. Do you know what it is ?
“ **Fear not,**” Dr. David Jeremiah tells us that it's stated in the imperative tense which means it is a command. How many times must God command us not to fear ?
“ *Therefore to him that Chynoweth to do good, and doeth it not to him it is sin.* ” (James 4:17) You see, the next time you find yourself overcome with fear, remember this. **To dwell in fear is to live in sin.** The Lord has given us everything we need to deal with fear. Indeed right here Paul is telling us that we need not live in bondage to fear, for we have been given the resources to overcome our fear. Did you notice these resources in
(1:7) ? Notice,

(a) GOD ENDUES US WITH POWER:

“ *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power.* ” (1:7) Christ promised, “ *But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.* ”

(Acts 1:8) He is talking about the power of the Holy Spirit. My so often we are afraid because we do not believe we have the necessary resources to face the challenges before us. We do have the spiritual equipment with which to face the foe, the devil himself. Oh, that we might understand that resident within us is a power greater than any foe anywhere, therefore we do not have to be afraid. John says, “ *greater is He that is in you than he that is the world.* ” (1 Jn 4:4) Do you know why the Lord says so often in the Bible “ *Fear not ?* ” Because He has given us the Holy Spirit who enables us to overcome our fears. My God is with you, God is within you, God is around you. Now you think about it. If God is our Father above us, if Christ is our Friend beside us, and the Holy Spirit is the Force within us, why should we fear anyone or anything ? We should sing with the psalmist of old, “ *The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear, the Lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid.* ” (Ps 27:1) Are you remembering God's power within you ? Do you know just how great your God is ? Only glance at your problems but gaze at you God. For (a)

(b) GOD ENRICHES US WITH LOVE:

“ *For God and of love.* ” (1:7) How does love combat fear ? Well, John says “ *perfect love casteth out fear.* ” (1 Jn 4:18) Now understand that this does not refer to my love for God, because my love is not perfect. This refers to God's love for me. Do you know what that means ? I do not have to be afraid for God loves me perfectly. Let me give you one reason why

you should never fear again. God loves you. Now if I know that God loves me, then I know that He will never allow anything to happen to me but that it will work out for my good. My I do not have a perfect love, and neither do you, but yet with an imperfect love I would never do anything to hurt my children. Why then do we think that God who has a perfect love would do something or allow something to hurt us ? You see, when we realise His love it calms our fears. And we can pray, “ *Lord, no matter what happens to me I know that you love me. And because You love me, and because You are all-powerful, all things are working together for my good.* ” My will you just rest in His love ?

(a) (b)

(c) GOD ENLIGHTENS US WITH WISDOM:

The word “ *sound*, ” speaks of discipline and conveys the idea of discernment. In other words, we have not only God’s power and God’s protection, we have God’s perspective. God has given us a discerning mind so that we can see fear for what it really is. Did you know that so much of our fear is unfounded and ungrounded ? Zig Ziglar says that fear, *F-E-A-R*, is often “ *False Evidence which Appears Real.* ” In conclusion, let me give you three practical steps on how to take these resources that we already possess and achieve “ *freedom from fear.* ”

1. Admit your Fear: When David had been captured one time by the Philistines, he said, “ *What time I am I*

will trust in thee. ” (Ps 56:3) The eminent king of Israel admitted that he was afraid. Acting as if you are not afraid or acting as if fear does not exist will not resolve the problem. Never be embarrassed to admit your fear.

2. Activate you Faith: God’s answer to fear is faith. You have to come to the place where you say, “ *No matter what happens or what comes my way, I will trust you Lord.* ” Above the mantle of a famous hotel in England, there is this inscription, “ *Fear knocked at the door. Faith answered. No one was there.* ” Those who trust God fully are ready for anything and will fear nothing. (Ps 112:7) Therefore, you need to release your faith and act upon it.

(3) Acknowledge your Father: David had said that when he was afraid he would trust God. Yet Isaiah, perhaps a little more mature at this point in his life said, “ *Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid.* ” (Is 12:2) Charles Haddon Spurgeon, once said, “ *The past you need not fear for it is forgiven you, the present you need not fear; it is provided for, the future you need not fear; it is secured by the living power of Jesus.* ” I heard about a prison in British Columbia Canada. When this prison was being demolished, the workmen discovered something fascinating. Even though the gates were steel and the windows were barred, the outer walls were made only of wood board covered with clay and paper, painted to look as if the walls were thick metal. At any time anyone could have

gone through those walls with very little effort but no prisoner ever tried because they all believed the walls would never move.

Do your fears look like impenetrable walls this ?
The hot knife of your faith can cut through them as though they were cardboard. So two words I leave with you. Two words, from Him who had power over demons, disease, and death. “ **Fear not.**” For with the Saviour at your side you can say “ *farewell to fear.*”