

Living the Fearless Life in the Midst of COVID-19

Dear Friend,

Fear paralyzes ó fear destroys. Because of fear good men and women remain silent as the greed of a few subject the poor and elderly to the ranks of the homeless. Harold Ruopp says, "Fear is private enemy number one, for out of fear comes a whole train of evils," Shakespeare said, "The souls of men are full of dread."

Jesus knew the power of fear in the lives of people. That is why He said over and over in times of crisis, "*Fear not, fear not.*" To His followers who live in constant fear of the coronavirus He says, "*Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*" (Matt 10:28).

To fear that paralyzes Paul declares, "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind*" (2 Tim 1:7). It takes the power of faith, love and a sound mind to overcome fear.

There are so many things we can be afraid of. We can fear crime, the COVID-19 virus, failure and the future. The list goes on and on. Fear will paralyze and destroy. Daily we are presented with the choice of whether we are going to let fear or faith rule our lives. If we are going to live a life of faith rather than fear, then we need to know how faith develops. Romans 10:17 tells us "*Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.*"

Karen Spears Zacharias in her book, "*Where's Your Jesus Now? Examining How Fear erodes Our Faith,*" writes, "*Fear was making my world smaller and smaller. I knew if I let it continue that way, I'd eventually become a prisoner of my own soul. I began praying that very day that God would make me a woman of faith. I asked the Creator to give me the courage to move beyond the borders of my confirming imaginations and into the glory of God's imaginings.*"

In order to be a people of faith we must daily be immersed in the Scriptures. There Christ assures us with His presence. In the storms of life Jesus says: "*Take courage. It is I, don't be afraid.*" (Matt 6:50) He goes on to say, "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid*" (John 14:27).

Daily we are given the choice whether we are going to believe the assurances of God's word or the crazy tapes of fear and unbelief that Satan turns loose in our heads each day. In Luke 12:4-7, Jesus tells us not to fear mankind but instead be more concerned about God's will for our lives. After all we, are extremely value in the eyes of God for while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

When we find fear knocking at the doors of lives, are we going to answer with faith in the words of Christ as Paul did when the Lord spoke to him declaring, *“Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For, I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city”* (Acts 18:9,10). What assurance I find in these words as I try to provide for the homeless in communities like St. Louis, and Springfield Missouri where so many of the homeless are left on the streets alone to fight the corona-virus. Daily I have found strength in Scriptures such as Is. 12:2 which declares, *“Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation.”*

We can either lie in our beds at night unable to sleep as fear haunts us concerning the future, or we can accept the promises of God’s Word. *“When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared”* (Proverbs 3:24-26).

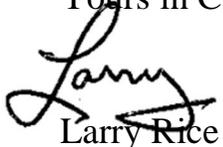
It is so easy for fear to wrap its snarling hands around us until we find ourselves suffocating in worry, anxiety and fear. In the middle of the storms of life, Jesus is asking us the same thing He did His disciples in Mark 4:40, *“Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”*

Unless I be found among the cowardly, the unbelieving and others described in Rev. 21:8 whose place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur I must be in the presence of the Living Christ and the Scriptures and creation, praying and fellowshiping with other believers.

Throughout the Scriptures we see ordinary people who, instead of fearing, chose to believe God. Whether it is Abraham believing for a great nation, Moses leading the Children of Israel through the Red Sea, David facing Goliath, Daniel in the lion’s den, the list goes on and on. These heroes of faith chose to fear not and instead threw themselves into the arms of our Loving Heavenly Father. Hebrews 11 describes over and over those who heard the admonishment to fear not and chose to face adversity with faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, *“Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”*

So now let us not fear but instead by faith, move ahead practicing social distancing, hand washing and other measures in the battle against COVID 19. As we do this stand on the multitude of scriptures promising us that God will protect, guide and direct us in the midst of this pandemic.

Yours in Christ,



Larry Rice