

SERMON: SAVED AND SANCTIFIED AND SOMETIMES SCARED

2nd Timothy 1:7

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

Introduction

The subject of this sermon may sound contradictory to some listeners. It may fall upon some ears as a fictional oxymoron. When we accept Christ as our personal Savior we become new creatures; we do not become perfect creatures. Our sanctification will not become complete until will transition to eternity. Therefore, Christians can become scared. The good news is that God has provided the tools to dispel fear.

Let's keep it real. Everyone, including born-again Christians, experiences fear at one time or another. There are things that do scare us, at least initially, leaving us jumpy, timid, painfully uneasy, and sometimes too startled to act with any reason or readiness.

Psychologists contend that fear is a universal emotion both in humans and in beasts. It is the first emotion to develop. It is a response to a perceived threat or perceived loss, either real or imaginary. Some contend that fear is like the wild animals in the circuses. The lions and tigers can be tamed and trained to do tricks but never domesticated. The animal tamers are always on their guard and never turn their backs on the animals. As soon as the acts are concluded, the animals are driven back to their cages. Likewise, we must watch and pray and put fear in its proper place.

Those who claim they are never scared, just use some of the synonyms for fear: alarm, nervousness, despondency, dismay, horror, panic, or terror. It is a matter of semantics.

A study of the Bible will reveal that fear has been an unwelcomed traveling companion of humans since the beginning of time. There are seventeen different nouns and thirteen different verbs for the idea of fear in the original languages in which the Bible was written.

Fear is a reality; the Bible acknowledges it. Some of our fears are normal. Sometimes we call normal fear "rational self-interest." Normal fear can be an aid to our safety, comfort, knowledge, and health. A person void of normal fear is always in danger of disaster. (If only Adam and Eve had been afraid to eat the forbidden fruit, things would have turned out differently.) However, many fears are abnormal; they undercut our efficiency, our happiness, and our mental and physical well-being. They paralyze us. They are enemies of the spirit and the flesh.

Our heavenly Father does not want fear to control His children.

Throughout the Bible two words ring loud and clear: "Fear not."

These two words are found in nearly a hundred passages in God's Holy Word. From Genesis to Revelation, this phrase of encouragement is echoed. If people of faith were

not prone to fear, there would have not been the need for so many iterations of this phrase.

As Spurgeon said, “Our fears are the weasels that keep sneaking into our hen houses and devouring our happy, well-fed, productive chickens. As soon as we slay one weasel, another one arrives with the same intent. We can never be lackadaisical. We must guard our hen houses with vigilance.”

Others say fears are like the weeds in our beautiful flower gardens, that we have to constantly pluck up. If left alone, they will grow bigger and faster than our rose bushes.

You, as well as I, know what is scary and dangerous in our crazed, mixed-up world: neighborhood crime, mass shootings, road rage, Covid19, inflation, shortage of infant formula, and the list goes on and on.

Christians can become temporarily fearful, so don't beat up on yourself or run a personal guilt trip when you get scared. Pastor Timothy was fearful. In spite of his excellent family heritage, religious training, and wonderful friends, he was timid and fearful. Perhaps his awareness of responsibility and the constant threat of persecution made him afraid. In addition, he became resentful of the people he was leading. Paul's words of counsel and encouragement came just at the right time to help Timothy. We, too, can benefit greatly from Paul's words. Let's explore.

Exposition

1. The Spirit Gives Us Courage- Not Cowardice.

(Caution is Not Cowardice.)

2. The Spirit Gives Us Power.

(To Endure Pain In All Of Its Forms.)

(To Survive Disappointment.)

(To Overcome Discouragement.)

3. The Spirit Gives Us Love.

(We Must Love Our Enemies.)

(We Must Not Seek Revenge.)

(Power Without Love Is Ruthless.)

(Love Without Power Can't Get Anything Done.)

4. The Spirit Gives Us a Sound Mind.

(“Saintly Sanity.”)

(Our Minds Must Control Our Bodies And Our Emotions.)

(We Must Keep A Cool Head And A Compassionate Heart.)

(We Must Commingle Faith With Reason.)

(Part Of Reason Is Plain Old Common Sense.)

5. We Must Remain Positive And Appreciative.)

(In All Things Give Thanks.)

(We Must Keep Hope Alive.)

Closing Thoughts

You and I can have the faith that dispels fear each time it shows up, if we will respond to God's movement toward us, and if we will deliberately seek His guidance. Let's continue to watch and pray and God will see us through. Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory.

End Note

The English phrase "sound mind" does not provide the original Greek with "translational justice." It is one word in Greek. The word implies many things. It implies self-control. It implies rational thought. It is the image of an athlete who keeps his/her cool no matter what happens during the contest. It is used to describe a soldier who maintains his composure in the heat of battle. It implies an actor in the theater who overcomes stage fright and performs with excellence. The word is "*sophronismos*." It is a concatenation of two words: "Sozo" which means to save or maintain and "*phren*" which simply means mind.

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