

Fear And Faith

Rex Banks

Fear! How well we all know this dreadful enemy that paralyzes our will, sucks the resolve from our heart, and mocks our every effort to step out in faithful obedience to our Lord. The sacred pages are saturated with the tears of men and women who succumbed to the tyrant named "Fear," and who betrayed both themselves and their God while held prisoner in the grasp of this merciless despot. Fear cast its cold shadow over Aaron so that he yielded to the Israelites' demand for an idol. The icy fingers of Fear chilled the hearts of the ten spies so that they refused to tackle the giants in the land of promise. Fear entered the tents of Saul's warriors and released its venom into the bloodstream of Israel's army so that God's people trembled before an uncircumcised Philistine named Goliath. Poor, impetuous Peter, weeping alone in the darkness after his denial of Jesus, knew all too well the bitterness of defeat at the hands of a pitiless foe called Fear.

You and I know the foe equally well. We yearn to take our God at His word, and we long to make the precious promises ours, but often the cunning adversary sows the seeds of doubt within our minds so that our best intentions dissolve in a sea of indecision. We know the promise: "And my God shall supply all your needs" (Philippians 4:19), but the tyrant whispers in our ear, "What if?," and our peace of mind disappears like smoke in the wind. With our intellect we grasp the meaning of our Lord's words, "I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), but Fear is like a lead weight that threatens to drown us in a bottomless sea of anxiety and worry. The words on the sacred page tell us that "God has not given us a spirit of timidity but of power and love and discipline" (2 Timothy 1:7), but still Fear invades our soul by a dozen different doors: fear of failure, fear of ridicule, fear of rejection, fear of change, fear of darkness, fear of crowds, fear of financial loss—the list is endless. And as the oppressive iron-fisted ruler squeezes the joy from our days, Fear is joined by Guilt because we know in our heart of hearts that our joyless, insipid lives have no power to attract an unbelieving world.

The bad news is that Fear's henchmen are Guilt and Despair. The good news is that Fear has an implacable enemy that stands with drawn sword to protect against the ravages of our foe. Its name is Faith. Its source is the Word of the Holy Spirit. Its fruit is optimism, hope, and courage. Faith banishes Fear: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I dread?" (Psalm 27:1). You see, if we can but saturate our minds in such promises, then the ridicule of unbelievers and the rejection by men are powerless to harm us! Again, trust is the antidote for despondency: "Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name" (Psalm 33:20-21). Trust and joy are inseparable. Are you worried about the future? Listen to Isaiah 57:13: "But he who takes refuge in Me shall inherit the land, and shall possess My holy mountain." Is the prospect of death a shadow upon your happiness? Listen to Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and I am confident that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Timothy 1:12). Does the world appear to be out of control? Listen to Isaiah again: "For the Lord of hosts has planned and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?" (14:27). Faith banishes Fear! Let us saturate our minds in the promises of God, immerse our hearts in the faith that guards from Fear, and place our plans in the hands of the One Who upholds the Universe with a word.

The Sermon On The Mount: God's Plan for the Home

Denny Wilson

"It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:31,32).

God's plan from the beginning was for one man and one woman to be joined together in the marital bond for life (Genesis 2:18,24). The first institution established by God was not the government nor was it the Law. God's first organization set up in the new world was the family. It was not good for man to be alone. He needed a companion who would be his help-meet. He needed a partner that would complete him physically, emotionally, socially, and who would join him in worship of God spiritually. God's solution was to create woman to meet the needs. Together, they could walk hand in hand in life achieving all the goals God has set before them in all aspects of life. For the home fortunate enough to have children, we are again blessed by God with a wonderful heritage (Psalm 127).

The home is truly a blessing under God's authority. God's plan will still work for the couple that has their eyes firmly fixed upon His will for their lives. With God's plan as our foundation in life, we will protect one another from harm, we will guard one another from sin, we will love one another above everything in this world but God, we will cherish one another, and we will worship together as joint heirs of the grace of life (Ephesians 5:22,33; 1 Peter 3:7). The home as God designed it is a blessing for all generations.

However, it is sad to note that sin enters into the homes and marriages of many in this world. There are many sins that affect homes today including fornication. When two become one flesh in the bonds of matrimony, their physical desires are designed to be fulfilled in one another. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband...Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency" (1 Corinthians 7:2,3,5). The physical passion for one another is a blessing God has designed for the home but it is only to be fulfilled in that bond of matrimony.

While God designed the home to be from its union until "death do us part," Jesus has given one exception that can separate the marriage: fornication. Our world is filled with bad examples of marriage: for example, marriages that ended within hours of beginning, multiple marriages, infidelity, and more. However, we are not conformed to the world. We must follow God's plan. Men try to justify every reason under the sun for ending a marriage: such as abuse, financial problems, incompatibility, burning the biscuits, or even "no fault" divorces. Brethren, this ought not to be. There is only one reason for which a marriage may be ended with God's authority: fornication (Matthew 19:9). Are there real issues that need attention in a marriage other than fornication? Of course! If there is abuse, whether physical or verbal, it must be corrected. However, these problems are not sufficient to meet God's standard. Must a marriage that has been harmed by fornication end in divorce? No! God is a loving and merciful God who has forgiven us for our sins that nailed the Son of God to a cross. He expects us to be forgiving of others just as He through Christ forgave us. It may be that problems can be corrected, forgiveness sought, restoration be made, and the disharmony repaired. In such situations we would rejoice over the sinner who comes home. The key is that we submit to God's authority!

