



November 18, 2022

Fear, Anxiety, ever meet this Creature?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from back here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Recently someone sent me a short video clip from a movie back in 2012 where Denzel Washington calmly crash lands a commercial plane. It was pretty intense.

As I viewed the clip I was reflecting on a story I've shared with some about flying to visit one of the congregations I used pastor in Colombia.

I've not shared with many that I really have a fear of flying. Many times the flights are difficult for me; maybe it is because I have absolutely no control of the machine I am sitting in.

I remember one flight where all 4 seats were filled. The pilot, my wife and me, and our luggage. I think it was a Cessna 170. We were flying at a lower than normal altitude when we hit a series of air pockets and dropped several feet. I was lifted off my seat by at least 4 inches, and I pulled my seat belt tighter. My knuckles turned pale as I squeezed the door handle, holding on for dear life. I realized at this juncture that my stomach had found a new place to rest in my body-right near my throat.

The pilot, who had been silent for most of the short 40 minute flight turned and looked at me with a halfhearted smile. The undulating motion of the aircraft did not seem to bother the pilot, and he continued checking his email on his smart phone as if nothing was wrong.

I had to admit, that along with the air pockets, and both fuel gauges reading in

the red zone, I was feeling like the little aircraft might not make it back to Bucaramanga safely. Not too many days before that flight, I had mentioned in a sermon message the importance of prayer, and trusting in God, and now I was practicing what I preached.

Fear, Anxiety, ever meet this creature? I am sure you have. It creeps into your mind through many different doors and windows. Fear of flying. Fear of heights. Fear of groups of people. Fear of disease. Fear of other countries invading where you live. The list goes on. Fear of being rejected. Fear of being accepted. Fear of financial reversal. Fear that the world is going to end. Fear of dying.

Let's take a quick look at some definitions of meaning for "fear". These are all very real in the world we live today.

1) Fear is the feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the literal presence of danger, such as you might feel if approached by a dangerous animal or perhaps a lawless gang in a desolate area.

2) Fear is the feeling of uneasy concern. For example, when your wife or someone you love is not home by the time you both agreed on, you are afraid something might have happened to them. Human nature always thinks of the worse.

3) Fear is also defined as a feeling of respectful awe...as toward our Creator.

The fear that most of us are familiar with is the tense feeling that takes hold of us when we are faced with the difficult problems of normal day to day living.

Have you ever felt like your emotions were as tight as a bow string? Often these fears can be traced back to an earlier time in our life, or in many cases a result of sin, which can create fear.

Have you ever realized that fear does not originate with God, *"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). Since the fear referred to does not come from God, it must come from somewhere else. One of our adversaries' best tools is fear.

Chronic fear wreaks havoc in our lives. 1 John 4:18 *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love."*

When fear is present, we suffer penalties. Fear produces physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges. Fear can also produce a persecution complex. Ever feel like everyone is out to get you? That is not a normal thinking pattern. Every time they hear a siren, they think the police is coming for one of their family, or an ambulance is taking a family member to the hospital. That kind of fear sends you through an emotional wringer. Maybe someone simply looks at you, and you think "now what did I do?"

Fear causes spiritual problems, and paralyzes faith. As long as fear is allowed to persist, our effectiveness in growing as a Christian is limited.

I'd like to suggest that either faith will overcome fear, or fear will overcome faith.

Some become so afraid, that not only can they not trust God for the spiritual things, they can't even trust Him for their daily bread. As Christians, those who do and follow Christ, we are not supposed to be afraid, but we struggle. Have you ever cried out, "why can't I quit being afraid!"

Now you and I need healthy respect of danger. To fly in a plane, knowing there is a thunderstorm building in intensity before we taxi down the runway, or taking off with little fuel in the tanks, would be foolish. And of course we must maintain a reverential awe, or fear of God. But, as we see all the things taking place in this world today, do we need to be afraid? Are you afraid?

The kind of fear God commands us to overcome is inner tension that comes and tears us apart emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Some who watch the news 24-7 have found that they are in a constant state of fear and worry.

There are a couple three things that are essential in coping with this type of fear.

First: Realize fear is not a part of what God wants for us. We are told directly, to “fear not”. We are told just the opposite, as it says in Proverbs 28:1, to be bold- the exact opposite of fear. We cannot escape fear by taking a daily dose of drugs or alcohol to send us into a deep sleep. We cannot defeat our fears by trying to just “get away from it all” by taking a vacation somewhere. Deliverance from fears begins with our mental attitude.

Secondly: Recognize we do not face our problems alone. No matter how severe our problems are, or become, we are not alone. God does not abandon us, even when our personal safety is threatened.

The apostle Paul shares some encouraging words. Hebrews 13:5-6 (RSV) *5 Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, “I will never fail you nor forsake you.” 6 Hence we can confidently say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?”*

Thirdly: Practice and remember “*perfect love casts out fear*”. Contrast the two, it’s quite interesting. Love looks for opportunities to give, and serve others. “What can I do for someone else?” Fear keeps a wary eye on the possible consequences of getting involved in other’s lives, and asks, “What will He or She want from me in return?” Love thinks no evil. Fear thinks little else. Love believes all things, fear is always suspicious.

Many in the world today live in almost a state of paranoia. You can see it in their faces.

Love is busy doing today's tasks, and does not worry about tomorrow. Because fear constantly focuses on tomorrow, it fails to undertake responsibilities, or focus on the task at hand.

I think the last references to fear in the Bible in (Revelation 21:7-8) has some insight in to this subject of fear. *"7 He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*

The world is going to get a whole lot worse. But, then, it's going to finally get better. That is a promise from our Creator! As you face your fears friends, think vertically. Face them with confidence that God will help us. He will be with us. He will help us to learn to truly *"be not afraid"*.

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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