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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 Peter 3:14
Lesson #22
Fear
01/03/2021

Fear is an universal experience
of humans in every culture.

Merry Crisis and a Happy New Fear!

“Fear not”

appears over 360 times in the Bible.

1

1 Peter 3:14

“But even if you should suffer
for the sake of righteousness,
you are blessed. And **do not**
fear their intimidation (fear),
and do not be troubled,”

Isaiah 8:12

“... And you are not to fear what
they fear or be in dread of it.”

2

1 Peter 5:7

“⁶ **humble** yourselves under the mighty
hand of God, that He may exalt you at
the proper time. ⁷ having **cast all your**
anxiety on Him, because He cares
about you.”

Psalms 55:22 (LXX)

“Cast upon the Lord your anxiety
and he will sustain you; he will never
allow the righteous to stumble.”

3

Fear

is rooted in
uncertain
expectations
based on
misplaced
hopes.



4

Fear

is perhaps the
most powerful
negative
emotion
in effecting
spiritual
decisions.



57

The emphasis in Christianity?

Pietist

private
confessional
beliefs and
disciplines

Prophetic

speaking /
showing
truth to
power

Political

civic, social,
economic,
justice &
reform

Power is spiritual

New Testament

(fear free zone)

Power is physical



6

“We’re tired of the national conversation centering on “What should we fear?” and “Who should we blame?”. ”

Brene Brown
(PhD social work)



7

“Men go to far greater lengths to avoid what they fear than to obtain what they desire.”

Dan Brown



8

What are people afraid of?

- ✓ **Change** - I do not feel confident in rebuilding control in a new situation.
- ✓ **Losing something of value** - I can't live without
- ✓ **Failure** - My respected image is at stake when I take on responsibility.
- ✓ **Pain** - Physical suffering, social rejection, psychological sadness.

9

Some toxic indications of anxiety / fear

- ✓ **Need to control** - minimize the unknowns
- ✓ **Need for closure** - get it settled ASAP
- ✓ **Black and white** - gray areas are unsettling
- ✓ **Resisting change** - low risk tolerance
- ✓ **Worry / whine** - things will or have gone bad
- ✓ **Conspiracies** - systemic doom
- ✓ **Low creativity** - avoid risk of failure
- ✓ **Cup is half full** - bad things will happen
- ✓ **Social withdrawal** - depression, illness

10

Fear

Too many things can go wrong for me to feel safe when I am left alone in life.



11

“Shame is the most powerful, master emotion. It’s the fear that we’re not good enough and all alone.

Brene Brown
(PhD social work)



12

The beginning of Jesus’ ministry

Matthew 1:23

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name **Immanuel, which translated means, God with us.**”

The end of Jesus’ earthly ministry

Matthew 28

“¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**”

13



23rd Psalm
is about
Immanuel
“God with us.”

14

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd,

I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil,

for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

15

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16

Fear is Satan’s tool

- He started by drawing attention away from the “Good Shepherd” and placing attention on the **world**.
- He convinces us to seek security in **temporal, physical treasure** that thieves can steal, rust can tarnish, and time can decay.
- He tempts us to walk by **sight** not by faith.
- He keeps us in **shame and blame**.

17

Hebrews 2

“14 ... He Himself likewise also partook of the same (flesh and blood), that through death He might render powerless **him who had the power of death, that is, the devil**; 15 and might deliver those who through **fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.**”

- The devil uses the uncertainties of this life as a **tool to enslave us through fear.**
- God addresses the uncertainties of this life with **the Word and Way of the Cross.**

18

Psalm 23 is about

*what I see
and believe
about my
Shepherd*



*not what I do
or others
do to me*



19

Apostolic letters

*My understanding
of what God
has done.*



*My responsibility
to behave
accordingly.*



20

Apostolic letters

*what I see
and believe
about what
Jesus has
done for me
and in me*

*what I do
in response
to what
God has done
for and in me
and others
do to me*

21

Psalm 23:4

“Even though I walk
through the valley
of the shadow of death,
**I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;**
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.”

Matthew 14:27

“Take courage,
it is I;
**do not be
afraid.**”

**Sensing the presence of Christ in (with) us
is the source of our courage
in the face of fear.**

22

**Building a fear
killing faith.**

What not to do.

Matthew 6

23

Mistake #1
Leading with our heart
rather than
our choices.



Matthew 6

“¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ **for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**” ²⁴

**If it can decay
or be taken away
it is a false treasure**



25

**If it can decay
or be taken away
it is a false treasure
that inevitably
invites**



26

Mistake #2
Working hard and / or
trusting God

**but for the
wrong thing.**



Matthew 6

“²² The lamp of the body is the eye; **if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.** ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

27

**The problem is not
our lack of faith.**

**It is that our faith is
in something other than God
and / or
for something other than His
kingdom.**

28

Mistake #3
Believing that we
can have it
both ways.



Matthew 6

“²⁴ **No one can serve two masters;** for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. ²⁵ For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?”

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**Serving two masters
will double your anxiety
not your security.**

Matthew 6

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Mistake #4
Neglecting or
fretting over
**material
needs.**



Matthew 6

“³¹ Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ ³² For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for **your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**”

31

Matthew 4:4

“Man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

Godly character does not
neglect nor is it anxious about
material needs.

32

2 Thessalonians 3:10

“For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order; if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.”

Godly character does not
neglect nor is it anxious about
material needs.

33

Mistake #5
Failing to keep
the main thing
**the main
thing.**



Matthew 6:33

“But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**; and all these things shall be added to you. “Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

34

**When the good
keeps us from the best
it is no longer good.**

Luke 10

“⁴¹ But the Lord answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴² but **only a few things are necessary**, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.””

35

Take home

- ✓ Take your baptism seriously and invest your life in things that can't be taken away.
- ✓ When anxious, ask if you are trying to have it both ways.
- ✓ Work hard, trust God, and fear not.

36

Worrying

does not take away tomorrow's troubles; it just takes away today's peace.

37

Vision

Commitment

Investment

Passion

A heart full of fear will lead us to make defensive decisions and suffering.

If we lead with hope and faith our hearts will follow.



38

Luke 12:32

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.



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