

FEAR – THE THIEF OF CHRISTIAN USEFULNESS – PART TWO

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

We are back, friends, to continue from where we stopped last time. We are discussing: Fear - the Thief of Christian Usefulness. And our text was taken from Acts of the Apostle 18:9-11

⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." ¹¹ And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

PRAYER:

Break the bread of life to us, O God, as You did break the natural bread years ago by the Sea of Galilee, that we may find You in this sacred pages as we reason with You in Your Word today...in the Name of Jesus. Amen!

Fear – the Thief of Christian Usefulness.

We stopped last time with the dimensions of fear. We are going to consider the dimensions of fear, the direction of fear and the disarming of fear.

In terms of the dimensions of fear, we said that fear is rooted in the product of the past; that a guilty conscience is a strong weapon in the hand of fear. Fear is rooted not only in the product of the past but also in the performance of the present. Much of our fear is located here, in what I will call existential fear, especially fear of people and fear of failure. Many do not make an impact for God because they fear people: because they fear they will fail.

Someone has observed that the cemetery is the richest piece of landed property in any city. What he means by that is: there is so much treasure buried there. People have gone to their graves with so much treasure because they were afraid

to act. We do not only fear the product of the past and the performance of the present, we also fear the potential of the future. These are the dimensions of fear: the product of the past, the performance of the present, the potential of the future.

Fear of the unknown explains the great difficulty men and women have in facing death. For example, fear of the future has created big business for charlatans and false prophets who read people's palms, prophecy to them and see visions of who has held them back; held their progress back. All these are in the attempt to pry into the future. When a prophet has ready prophecy for everyone that comes to him or her there is sufficient reason for serious concern.

Let me go quickly to the direction of fear.

Fear is directed against your usefulness for Christ by keeping you from:

- Serving Him fully,
- Speaking in His Name boldly,
- Sacrificing for Him joyfully.

Fear will keep you from being useful to Christ or to your God by: keeping you from serving Him fully, speaking in His Name boldly and sacrificing for Him joyfully.

The Disarming of Fear.

There are three things that disarm fear. These three things are faith, hope and love. Let's comment on each of them briefly.

Faith disarms fear. David, in Psalms 56: 3&4 suggests that faith is a weapon for disarming fear.

Psalms 56:3-4

³ *Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in You.*

⁴ *In God (I will praise His word),
In God I have put my trust;*

*I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me?*

In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. Considering not only the possibility of death, but also the probability of death, David said:

Psalms 23:4

*⁴Yea, 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.*

When fear tells you not to try because you will fail, don't hesitate to say to it: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me – Philippians 4:13.

Fear is disarmed not only by faith but also by hope. Ira Stanphill, in a 1950 song, said something interesting about handling the tyrannical potential of fear of the future in the song that says,

*I don't know about tomorrow;
I just live from day to day.
I don't borrow from its sunshine
For its skies may turn to grey.
I don't worry o'er the future,
For I know what Jesus said.
And today I'll walk beside Him,
For He knows what is ahead*

*Many things about tomorrow
I don't seem to understand
But I know who holds tomorrow
And I know who holds my hand.*

He was saying in effect that the important thing is to live one day at a time rather than worry about the future. He was saying, know what Jesus says in the bible, and thirdly, know that the one who holds tomorrow is the same one who holds your hand.

Faith and hope are not the only weapons against fear. Love joins them to cast out fear.

1 John 4:18

¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Perfect love is found only in God. The Christian loves God but does so imperfectly, no matter how sincere and no matter how serious he is with loving God. The perfect love that casts out fear is God's love for me, it is God's love for you. It is God's love for that is perfect, knowing that He God loves me perfectly is the secret weapon for dealing with fear. It is the assurance of God's love that tells me that He shall give His angels charge over me to keep me in all my ways. In their hands they shall bear me up lest I dash my foot against a stone.

There was a young soldier in danger of being captured and brutally killed. His troop or his platoon was routed, and they ran helter skelter in a cave. But the enemy was searching for them, looking into every nook and cranny. He was praying desperately. And he was praying that God will protect him. Suddenly he saw a spider crawling across the mouth of the cave and in a few minutes the web was at the mouth of the cave. And the soldiers – the enemy in search of him came to that same place, looked and they saw the spider web across the mouth of the cave. And they concluded that nobody is in there, otherwise this web will not be here. And they walked away. That was how he was saved. And later on he wrote, "Where God is, a spider's web is as a stonewall; where God is not, a stonewall is as a spider's web.

The Apostle John had an advantage over the rest of the disciples of Jesus Christ in that he was the disciple who knew that Jesus loved him. Five times in John's Gospel the disciple Jesus loved! The disciple Jesus loved! Who was saying that?

John himself. His love for me assures me that all things will work together for my good. Romans 8:28. His love for me gives me the boldness to claim His promise that says, Because he has set his love upon me – therefore I will deliver on Him and set him on high because he has known My Name. He shall call upon Me and I will answer Him, I will be with Him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.

Friend do you know how much God loves you?

Let me conclude by saying that fear cannot steal your usefulness for God when you are committed to His commission. Faith says, fear – the thief, you or your past is under the blood of Jesus; for Jesus has set you free from the guilt of sin, clearing your conscience of all offences – if only you put your trust in Jesus Christ. When fear come to rob me of my usefulness hope dismisses this fear, telling it that Jesus who holds tomorrow is coming back for me; although it has not yet been revealed what I will be. But it is certain, when Jesus is revealed I will be like Him; for I will see Him as He is.

When fear comes to steal my usefulness love tells fear that my past, my present and my future are all covered because the love that drew salvation's plan and the grace that brought it down to man has provided for my past, present and future. This love is an everlasting love. Fear cannot win for it is no match for the faith, hope and love of God. Halleluiah!

PRAYER:

Friend, I want to suggest very strongly, advice very strongly that if you have not committed your life to Christ that you should do so now, as you say to Him, Lord, I am a sinner. Please forgive me. Lord Jesus, come into my heart and be my Savior. If that is your prayer, I say a big Amen to it. And because Jesus was revealed that He might destroy the works of the devil, I say to you let every work of Satan in your life, in whatever form or shape, be destroyed now in the name of Jesus. Amen!