

Proverbs 25:29 – Fear!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: There are 2 types of fear you are commanded to have. These are good fears.

1. You are called to fear God. This is the godly awe by which you reverence God. If you don't fear God in this way it is a serious sin!

Psalms 22:23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!

Psalms 33:8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

2. There is another good fear...a necessary emotion given by God and it is most useful (as all of God's gifts). This fear keeps you from falling off the edge of a cliff, alarms you when there is a rattlesnake in the neighborhood, and makes you not pet a scorpion. This fear makes your body work faster so you can run or jump to save your life...It makes your eyes open wider and blood rush to your legs.

But there is a bad fear, a sinful fear. **This is when you are in a state of anxiety, worry, and panic – when you should not be!** And with the onset and spread of the coronavirus in Canada and around the world, and seeing the anxiety, worry, and panic that is beginning to set-in in many quarters, you will hear from God's Word about bad fears...deadly fears. You will also hear how to destroy sinful fears!

Our headings are:

Defining Bad Fear

Describing Bad Fear

Destroying Bad Fear

Our goals are: That you will **identify and use good fear**, and that you will **identify and destroy bad fear** so you can live as a successful covenant child who will bring glory to Christ.

Defining Bad Fear

1. Bad fear is that panicky uncertainty, that worry and anxiety you feel when a difficult situation looks out of your control.

You can't control the situation...so you panic, worry, or become anxious.

2. Bad fear in is that panicky uncertainty, that worry and anxiety you feel when you have a phobia – when you think a reasonable situation is out of your control.

Phobias are really unreasonable fears that arise out of faulty associations in your mind.

Claustrophobia – the fear of closed places.

Aerophobia – fear of open spaces.

Acrophobia - fear of heights.

Hydrophobia – fear of water.

Ergophobia-fear of work.

Acarophobia – fear of skin infestation.

Arachnophobia – fear of spiders.

Anticipated feelings trigger more fears and can ultimately lead to panic.

But places or things like closets and water are not dangerous; the problem is in man.

There are no outside forces forcing the Christian man, woman, boy, or girl, to fear. The Christian is able to control those fears.

3. You are commanded not to fear in difficult situations or even when you think a situation is difficult!

You are commanded not even to fear man, death, the devil, or the future...

Isaiah 51:12 - "I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die, and of the son of a man who will be made like grass?

Describing Bad Fear

1. You fear when you doubt God's Providence.

Proverbs 25:29 - The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

When you fear, you literally are saying: "**God can't help me and I don't know what to do.**" You are treating God as if he were small and inadequate; you have a low view of God. Then when you doubt God's ability to protect you, you panic.

Let me illustrate this with the people of God – the Jews – just before the fall of Jerusalem in BC586. They believed God would not protect them from the Babylonians so they ran to Egypt. This was a worse sin. They feared and panicked and then disobeyed God. God then punished them worse than if they stayed in Judah and then went to Babylon.

2. You fear because you reject the fear of God.

Long ago Moses wrote how bad fears would overtake God's people if they lost godly fear.

Deuteronomy 28:65-67 - "And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. "Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. "In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.

If you only have respect for yourself, and none for God, when you see you can't control the circumstances you will panic.

3. What are the results of having sinful fears?

a. When you become sinfully afraid you are not able to fulfill your responsibilities.

So if you are afraid of flying, you won't be able to visit your dying relative.

If you are afraid of failing your driving test you won't ever take it.

If you are afraid you might say the wrong thing, you never publicly pray or speak.

If you are afraid a girl might reject you, you never speak to her.

If you are afraid you will get coronavirus, you won't go outside.

If there is a little snow, you won't drive because you are afraid you will have an accident and be injured.

b. When you fear, you panic, and things get worse. You then lie, you murder, you commit suicide, you work on the Sabbath, etc.

c. Keep in mind sinful fear is not when you take reasonable precaution to protect yourself or your loved one. So if you avoid visiting one with a highly contagious disease, that is not fear; that is love...love for your family at home. If you are sick with a contagious disease, you will stay from work so you don't spread it. That is love...not fear.

