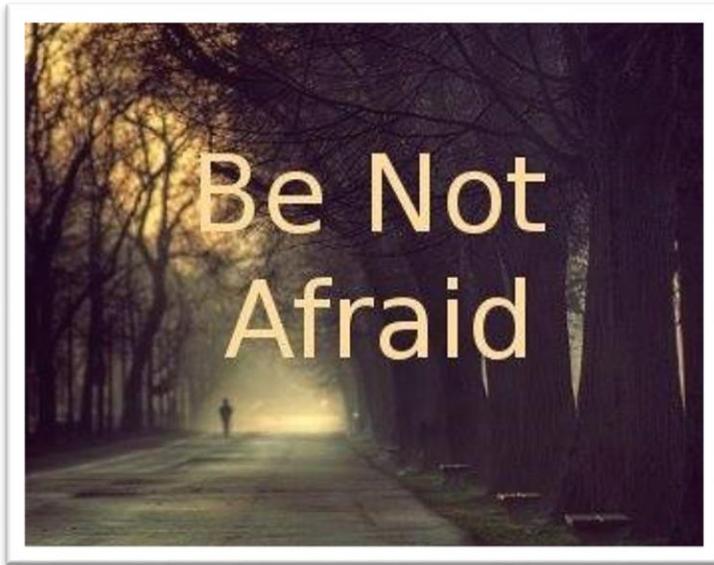


## DEALING WITH FEAR



Yes, I fully admit that there are times when I feel afraid – but I have learned what to do with that fear.

If one is immersed only in this world, there is a LOT to fear. This world is very uncertain. However, if one derives life from another world – one that is unshakeable – then fear has little to cling to, or at least for very long.

This “other world,” Jesus called the kingdom of God. He told a confused Pontius Pilate that he WAS a king, but his kingdom was not of this world.

Jesus MANIFESTED his kingship of this other world as he healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, drove out demons, raised the dead, and preached good news to the poor.

The kingdom of God is a PRESENT reality. It is deeper, higher, broader, and in every way superior to this world of our senses. It is available NOW – not just in heaven.

We enter this kingdom, and it enters us, as we entrust ourselves to Jesus Christ and follow him.

Reading in the Gospels, one is struck by the NUMEROUS times Jesus urged his disciples not to be afraid. Jesus completely understood our weakness and vulnerability to things outside our control.

Jesus also knew that in the kingdom of God we have nothing to fear – no harm can come to us.

“Wait a minute,” you may be thinking. “All kinds of hurtful things happen to Christians, even martyrdom – how does that square with not being harmed?”

The distinction is this: everyone in this life gets hurt. Hurt has to do with pain. Harm has to do with DESTRUCTION. That, Jesus promised, will never come our way, even if martyred for our faith.

We tend to view life in tombstone fashion: date of birth to date of death. God, on the other hand, views this life as a phase, the purpose of which is “training for reigning.”

As my mentor Dr. Dallas Willard used to say, “What God gets out of our life is the kind of person we have become. His goal is that we become the kind of persons he can trust to do what WE want into eternity.”

The gymnasium for “training for reigning” is the testing (and strengthening) of our faith through trials.

Jesus strongly rebuked the “fear of man” and urged us, if we are to fear at all, we should fear God – who certainly can send people to hell – yet this same God knows every sparrow that falls to the ground, knows every hair on our head, and as our heavenly Father, WILL protect us.

Our job is to seek God’s face before all else in life – and EVERYTHING will then be provided.

PERHAPS YOU ARE AFRAID RIGHT NOW. What can you do about the fear?

START BY TELLING YOURSELF THE TRUTH. God can be trusted.

TAKE OFF THE WIDE-ANGLE LENS AND USE THE TELEPHOTO INSTEAD. When afraid, we tend to scan far and wide tormenting ourselves with the “what if?” questions. This just magnifies the fear. Instead focus on the very near and the manageable.

READ PSALM 91 and take it to heart.

DO YOUR DUTY IN SPITE OF FEAR. The devil uses fear to paralyze and keep us from doing God’s will.

ASK GOD TO LIFT THE FEAR as you move forward in obedience.

HARNESS YOUR THOUGHTS to this present moment – and keep harnessing them.

ASK OTHERS TO PRAY FOR YOU.

HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD and he will raise you up.

FIRMLY COMMAND THE DEVIL TO LEAVE YOU ALONE because you belong to Jesus Christ. Do this out loud, with conviction, and insist on it.

PRAISE GOD WITH YOUR VOICE and sing love songs to him from your heart.

THANK HIM FOR EVERY SINGLE THING. Your cup of coffee. Your breakfast. Your health. Your salvation.

MEMORIZE THESE WORDS OF JESUS:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:27

Have you accepted Jesus Christ into your life? ENTRUSTING YOURSELF TO JESUS CHRIST IS THE VERY BEST THING YOU CAN DO.