

# BE AFRAID, BE VERY AFRAID!

## Overcoming Fear In A Fearful World

By Pastor Greg Hooker

*“For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7)*

The phrase, ‘Be afraid, be very afraid’, originated in the 1986 horror film ‘The Fly’, starring Jeff Goldblum (as Seth Brundle) and Geena Davis (as Veronica Quaife). In the plot, Brundle as a scientist was experimenting with teleportation. In order to test his device, Brundle enters the chamber himself, but unknown to him a fly enters also. As the experiment progresses, the DNA of Brundle and the fly become mixed and he turns into a hideous monster resembling both human and insect-like qualities. As he begins the process, Brundle says, ‘don’t be afraid’, but a reporter covering the story and seeing what actually was happening, responds ‘No. Be afraid. Be very afraid.’

Looking around at the world I see one common thread woven into the very fabric of mankind – fear. Fear of war and rumors of wars; fear of economic collapse; fear of violence; fear of disease and famine; fear of nuclear and biological warfare; fear of terrorist attacks, fear of a Zombie apocalypse, and fear of an uncertain future are just some of the many things we recoil at.

Henry Louis Mencken stated, ‘The one permanent emotion of the inferior man is fear - fear of the unknown, the complex, the inexplicable. What he wants above everything else is safety.’

So we have to ask ourselves, where does all this fear originate? We know for certain from our text God is not the author, *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear...”* (II Timothy 1:7).

So by reason of deduction, we must conclude that fear is a product of something apart from God – that ‘something’ is Satan (it’s elementary my dear Watson!). Fear is just one of many tools used by the enemy to render us paralyzed and ineffective in the work of the Lord. You see, to live in constant fear is to die many deaths. Fear will immobilize and cause you to hunker down in a dark corner of life like a coward, never enjoying the freedom and blessings God wants you to have.

The word “fear” in our text literally means ‘servitude’, or ‘bondage’. If we allow the seed of fear to be planted by the Devil and left to germinate and grow in our lives, we will never be able to live victorious and fruitful in the Lord’s work. So how do we conquer this debilitating malady brought on by evil influences? Notice three things from II Timothy 1:7 that will help us conquer fear:

### **I. GOD’S POWER CONQUERS FEAR – “...of power...”**

In the all-time classic, ‘The Wizard of Oz’, Dorothy and Toto were getting ready to leave The Land of Oz via the Wizard and his magical balloon. Glenda, the good witch, told Dorothy to close her eyes and click

her heels three times repeating these famous words, 'There's no place like home.' Dorothy replied, 'You mean I've had the power to go home all along?' Glenda responded by assuring her she did.

As Christians in uncertain times, we have always had the power to overcome fear – God issued it in the person of the Holy Spirit at the moment we were saved. The Greek word Paul uses for this “power” means to overcome all obstacles and to face all dangers. When fear begins to raise its ugly head, we possess the power of the Holy Spirit of God to look it straight in the eyes and vanquish it – not in our own strength and ability – but upon the authority of the Word of God.

The power of God within us will bring peace to our troubled hearts, meaning to our distressed lives, and joy in the midst of our anxieties. Listen to Psalm's 107:13.14, *“Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.”* God breaks the bands of fear Satan has bound us with, and sets us free of its debilitating clutches. As the old hymn says: 'There is power, power, wonder-working power. In the precious blood of the Lamb'

## **II. GOD'S LOVE CONQUERS FEAR – “...of love...”**

In addition to God's “power” to help us overcome fear, Paul tells us love does, too. Notice I John 4:18, *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love”.*

Perhaps there is nothing that will make a person more courageous in the face of danger than that of love – love for nation, husband, wife, children, and friends. Love will awaken even the most timid and fearful person to rise up with unbridled bravery. Most of you can relate when I say, 'touch me and I'll turn the other cheek, but lay one finger on one of my family members, or even my friends and you had better run!'

Think about this: It was the love of God for His people, the Israelites, which conquered their fear of their enemies and brought them safely to the Promised Land. It was the love of God which delivered Joseph from a deep pit and raised him up in Pharaoh's court. It was the love of God for young David which enabled him to defeat Goliath with a sling and small stone. It was the love of God for Daniel which protected him from the drooling jaws of a den full of hungry lions.

Moreover, it was the love of God for mankind which allowed His Son to be nailed to a cross. It was the love of God which delivered us from the bondage of sin and established a right relationship with Jesus Christ. It was the love of God which sent His Holy Spirit as our Comforter and Protector. It was the love of God which built us an eternal home with peace and joy in Heaven.

So my friends just remember, it is also the love of God which will deliver you from ALL your fears – *“...perfect love casteth out fear...”!*

## **III. GOD'S SOUND MIND CONQUERS FEAR – “...of a sound mind...”**

The Greek word used for a “*sound mind*” denotes someone whose mind is sober, a mind capable of exercising wisdom and discretion. The opposite would be an un-sober mind as illustrated by someone under the influence of drugs and alcohol. We hear of accidents caused daily by those who have given their minds over to the control of substance abuse. Rather than abusing them, however, Christians are exhorted to have the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16).

The sober mind, furthermore, is balanced and views things in their proper perspective – a mind that isn’t swift to jump to false conclusions, but carefully analyzes the situation. In modern-day vernacular, ‘engage ones brain before using ones mouth!’ Sadly, however, many people are summed up by the words of the Scarecrow on the Wizard of Oz, “...some people without brains do an awful lot of talking... don't they?”

I’m afraid a large part of the violence and anarchy prevalent in our modern-day society is a result of a mind ‘drunk’ on many factors. For examples: not only are our minds affected by substance abuse, but violent movies, TV programs, video games, the internet, filthy books and magazines, and false teachings propagated in our schools breed negative emotions and violent tendencies.

Satan is a very intelligent and wise being. He is very good at brainwashing, especially young, impressionable minds. If he can control your mind, he can control your actions. When we go back and research some of the violent carnages committed across our country in recent days and study those who perpetrated them, we find there were deep, dark, secret activities carried out over time which led them to perform these hideous crimes. That’s why it’s so important to develop a “*sound mind*” by filling them with good and wholesome things.

The Apostle Paul to his letter to the Philippians provided a good starting place to develop a sound mind, he said this, “...*whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*” Let us cast off our fear by developing a mind that is centered on good things and avoiding the negative.

## **CONCLUSION**

Satan is the author of fear, but God provides three things from II Timothy 1:7 to help us conquer our fears and live a victorious life – “*power*”, “*love*”, and a “*sound mind*”. We can choose to occupy a dark corner of existence worrying about the things happening in the world and around us, or we can eliminate all fear by trusting in God. “*Fear not; for I am with you: be not dismayed; for I am your God: I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you; yea, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness*” (Isaiah 41:10).

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,

And drives away his fear.

- JOHN NEWTON, Olney Hymns