NEWS AND NOTES

"I was sick, and ye visited me..." (Matthew 25:36)

Miles Dodson had his surgery on Thursday in Memphis.

Lou Ann Baugh is showing improvement after recent foot surgery.

Marian Mangrum fell last week and injured her elbow. She is receiving treatment for it and is at home.

Carolyn Tinsley has returned home from Encompass.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please check here and on the bulletin boards for updates on the Prayer Request List, and inform us of any needed updates.

Clydene Nelson	Frances Trotter	Mark Brewer	Nicole Nelson
Kevin Trotter	Stella Lancaster	Sheryl Taylor	Reta Oden
Linda Baker	Naomi & Jae Renck	Carol Willcockson	Reba Dye
Dene Barnett	Brian & Christy House	Hazel Scarborough	David Dye
Helen Coleman	Carolyn Harper	Thad Mangrum	Kathryn Williams
Darlene Felts	Steve Stoker	Jane Spencer	Vicki Robertson
Paul & Sandra Sherman	Sherry Horton	Mark Stoker	Carolyn Tinsley

Those Privileged To Serve

April 19, 2020

SUNDAY MORNING

Song Leader: Scottie Blanchard
 Opening Prayer: TBA
 Closing Prayer: TBA
 Bible Reading: TBA
 Preacher: Terry Joe Kee

LORD'S TABLE

Presiding:
TBA

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Randy Oden

SUNDAY EVENING

Song Leader: TBA
 Opening Prayer: TBA
 Closing Prayer: TBA
 Preacher: Terry Joe Kee

WEDNESDAY NIGHT

Song Leader: TBA
 Opening Prayer: TBA
 Closing Prayer: TBA

DEVOTIONAL SPEAKER

TBA

NUMBERS FOR THE WEEK

April 19, 2020

Sunday Bible Study	
Sunday AM Worship	89
Sunday PM Worship	41
Wednesday Bible Study	40
Contribution	\$5392

SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 Matthew 5:16

The Friend of Truth

Greensboro Road church of Christ

Jonesboro, Arkansas 72405

(870) 932-3920

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16)

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Keep Notes

Each Lord's day we are blessed to assemble and worship with the saints. More and more I am seeing and hearing where churches of Christ are continuing to meet and worship on the First Day of the week. Some are meeting in their cars on the parking lot and others are meeting under strict guidelines of separation. I hope that our live streaming will get better in the coming weeks. The new cameras have been installed after the storms knocked out the old ones, but we still have work that needs to be done to make our picture quality better. I hear from those in Tennessee, West Virginia and Pennsylvania that are watching us and know we have an opportunity to spread the good news to those who cannot be present with the saints. Pray for those who hear and those who are less fortunate than we are.

Every week we have a large number of folks who are sick, hospitalized and recovering. Please check the "News and Notes" section on page 4 and keep these all in your prayers. Several are having surgery and others are recovering at home, but they all need our prayers. Also check the bulletin boards from time to time and notice the long list of sick and shut-in members who are needing our prayers. Consider also those who are suffering from loneliness and seclusion and reach out to all of them and keep them encouraged. We have responsibilities to those in all kinds of circumstances to edify and encourage. Even a pandemic cannot keep us from serving the Lord faithfully and using ourselves in His service. Look for ways to serve and then serve.

We have determined to postpone our gospel meeting this Spring. Arnold Kelley was to be with us, but due to the virus our Spring Meeting had to be postponed for now. During the recent storms many have suffered devastating losses and some of those who are suffering are brethren in Christ, like Arnold and Susan, whom we support in Laurel, Mississippi. Arnold and Susan lost their house during the recent tornado in Laurel. They have secured a house to rent, and brethren there have helped them gather things to move to the new location. The elders have sent funds to help Arnold and Susan in their relocation. Keep them both and all the church in Laurel in your prayers.

Another thing that will be different in 2020 is we will not be able to have VBS this year. We have sadly had to cancel it this year, but we are looking at other options if things change early enough this summer. Be looking forward to our theme in Summer 2021 of the Gospel Railroad. If things change in time, we will do something special for our children and make 2020 a good memory of study and growth.

SHEPHERDS

Dan Nichols
 Randy Oden
 Jody Pickens

DEACONS

Scottie Blanchard
 Jerry Dodson
 Mike Felts
 Jason Garland
 Marshall Lands
 Mark Wooten

EVANGELIST

Terry Joe Kee

MISSIONARIES

Michael Hughes
 Samrit Kammanee
 Arnold Kelley
 Guyana, South America
 Warren, PA

SERVICES

SUNDAY

Classes 9:00 a.m.
 Worship 10:00 a.m.
 5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the Word of God
 Romans 10:17

Believe the Word of God
 John 8:24

Repent of your sins
 Luke 13:3

Confess your faith in Jesus as the Son of God
 Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for the remission of your sins
 Acts 2:38

Live faithfully
 Revelation 2:10

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..."
 Proverbs 29:18

God Give Us 2020 Vision in 2020