

Overcoming Fear

No. 136

Introduction.

I. There are many things that characterize the age in which we live. One of these things is fear. There has perhaps never been an age as fearful as this one. It seems that every man, woman and child is afraid of something. Some have said that the 20th century may go down in history as “The Age of Fear.”

II. In view of this fact, let us study some of the fears of modern man and how to overcome them.

I. **Fear God Will Fail Them** - One thing most people fear is that God will fail them.

A. The man of the world often fails to keep his word so many think God will do the same.

1. This is a needless fear. God is not like man. He is not weak or forgetful.
2. The scriptures assure us that God will keep His promises. God has never failed to keep a single promise in the past and He will keep His promises today.

B. Let us consider some the great promises God has made.

1. God has promised to **provide our physical needs**. As long as we serve God we do not need to fear hunger or starvation. (Matt. 6:25, 26, 30, 33; Phil. 4:19).
2. God has promised to **be with us in times of danger**.
 - a. He says to the fearful. (Gen. 26:24; Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5).
 - b. **One time a child said to his father**, “Daddy, do not leave me, for if you are with me I shall not be afraid.” After the child had gone to sleep the father prayed, “Dear God, do not leave me, if you are with me I shall not be afraid.”
3. God has promised to **forgive our sins**.
 - a. Some fear their sins are too great to be forgiven.
 - b. No sin is too great to be forgiven if we will confess it. (1 Jn. 1:9).
4. God has promised to help us **overcome temptation**.
 - a. 1 Cor. 10:13; Jas. 4:7, 8.
 - b. One of the ways God helps us overcome temptation is by providing us with armor.

EPH 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God,

that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

- c. Paul informs us that Satan and the forces of evil are fierce and hard to defeat. The Christian has just one way of defeating Satan. He must trust in God and His power and He must put on the whole armor of God.
 - d. Leaving off a part of God's armor will result in utter defeat.
5. God has promised to help us **bear our burdens**. (Psa. 55:22).
- a. Years ago a **farmer in a wagon picked up a packpeddler** and the man sat down on the floor of the wagon bed. After awhile the farmer looked back and saw that the peddler still had the pack on his back. He asked, "Why don't you lay the pack down and take a rest?" The peddler replied, "I didn't know whether you were willing to haul both me and my pack or not."
 - b. How foolish! Many of us are just like this peddler.
 - c. We bear a needless load throughout life because we are afraid to lay our burdens down on the Lord and take a rest.
6. God has promised us a **home in heaven**.
- a. This is not "pie in the sky".
 - b. Heaven is a real and beautiful place. (Jn. 14:1,2).
 - c. Heaven is a place that is without fear. The citizens of heaven enjoy the presence of the Almighty God and do not have to fear anything.
 - d. Such things as war, death, disease, pain, evil, sorrow, darkness will all be gone.
 - e. These things cannot exist in the presence of God.
- C. **C.D. Martin** has written this hymn.

<p>Be not dismayed whate'er betide God will take care you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you.</p> <p>Thro' days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you; When dangers fierce you path assail, God will take care of you.</p> <p>All you may need He will provided, God will take care of you; Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you.</p>	<p>No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you.</p> <p>God will take care of you, Thro' every day, O'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.</p>
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II. **Fear Criticism** - A second thing many people fear is criticism.

A. They are fearful someone will find fault with them. We should not fear criticism for the simple reason it is inevitable. People will find fault with us no matter what we do.

1. This was **true in the life of Christ**.

- a. Christ was criticized for **eating with sinners and publicans**. (Matt. 9:11). If Christ had not done so, He would have been called haughty. People would have said, "He thinks he is too good to eat with sinners."
- b. Christ was also criticized because he came from **a poor family**. (Matt. 13:55). If Christ had been rich, men would have said, "He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth."

2. **Jesus taught that we will receive criticism**. (Lk. 6:26).

- a. What I am saying is illustrated by **an old Spanish parable** concerning a man, a boy and a donkey. They were all walking down a dusty road on a summer day. They overheard some passerby say, "Look at those foolish people walking when at least one of them could be riding the donkey." Not wanting to appear foolish, the father climbed upon the donkey. It was not long until another onlooker remarked, "Look at that inconsiderate man making that poor little boy walk." Upon hearing this, the father and the son exchanged places. It was not long before an onlooker remarked, "Look at that young man riding and the old man walking in the heat of the day." The father then got on the donkey with the son. They had only ridden a short distance when another passerby exclaimed, "Look at that poor donkey carrying those two people; they should be carrying the donkey instead." So the man and the boy tied the donkey's legs to a pole and proceeded to carry the donkey. Everyone then exclaimed, "Look at those foolish people."
- b. This parable proves that we cannot please everybody no matter what we do.

B. **We should not fear criticism**.

- 1. Instead of fearing criticism, we should learn to profit by it. We should examine ourselves very carefully. If we are doing wrong, we should attempt to correct our lives. If we are doing right, we should ignore the criticism and go ahead with what we are doing.

2. **Benjamin Franklin** said, “Be sure you are right and go ahead.”

III. **Loss Of Possessions** - A third thing many people fear today is they may lose their possessions.

- A. They are afraid they will lose their jobs. They live in constant dread of another depression like we had in the 1930's. They are so alarmed over what might come in the future that they cannot be happy.
- B. This fear is needless because **even if all is lost it can be regained**. Many a man has regained his wealth with the passing of time.
- C. This fear is also needless because the **worst financial ruin is for life only**. The important thing is to have wealth in heaven, not on earth. (Matt. 6:19, 20).

IV. **Fear Persecution** - Another thing many people fear is persecution.

- A. They are afraid they will be scorned. They are afraid they will be harmed or put in prison or lose their lives.
- B. Jesus taught us not to fear persecution. (Matt. 10:28; 5:10-12).

V. **Fear Death** - Still another thing that most people fear is death.

- A. The man of the world is especially afraid of death. He does not like to talk about it or think about it. He tries to push the thought of death completely out of his mind. Chills run down him as he thinks of being placed in a grave with 6 feet of dirt over him.
- B. The Christian should not fear death.
 - 1. The grave is not his end.
 - 2. Through Jesus Christ the Christian will be victorious over death. (Jn. 3:36; 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:22, 50-53).
 - 3. Pau wrote.

1TH 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

- 4. In view of these passages the Christian can have great confidence toward death. (Phil. 1:21).

Conclusion.

- I. We can have this great, unfearing confidence toward death. We can have it if we trust in Jesus and will become a

Christian.

II. We must count the cost, turn from sin, confess our faith in Christ and be baptized. (Mk. 16:16).

III. Those who have never committed to Christ are invited to do so as we stand and sing of song of invitation.

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