

OVERCOMING FEAR WITH FAITH

By

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There have been many times in history when truth was on the scaffold and wrong was on the throne, but usually the condition was applicable to one locale or one nation. Today it is worldwide. As a result of this condition, there is a rising tide of fear which overwhelms some and paralyzes others.

One can make a good case for such fear. A destruction crew has been placed into power — an administration which sweeps away civilized law to support homosexuals, abortion, and a socialist economy which has destroyed one nation after another. Plans for a totalitarian world-wide government, which have been in the works for over a century, are coming closer to reality as national sovereignty gives way to a New World Order enforced by the United Nations military forces.

Racial tension, violence and immoral lifestyles are continuously promoted by TV and the news media until the nation stands on the brink of anarchy and moral suicide. Christians are the only ones who uphold the truth of God against such wickedness and therefore are targeted for elimination by the combined powers of government, education, newspapers, television, arts and science. No longer is it necessary to give documentary evidence of this, as it is demonstrated daily for everyone to see and hear.

Just as it was in the nations under communist rule in the Soviet Republic, the government has become the enemy and exercises control through the use of fear. In the French Revolution, when the normal order of society began to be torn apart by those who agitated for “change”, all kinds of rumors began to circulate. Whether true or false, the fear generated by these rumors rendered people incapable of reason and stability, until law and order crumbled in what has been called the Great Fear. Then began the Reign of Terror.

Where was the church and its leadership in those days? They looked to their own corporate structure for power and deliverance rather than to Christ. The clergy had its own system to preserve and panicked when that system was threatened. Today there is a false sense of strength in large church organizations, and their clergy treat the pulpit as a stage for star performances in their climb up the corporate religion ladder to “success”. How well are such churches equipped and prepared to meet the challenge now instilling fear in the hearts of the people?

An “evil generation” has gained great power and seeks to do great evil, but this is no excuse for fear to grip the hearts of God’s people. It was an evil generation that ruled in the time of Jesus. He warned the disciples that they would be hated and persecuted,¹ but also told them to “be not anxious”,² and declared, “In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”³

Jesus is the One in authority, even over earthly rulers. “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth,”⁴ He claimed. Exactly how He applies this authority in regards to government is not always clear, but in faith we can trust our lives to Him in all things, even in relation to earthly powers. To Daniel Jehovah said, “The most high rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will and sets up over it the

basest of men.”⁵ The political powers now in place are appropriate for the prevailing moral climate.

The enmity between Christ and the world is inevitable. Jesus warned, “Because you are not of the world...therefore the world hates you.”⁶ This is reflected in every facet of society today, as noted by Kim Ham: “The anti-Christian sentiment in this nation is rising at an alarming rate. Once conservative Christian values were the norm in our society, but now those who hold such values are not only being held up to ridicule, they increasingly are being considered the ENEMY.”⁷

As a result of the sin of Adam, the world fell under a curse, which continues to this day, so that in the end it will be destroyed by fire, “being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.”⁸ The crucifixion of Jesus was an act of judgment in which He underwent death for His disciples,⁹ and “gave” Himself for our sins that he might deliver us out of this present evil world.”¹⁰ We are not only delivered from the judgment of the world but also from any desire to conform to the world and its standards. This is why Paul wrote, “The world has been crucified unto me and I unto the world.”¹¹

The plans and purposes of the world of unbelievers are already under God’s judgment, and have no lasting value. “Love not the world...for all that is in the world, the lusts for the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever.”¹² Those whose hearts are set on the world’s treasures have their fears increased with every newscast of the world’s economic chaos.¹³ The world is our work place where we serve God and seek to make the gospel known, but we are not bound by its customs and fashions nor guided by its rebellious spirit. Neither should we fear when the strokes of God’s judgment fall upon it.

A resounding confession of faith by every Christian is the great need of the hour. The clearer the opposition to Christ and His truth, the greater our opportunity to declare His righteousness and His salvation. When the apostle Paul was imprisoned, he wrote to Timothy, urging him to boldly speak up for Christ, saying, “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and self control.”¹⁴

Following in the steps of Jesus, the apostle faced all the terror represented by Nero, yet found joy in doing the Father’s will. Instead of fear, God gave him the power, love and self control to do His will. This is what the crisis is all about for the Christian; not material success and prosperity, not fun and games, not safety and security, but our stand for the truth of Christ and His righteousness.

As we witness the breakdown of all earthly kingdoms, the total disarray of finances and social institutions, and the official promotion of gross immorality, ours are the only voices to proclaim the truth of Christ, to warn against disobeying His commands and to call men to repentance.

Whitaker Chambers, who became a martyr for exposing communism in our government, wrote: “A man is prepared to destroy himself if necessary to make his witness...In no other way can he strip his soul of that dragging humanity, that impeding love of life and its endearments which must otherwise entangle him at every step and distract him at last to failure...At the heart of the crisis of our times lies the cold belief of millions, avowed or un-avowed, that the death of religious faith is seen in nothing so much as in the fact that it has lost its power to move anyone to die for it.”¹⁵

Chambers' stand against the most powerful people in the world is a challenge to the flabby faith that is demonstrated by most of us today who are now called to stand against the same powers, only much larger in force.

Faith develops by exercise. In living by faith, many are like the person who said he was not afraid of flying as long as he could keep one foot on the ground. Jesus said, "if any man wills to do His will, he shall know the teaching, whether it is of God..."¹⁶ It is when we act on our faith that it becomes alive. Jesus said that it is when a man keeps His word that he comes to know the presence of God.¹⁷ We must stop being fearful and start being faithful, not looking to flimsy foundations of men for security, but to Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith.¹⁸

Our victory is guaranteed. Our Lord is longsuffering, but the day of judgment will come.¹⁹ David's advice is "Fret not thyself because of evil doers...For they shall soon be cut down like the grass."²⁰ "The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of Jehovah shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; in smoke shall they consume away."²¹ Not until that day will the faithful believers reach the goal of eternal life and immortality in a perfect and glorious new creation.²²

In the meantime the world makes war against Christ and His saints.²³ Instead of retreating in fear, we must take up the whole armor of God, with the sword of the spirit, which is His word, and take our stand for Christ.²⁴

"Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For Jehovah loves justice, and forsakes not his saints; they are preserved for ever; but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."²⁵

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