

# THE CURE FOR FEAR

By

Curtis Dickinson

Every newscast and every morning newspaper reminds us of the tragedies and potential catastrophes which could spell disaster to the nation and horror to one's life. It would take pages just to list all the problems and calamities that are mounting up to create a paralyzing aura of fear throughout the world.

There are plenty of people evil enough to use these fears to manipulate us, if we let them. In World War II the politicians used the fear technique to get a president elected for three and four terms, saying, "Don't change horses in the middle of the stream." It is constantly used for the purpose of trying to pass repressive legislation such as gun control. Humanists use the fear of AIDS to get so-called sex-education and sex clinics in public schools.

Some evangelists and writers build upon these fears to sell books on fantastic and absurd interpretations of prophecy. Financial advisors use it to sell their newsletters and investment deals.

But one of the worst results is the effect fear has on those who profess faith in Christ. James G. Knox asks, Are we now peopled by the impotent and fearful, the faithless and the benign, wimps living out meaningless lives, waiting in fear for the next turn of the planet and the next directive from 'the system'?" (Pamphlet: *Christian Disunity*)

While the propaganda on TV, in the movies and in print blasphemes the name of Christ, while the antichrists ADL and ACLU keep up the pressure to silence the Christian witness, and while the moral climate of our nation is deliberately lowered for the sake of "equality" and "equal rights," many Christians cower in silence or compromise the faith.

To live in fear of men is to be a slave to men. To live in fear of the future is to be an unbeliever. The future is in God's hands, and so are His people.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand," (John 10:27-29).

Jesus said that we are not to worry and be anxious because He will see that our true needs are met and that we will be recompensed for every sacrifice (Matt. 6:33, 4:18). To continue in fear reveals a degree of unbelief, therefore God declares, "He that overcomes shall inherit these things (the New Creation); and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (Rev. 21:7-8). Note that the fearful and unbelieving head the list of those

to suffer the second death. One is fearful because he doesn't actually trust God to keep His word in giving only good gifts or because in his heart he doesn't actually love God and is aware that God knows it. Either case precludes a genuine fellowship with God.

The common method of tackling fear is to build walls of earthly security by accumulating wealth or investing in insurance and retirement programs. But the bankers and Wall Street brokers probably are among the most worried people in the world. How many people who bought Social Security insurance all their lives now find that their monthly check will not even pay the rent? How many have become victims of S & L failures in the past two years? Jesus warned against relying on earthly treasures which, He said, thieves can steal.

**The cure for fear is found in putting our trust in that which cannot be taken from us against our will.** Riches can be lost or stolen. Locks can be broken and secrets discovered. Positions can be undermined, and even one's good name can be wrongfully destroyed. As long as we rely on any temporal power, including our own, or any human device for security or happiness, we will be subject to fear. It is only when we set our goal on that which is eternal and rest our hope and joy in that which cannot be taken from us against our will that we can honestly say, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me" (Psalm 23).

I am not suggesting that one abandon earthly concerns and financial responsibility. Godliness generates godly concern for all God's creation, and a commitment to Christ means commitment to responsible citizenship, to righteousness and justice everywhere. But, after one has acted in good faith in keeping with Christ's commands, there is no place for worry and fear about the outcome. It is a matter of trust. If we trust Christ to save us from sin and death as the gospel proclaims, if we trust Him to raise us from death to immortality as He promised, then we also trust Him in all daily affairs, remembering His words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Anxious and fearful about food and clothing: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Can we believe that? It is the promise of Jesus. Trust Him.

World events are scary. Evil is everywhere and getting worse. But the media leaves out the most important fact, that ultimate control is in God's hands, and the outcome of events will be far different from that planned by rebellious man. The most stabilizing factor is the knowledge that God's eternal purpose will be accomplished, no matter how the world opposes Him, or God is not God. This is not something which requires profound and sophisticated research; what it does require is faith. The Bible is filled with examples of such faith. Life was every bit as dangerous in Abraham's time as it is today. Because he "believed God" he acted in diametric opposition to the world's ways and proved that God is faithful. Paul is one who willingly gave up everything – his grand position, his wealth, even his promising career – in order to serve Christ. In prison, and in chains, not knowing whether or not the dawn would bring his execution, he sang God's praises. Even when the Jews declared their determination to kill him, he continued his preaching, the very thing for which they threatened him. When it appeared that his

circumstances could not be worse he admonished the disciples to have no anxiety but to rejoice. He declared, “For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). He said, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24). He placed little value on that which could be taken from him against his will; therefore he did not fear its loss.

It is a highly significant commentary on our present religious society that, while all admire Abraham and Paul, anyone who seriously seeks to live by their kind of faith is considered a fanatic or even a fool.

What people want is to have the benefits of “faith” – forgiveness, eternal life and God’s daily support – while hanging on to the apparent support and benefits offered by man. It is like the fellow, in the early days of the airplane, who said he would be glad to fly if he could just keep one foot on the ground. It is the proven insecurity of the world and its offerings that provides a million reasons to fear, and only when we recognize such security as false will we be able to rest fully in the hands of God where fear cannot abide.

To be free of fear does not mean we can be free of problems, obstacles and suffering. These are promised to the faithful disciple. The more we do the Lord’s will the more we are at odds with the world and those who are enemies of Christ. The warfare is always there, but we know who will win the victory, therefore we need not fear. Tribulation and affliction are the means by which we are purified, molded and tempered to be what God desires. To reject the pain is also to reject the growth and the joy of coming into harmony with the Creator.

Contrary to what many believe, Christ does not offer a life of what the world calls happiness and success. His kind of happiness is almost unrecognizable to the world. “Happy are the poor in spirit...Happy are those who mourn...Happy are they who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake...” His happiness goes deeper, far below the surface, down below the pain, a happiness few seek. Nevertheless, it is the real joy and peace that enables one to live without anxiety and fear and fills one with a deep sense of thanksgiving and praise. God gives only good things.

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