

TITLE: Irrational Fears

TEXT: Lev. 26:14-17; Deut. 6:24; Ps. 34:9; 2 Co. 11:23-28; Acts. 27:21-26; Mt. 10:28; Jn. 14:27; Phil. 4:6-7; Heb. 11:1; Ps. 46:1-3; Mt. 28:20; Is. 43:1

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about irrational fears. First, we may need to determine just what an irrational fear is. The word irrational means:

***Not consistent with or using reason.***

Some synonyms for irrational would be: illogical, unreasonable, absurd and unfounded.

It seems to me that Americans are falling more and more prey to irrational fears. Anxiety treating medications are on most pharmaceuticals best seller lists in America.

A few years ago, ABC's 20/20 broadcast a report about a link between phthalates (thalik's), chemicals used to soften plastic, and the appearance of kidney tumors in mice.

The report strongly suggested that children who suck on toys containing (thalik's) are risking their health. Americans reacted with panic! But it turned out with further research that deadly rubber duckies and Barbie dolls were greatly exaggerated.

Science writer Micheal Furmento points out that while massive doses of (Thalik's) did cause tumors in rodents, other studies showed the chemical caused no harmful effects in guinea pigs and monkeys or in human cells.

20/20 isn't the only news outlet to run scary stories with little basis in fact. A few years ago the United Nations estimated that some 110 million land mines are buried around the world. It turned out the estimate was a little bit off---off by about 100 million!

One study will show that cranberries cause cancer the next will show that cranberries can actually help prevent cancer.

Killer Barbie's and cranberries? Land mines under ever step? Why do so many Americans uncritically swallow such exaggerated and alarmist reports?

Charles Colson has some interesting insight. He says *one possibility is that many of us live with an emergent sense of anxiety, even dread. We can't say why we feel this way, and we can't point to anything we've done that would merit death from a land mine or poisoned Barbie dolls, yet the sense of unease is there.*

*And all these endless reports of gloom and doom seem to reinforce this sense of dread that we often feel, so many will worry about things that will never become a reality.*

*Where does this kind of irrational fear and anxiety of things that may never happen, come from?*

Colson suggest that possibly it comes from displaced guilt.

*Even though we are the most wealthy and prosperous nation on the face of the earth, deep down we know that something is wrong with how we have ordered our society. Deep down we know that if we were living as we should, men would not be abandoning their families, women would not line up at abortion clinics, and kids would not open fire on their classmates and teachers in schoolyards.*

*We see the consequences of our sin all around us, but we don't admit the connection between cause and effect, at least not openly.*

*By our actions and the things that we condone, we know that we deserve God's judgment, but instead of saying so, we look for punishment in all of the wrong places. Stories of killer toys and poison food feed our sense of guilt and impending doom.*

*And this shouldn't surprise us because this is something that God said would happen as His people if we would ever start to stray from the absolute standards of His law!*

**Leviticus 26:14 - 17 (NIV) <sup>14</sup>“But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, <sup>15</sup>and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, <sup>16</sup>then I will do this to you:**

**I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life.**

**You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. <sup>17</sup>I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.**

Did you catch that?

**<sup>14</sup>“But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, <sup>15</sup>and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, <sup>16</sup>then you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.**

Gods warning to His people here is that if they would not follow his commandments, they would live in such fear that they will flee even when no one is pursuing them!

Or their fear would become irrational!

Our irrational fears are the inevitable consequence of disobeying God’s laws.

Do you realize that as a Christian that there is only one thing that we are told to fear in the Bible? And that is God Himself!

**Deuteronomy 6:24 (NIV) <sup>24</sup>The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today.**

**Psalms 34:9 (NIV) <sup>9</sup> Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.**

The fact is, that for the Christian, all fear other than the fear of the Lord is irrational fear on our part.

This morning I want to look at some Scriptures that God has given us to reinforce this fact and hopefully help keep us from falling prey to irrational fears....

With this in mind...As a Christian, all fear other than the fear of God is irrational fear on our part.

The best example that I can think of using this morning is the Apostle Paul.

I don't know if I have ever read about a man who had more of a reason to walk around fearful and yet never seemed to fear anything...

Just listen to where Paul's walk with the Lord led him....

**2 Corinthians 11:23 - 28 (NIV) ...I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. <sup>24</sup>Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup>Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, <sup>26</sup>I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. <sup>27</sup>I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. <sup>28</sup>Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.**

Talk about someone, who by the standards of this world had a lot in his life to be fearful of!

