

REMOVING ALL FEAR

Text: Mark 16:1-8

Key Word: Fear

Key Thought: What Things Are We Possibly Fearful of?

The Bible clearly states that fear is a torment. If we don't deal with it, it can eventually destroy us. Fears are caused because we are being overly concerned about what will happen to us by **someone, something or some event**. There is only One person that we should be fearful of and yet. He is the One who will not harm us. Moses' closing remarks to the children of Israel are worth taking note of.

*"Assemble the people - men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns - so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law.
13. Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."*

Deuteronomy 31:12,13

Fearing the Lord means *"a reverential awe of God; a complete submission to His rulership and control."* It is not something that torments us. It inspires us to follow His Word. There are many rewards for fearing God. The book of Proverbs has much to say about the issue.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge."

Proverbs 1:7; 9:10

"The fear of the LORD adds length to life."

Proverbs 10:27

"The fear of the LORD is a foundation of life, turning a man from the snares of death."

Proverbs 14:27

"The fear of the LORD teaches man wisdom."

Proverbs 15:33

"...through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil."

Proverbs 19:23

On the other hand there is a fear that brings us much trouble.

"Fear of man will prove to a snare."

Proverbs 29:25

In the story of our Lord's resurrection, the women arrived at the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. The Bible makes it clear that they were quickly overcome with fear.

"... and they were alarmed."

Mark 16:5

"... affrighted"

Mark 16:5 (KJV)

"Utterly amazed and struck with terror."

Mark 16:5 (Amp)

The word used here is a strong word that carried with it "a note of dread." This thought builds up until we read,

"They went out [and fled from the tomb, for trembling and bewilderment and consternation had seized them and they said nothing about it to anyone for they were held by alarm and fear."

Mark 16:8 (Amp)

I Wonder Today What We May Be Fearful Of?

I. AN OBSTACLE IN YOUR PATH

II. A SAVIOUR WHO HAS VANISHED

III. A MESSAGE THAT MUST BE PROCLAIMED

I. AN OBSTACLE IN YOUR PATH

As the women approached the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus they began to think about the large obstacle that awaited them. A stone, a large stone had been carefully placed at the mouth of the tomb. The Roman seal had been affixed to it which would deter anyone from tampering with it. The full force of Roman wrath would be directed at anyone who disobeyed - especially women. There were also trained soldiers who were assigned to guard to the tomb with their lives. Even if the women got passed all these safeguards, how would they remove the stone.

I. AN OBSTACLE IN YOUR PATH (Contd.)

With such a hopeless situation you would wonder why the women even set out so early to attempt to conquer the impossible. Perhaps their grief was overwhelming their thoughts. The moment came when they had to deal with their fear.

"Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb."

Mark 16:2,3

Have you got an obstacle in your path today? What is the "stone" that you need rolled away?

*** I'm sure Anne Mansfield Sullivan had a lot of folks telling her that the blind, seven year old brat wasn't worth anything. But Anne persisted - in spite of temper tantrums, physical abuse, mealtime madness and even thankless parents! In her heart she knew all the struggles were worth it. Within two years of continuing to battle the obstacles this young girl was able to read and write in braille.

She eventually graduated from Rad Cliffe College. This young girl grew up to become the famous Hellen Keller who devoted the rest of her life aiding the blind. ***

I've met a number of people who fear the obstacles that have been placed in their pathway. They can't see how God could ever remove it even though they keep on keeping on. What kind of stone is blocking your way? Is it a stone of relationship? Is it a stone of employment? Is it a stone of finances? Is it a stone of an uncertain future?

Whatever it may be God still works in the supernatural realm. He sent an angel who caused an earthquake in order to move away the stone that had been sealed. The fear was passed on to the Roman guards.

II. A SAVIOUR WHO HAS VANISHED

As the women passed by the stone and entered the tomb, they came before the angels of God. Again they feared. Jesus was no longer there. How many people have believed they would find Jesus in a certain place only to find that place empty when they eventually arrived at their destination? Millions of people are going through rituals in an attempt to discover Jesus. They really believe that all their religious actions will bring them closer to God.

II. A SAVIOUR WHO HAS VANISHED (Contd.)

They come with their sincere acts of devotion hoping to anoint Jesus. Their hearts are sincere. But they are sincerely wrong. God doesn't need to be anointed for burial anymore. He's not dead He's alive!!! The pathway of dead ritualistic ceremonies will not bring us any closer to the presence of God. As the women looked at the place where they thought they would find their dead Saviour - it was empty. What were they to do now?

The same problem perplexed the Jewish leaders. At Christ's death,

"The curtain of the temple was torn from the top to bottom."