Destroying Bad Fear

1. To destroy sinful fear, fear God.

If the fear of God is the key ground for avoiding bad fear, then you must start with fearing God. This is a command.

Psalm 2:11 - **Serve the LORD with fear**, and rejoice with trembling.

“Trembling” here means with submission – with proper fear. But in the keeping of God's law is great reward as well.

Specifically, **when you fear God through Christ, he removes bad fears.**

Hebrews 2:14-15 - Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and **release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**

2. To destroy fear, trust in God's providential care, for when you do, you will have no reason to fear.

If you have sinful fears because you don't trust God's providential care, learning to trust in God's providential care will eliminate your fears!

Matthew 10:28-31 - "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

You surely have never seen a sparrow on anti-depressant...and hoarding goods...

Psalms 118:6 - The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. **What can man do to me?**

Hebrews 13:6 - ..."The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. **What can man do to me?"**

Psalms 56:4 In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. **What can flesh do to me?**

What can man do to me? This is a rhetorical question! Obvious answer: **Nothing...not one thing!**

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Even if something I don't like happens, God will work it for my good.

HC Q1: **What is your only comfort in life and in death?**

Answer: **That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live unto Him.**

Keep in mind that even when you trust in God's providential care bad things might still happen to you.

3. To destroy fear, love others...for perfect love casts out fear.

1 John 4:18 - 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.

Love is self-giving. Fear is falling back.

But to love you must know how much God loves you.

Then knowing how much God loves you, you will love your spouse, your children and

your neighbors. When you love them, you will do what is best for them...regardless of the dangers.

A mother will jump in front of train to save her child...a husband will take a bullet for his wife. A soldier will die for his country.

Why? Love is greater than fear. So when there is true love, there is true obedience and no need to fear.

4. To destroy fear, have courage.

How do you replace fear with courage? There is no magic here...it is asking God to take away your fear when you are uncertain or irrational (phobias) and give you courage.

Daniel 3:16- 18 - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. "If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

Proverbs 28:1- The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion.

Ask God to take away your fear and give you courage instead of your fear.

Instead of sarcastically saying: "Oh, Great," one man said, "O Great...in thy faithfulness." Psalm 1 – How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel...but his delight is in the law

5. To destroy fears, stay away from friends who are fearful and avoid things that promote fear...even TV programs...

If you are bombarded with messages of hopelessness from friends and the press you will eventually be influenced by them. When you are influenced by them, fear sets in. And the kingdom of God suffers.

Conclusion:

There is good fear – a gift of God. **Fear God.** **Fear things that are dangerous.** **But** sinful fear is from the Devil and demons. Sinful fear shows you trust yourself more than you trust God. **Sinful fear shows you do not fear God.** You think you are adequate for your troubles and you treat God as inadequate. Instead of bad fear, fear God, trust in his providential care, love others with passionate love, replace that fear with courage, and stay away from people who promote bad fears.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

a. Let the wicked fear (Psalm 78). Let them wonder who will get their riches when they die, or if they will get coronavirus and die, or if someone would kill them, or if they will lose their jobs. But God wants you to fear no man... God wants you to put your trust in him...fear him. He is your caring Father.

b. God has given you the tools you need to put your trust in him. He gave you his Word, his Spirit, his church, his sacraments and prayer! And he **has given you his promises for now and the future!**

c. Remind yourself of God's ability to keep you... and to know his promises are sure and his weapons effective.

Finally, if you are sinfully afraid and you are not a Christian, coronavirus is the least of your troubles. You have to spend eternity in hell! But if you believe Jesus came to take punishment for sinners and you receive this by faith, God then obligates himself to make you his child, protect you, and reward you in haven. If you are not Christ's child, I hope you will ask him today to become his child!