Facing the lashes of the whip! Being beaten with rods!  
Being stoned and left for dead!  
Shipwrecked on three separate occasions! All with no apparent fear on Paul's part...

How do we know that for sure?  
Other than by Paul's own testimony, we know by his actions.

Example: If I survived a shipwreck once I don't know that I would be all that crazy about getting on a ship again. If it happened to me twice I really have doubts that I would!

If it happened to me three times I imagine I would be looking for other means of transportation or just learn to stay at home...

Paul seemed to be totally not troubled by all these ships going out from under him and he just kept getting back in the saddle.

In fact just listen to the verbal exchange that Paul had with some very fearful sailors on one of those ships that was about to be dashed to pieces upon the rocks and death seemed eminent...

**Acts 27:21 - 26 (NIV) <sup>21</sup>After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. <sup>22</sup>But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. <sup>23</sup>Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me <sup>24</sup>and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' <sup>25</sup>So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. <sup>26</sup>Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."**

This is the voice of calm in a very stressful situation.

**<sup>23</sup>Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me <sup>24</sup>and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul.**

As we evaluate the life of the apostle Paul we find much that Paul could have been fearful of, yet he never seemed to fear anything.. Why? How?

Because Paul understood the reality of his position with God and his relationship with Christ.

Paul understood that **the God whose I am and whom I serve stands beside me!**

As a Christian Paul believed God's Word. Paul believed in God sovereignty. Paul believed that God was ultimately in control of all things and all situations and that whatever the outcome would be it was all within the control and will of God, whether it made sense to him at the time or not.

Jesus tells us in:

**Matthew 10:28 (NIV) <sup>28</sup>Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**

What Jesus was telling us here is that all fear outside of the fear of the Lord is irrational fear for a Christian.

L.B. Cowman once said this....

*“Never look ahead to the changes and challenges of this life in fear. Instead, as they arise, look at them with full assurance that God, whose you are, will deliver you out of them. Hasn't He kept you safe up to now? So hold his loving hand tightly, and He will lead you safely through all things. And when you cannot stand, He will carry you in His arms.*

*Do not look ahead to what may happen tomorrow. The same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day after.*

*Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you the unwavering strength that you may bear it. Be at peace, then, and set all anxious thoughts and worries aside.”*

The antidote to irrational fear is the peace and presence of God...

Jesus proclaimed and passed this very peace on to us in:

**John 14:27 (NIV) <sup>27</sup>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.**

**<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you----so,  
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be  
afraid.**

.Peace=

*i-rah'-nay*

**peace (literally or figuratively); by  
implication *prosperity*:— quietness, rest, + set at  
one again.**

Jesus didn't just promise to give us peace, but He  
has promised to give us His Peace! **My peace I give  
you!**

Jesus peace is a perfect peace that displaces all  
irrational fears...

We see this perfect peace of Christ manifest to us  
in a very powerful way from the cross...

What were Jesus words from the cross? Were  
they words that express worry or anxiety for being in a  
bad situation? No! They were words of peace! Words  
of encouragement! Words of victory!

**Today you will be with me in paradise!**

**Father, forgive them for they don't know what  
they do!**

**It is finished!**

Jesus didn't allow irrational fear to plague Him even in  
the midst of great adversity.

Even with His flesh having been shredded by the  
Roman whip and nails driven through his hands and  
feet, Jesus didn't succumb to irrational fear but  
instead manifest the peace and presence of God.

And this is the same peace that He said that He  
would leave with us!

**<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you----so,  
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be  
afraid.**

Do not let-do not allow are action verbs..

This is a required action on our part. To not allow our hearts to become troubled or become afraid.

The only way that we can do that is to embrace the peace that Jesus left us with! His peace!

It is the peace that Paul describes in:

**Philippians 4:6 - 7 (NIV) <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

It is only the peace of God, this peace that Jesus left for us to embrace, that becomes a peace that literally transcends human understanding. A peace that doesn't give into irrational fears.

In fact, what makes this peace a peace that transcends human understanding is that it is a peace that can be manifest when potentially fearful situations surround us..

It is a peace that is literally not of this world and the world has no way to understand it, comprehend it or embrace it..

But this peace is, none the less is real and experienceable for all Christians who will embrace it.

How do we embrace this peace of Christ?

Scripture says by:

**<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**

For the Christian things such as worry, anxiety and fear are displacers of our faith.