Mark 15:38

That meant that anyone could enter the Holy of Holies. A blasphemy entered the minds of these leaders. How could they repair the problem without letting the people know what had happened? They knew that the common people would be able to bypass the O.T. priesthood and go directly to God. The members of the Sanhedrin had to act quickly or their religion would be in vain. They couldn't see or didn't want to see the fulfillment of Scripture in Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

So what did they do? They sewed the curtain back together again and continued their ritualistic ceremonies. But the glory of God had now **"escaped"** upon the common people. All men could now stand before God. Jesus alone had become their mediator before the Father. Their Saviour had escaped before their very eyes. Fear struck the heart of the Jewish leaders. A lie had to be started in a feeble attempt to protect their religion. The guards conspired with them.

"His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep."

Matthew 28:13

The only sleeping that took place was in the drowsiness of their spiritual eyes to accept the fact of what had happened. The hardness of their hearts veiled the real truth. We also sometimes fail to see our Lord because of all the things that distract us.

*** A black minister in the Southern United States after introducing a visiting white pastor to his congregation, prayed,
"O Lord, blot him out that we may see Jesus ONLY!" ***

Are you experiencing fear because someone or something is blotting out the presence of God in your life? Because of daily circumstances you may have come to believe that He is dead. I've seen the graffiti on the walls of buildings which read, *"God is dead!"*

II. A SAVIOUR WHO HAS VANISHED (Contd.)

They are still living in the truth of Friday's message. The message on the third day (Sunday), early in the morning was quite different. I'd much rather live with the message of the angels of heaven who declared on that glorious morning,

"He has risen! He is not here."

Mark 16:6

The truth of the resurrection message should remove all fear. Our Saviour has not vanished - He was simply not in the grave. The grave could not hold Him. Death could not conquer Him. Rebellion could not stop Him. False witnesses could not deter Him. Religious zealots could not dispose of Him.

The message rang out from the tomb. Our Saviour is alive forevermore. Fear not for He is with you. Be not dismayed for He is your God. Our Lord continues to proclaim put your hope in Him. His body never seen decay. FEAR Not - Fear NOT - FEAR NOT!!!

III. A MESSAGE THAT MUST BE PROCLAIMED

Along with this truth comes a responsibility. The angel (as a messenger of God) gave the women an assignment.

"But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Mark 16:7

We can miss the impact of such words by not understanding the customs of the time. These were Jewish women living at a time of Roman oppression and dominion. Jewish law stated that women were ineligible to be faithful witnesses.

I'm sure these women began to wonder what others would think about them witnessing the truth of the risen Saviour. One of the greatest messages ever given to man was first given to three faithful women. Making these women the initial messengers would be inconvenient and troublesome because their testimony would lack value as evidence.

Have you ever been gripped with fear because you knew you should share the gospel message with someone? Perhaps you felt that they wouldn't listen to you? You could tend to believe that there are so many others who are more talented than you are? I'm just a child ... youth ... woman ... man! I've never received any formal training. They may ask questions that you won't be able to answer. You may feel that you always stumble trying to find just the right words.

III. A MESSAGE THAT MUST BE PROCLAIMED (Contd.)

*** Perhaps you've heard about the husband who lacked tact. Early one morning his wife left for a trip abroad . . . and that very day their poodle died. When she called home that evening, she asked how everything was and he blurted out, "*Well, the dog died.*"

Shocked at the sudden news she chided him through her tears for being so tactless.

"*What should I have said?*" he asked.

"You should have broken the news gently, perhaps in stages. When I called you here from New York you could have said, "*The dog is on the roof.*" And the next day when I called from London, you could have said, "*The dog fell off the roof.*" The following day when I called from Paris you could have told me, "*He's at the vets . . . in the hospital.*" And finally from Rome you could have informed me, "*The dog died.*"

The husband paused for a moment to consider the advice he had just been given. His wife then asked, "*Oh by the way, how is mother?*"

He thought for a moment and then replied, "*She's on the roof.*" ***

It seems like God is satisfied to give very simple people a life changing message. He used herdsmen, fishermen, cupbearers, tax collectors women and children to proclaim His message. He didn't choose to use angels to shout it from the heavens. He instead chose common folks to shout it from the rooftops. Are you holding back because of fear? Is there a message He has given you to proclaim? There is an answer to **ALL OUR FEARS**.

"There is no fear in love. But perfect loves drives out fear."

I John 4:18

Have you matured to the level of love for God that casts out all the fear you may have? My prayer is that you are not fearful of . . .

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Date: July 25/21

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30Am

Song: In Your Hands - F, G

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