Faith and worry are like oil and water. No matter how much you try they just won't mix.



Example: When I worked as a manager for Dahl's foods I ran a pretty tight ship. One thing I learned about working with young people is that if you didn't keep them busy they would find a way to get into trouble. When I worked the closing shift I usually had a couple of the older kids run the front end for me. They knew that if I would see people standing around not doing anything I would start sending people home early. A universal law in retail is when you do that inevitably it would get busy later on and those left would have to work harder so no one liked it when I did it.

One evening it slowed down quite a bit and the guys I had running the front end had all the busy work done. The registers were all cleaned down and the sacks were all filled and there was not anything left for the baggers to do...So the guys running the front end had a new bagger working that night so they told him to go over to the glass pack isle and shake down all the salad dressings.

They showed him how the oil and water salad dressing were separated so they said he needed to shake them up to remix them. Eager to please this young man went over and started to do just that. About this time I came out of the back room and see this kid frantically shaking down all these bottles of salad dressing...he would get a half dozen shaken up and then notice the first ones he shook were already separating. I stood behind him watching him for a couple minutes then asked him what he was doing? With a big smile of accomplishment on his face said "I'm shaking down the salad dressings".

I look up toward the front end and see my two front end watchers doubled over laughing. I tell the young man that he was doing a fine job and just shook my head as I walked by the guys who told him to do it.

Anxiety and faith are like oil and water—then simply will not mix...

Anxiety and faith are like light and darkness one will always displace the other.

Example: dark room—turn on light---what happens to the dark? It disappears! And vice versa!

Worry will instantly displace faith!

Biblical faith is defined in:

**Hebrews 11:1 (NIV) <sup>1</sup>Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.**

Whenever we fear things that we really have no control over anyway we have given into irrational fear and it will weaken or even displace our faith!

99% of what we fear is irrational!

Any fear other than the simple fear of the Lord is irrational fear when you really think about it.

I think that David came to this truth in his life and beautifully expresses it in the Psalms..

**Psalms 46:1 - 3 (NIV) <sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. .**

**<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, <sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.**

We will not fear for God is our refuge and our strength and He is an ever-present help in our times of trouble!

And even though the situations of life that we may find ourselves in at times may feel like the earth gave way and the mountains have fallen into the heart of the sea and the waters are raging and roaring all around us and even if the earth is quaking beneath our feet we need not fear because God is still God! God is still on His throne! God still holds us in the palm of His hand!

Jesus promise is still true...

**Matthew 28:20 (NIV) ..... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**

The word surely means truthfully! In the KJV whenever Jesus wanted to make a strong point of truth He would start out by saying verily, verily or truly, truly...

**Truly, I am with you always!**

Do you know what Jesus was saying here when He said I am with you always?

He wasn't just saying that He would be with us always but he was saying I, God, am with you always!

Whenever Jesus used the words "I am" it was not just for the proper construction of a sentence but it was an intentional identifying of His true identity!

***i-mee'***

**First person singular present indicative; a prolonged form of a primary and defective verb; I exist (used only when emphatic):—am, have been, it is I**

I am is the name of God! It is the name that God told Moses to use when the Israelites would ask him who sent him to them!

Tell them "**I Am**" has sent you!

That is why when the Pharisees asked Jesus where he came from and Jesus responded; **before Abraham was I Am**.....That they got all riled up, tore their robes and wanted to stone Him.

They knew that Jesus had just told them that He was God! I Am! I am the all and ever existent one! The first and the last! The alpha and the omega! The beginning and the end!

So here God is telling us.... **And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**

God is with us, not part of the time or just some of the time but I Am with you always! Even to the very end of the age!

**Therefore we need not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.**

This morning are you allowing the peace of Christ to rule and reign in your heart?

Do you take solace and comfort in that you serve and follow a God who has promised to never leave you or forsake you but has promised to be and remain your great **"I Am"** in all of life's circumstances?

Whatever the fear that you may be facing today learn to see it for what it is... Irrational from the light of the Word and the promise of Christ!

**Isaiah 43:1 (NKJV)<sup>1</sup> But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; You are Mine.**

I encourage you to personalize this verse of Scripture and allow God to use it to remove all fear from your heart....

**But now, thus says the LORD, who created And formed you, O (terry), "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; You are Mine.**

As a Christian what do we have to fear from this world? Not a thing!

For God will never leave us or forsake us and He is with us always--even to the end of the age!

