



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

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EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

Letters of Faith

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**“But I will warn you whom to fear:
fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell;
yes, I tell you, fear Him!”**

Luke 12:5 NASB

“Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.”

Luke 12:7b

Dearly Beloved,

In the last several months, there have been numerous times when I was moved by the Holy Spirit to minister a gentle word of adjustment (correction) to a saint for expressing fear by using the phrase, “I fear that I will...” or “I’m afraid that...” I would point out that fear is the opponent of faith, and we are to walk in the love of Christ Jesus without fear because as John pointed out:

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” (1 John 4:18)

These all happened while I was personally learning and trying to practice the depths of truth in Philippians 4:6, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”** I have added the emphasis because not being anxious is what I was really trying to practice. I was therefore doubly sensitive when I heard anyone speak of fearing or being anxious which is the entry stage of fearing. I even had an opportunity to bring healing and freedom to a saint who was overly concerned with their early life’s failings by ministering my paraphrase of the truths in Isaiah 54:4, **“Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; and do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; but you will forget the shame of your youth...”**

I am convinced that the enemy of our souls is trying to lure us all into being anxious, and then growing into fearfulness, so that our faith will be weakened in God’s Lordship over us and over all of His people mired in the myriad of the world’s traumatic societal situations. I even experienced the “voice” of evil whisper in my ear at a particularly stressful time: *Well, certainly you can be anxious over THIS, can’t you?* To which, by God’s grace, I was able to reply adamantly: *NO! I will obey God’s Word to NOT be anxious, period!*

In the pursuit of appropriating this admonition, I have learned two lessons.

First, most of our anxieties are actually over “nothings”—which is humbling and so fulfills 1 Peter 5:6-7, **“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”**

And second, practicing not being anxious for anything releases the blessings of the next verse: **“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”** (Phil. 4:7) Incidentally, I have often observed the manifestation of this verse as I ministered the peace of God to Gretel. The calming peace of God would truly *bypass*

her compromised human comprehension and penetrate directly into her heart (spirit) and bring relief from anxious thoughts (in her mind).

As I was preparing to share the above with you, I realized that there are a ton of Scriptures that admonish us to fear, as well as the “fear-not” Words. I have selected just two such verses as our heading. They clearly demonstrate the problems we face with our rather limited English language in determining the connotation of words that mean different things in different contexts. The “fear” in Luke 12:5 means to have a reverence for, and to be in awe of, while the “fear” in Luke 12:7 obviously means to be anxious, frightened, afraid, or in the extreme, to be terrified.

A word study of “fear” surprisingly shows that the Scriptures often use the second of these connotations with regard to our Loving God and His ways. Does that surprise you as much as it did me?

For example:

“Therefore, let us fear [be afraid, anxious] if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.” (Heb. 4:1)

“Fear [fright, spiritual anxiety] gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and, ‘God has visited His people!’” (Luke 7:16)

Some Scriptures can best be fully understood by experience. I used to think the word “fear” in Proverbs 16:6 meant a holy terror and fear of God: **“By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.”** After all, the phrase “fear of the Lord” in the Old Testament often clearly refers to a fearful awe of a Holy God Who severely punishes transgressors of His Laws. But a wrenching real-life experience proved otherwise.

We had a close relationship with the pastor of an outstanding charismatic church who frequently and passionately exhorted his congregation to be holy and walk in sexual purity. When we heard that he was in an adulterous relationship, we were stunned. We cried out to our Lord: *How could he be unclean while so constantly preaching and proclaiming purity?*

Our Lord’s answer shocked us and brought us to the full meaning of Proverbs 16:6, *Scare Scriptures and punishment threats don’t empower purity. Agape love and the desire to be pleasing and acceptable in God’s sight do empower, overcoming the traps of the enemy!*

With this cryptic word, we were reminded that we had sloughed off being uneasy with the harshness of our friend’s admonitions for purity and the fire and brimstone threats he would pour out in his sermons. After all, we thought, he is a Bible expert and seasoned in the faith and the Holy Spirit; of course he is teaching that by the fear (fright, terror) of God’s wrath **“one keeps away from evil.”** But it didn’t work for him, and it won’t work for any of us, because this Scripture means it is the awesome love, and holy reverence, and deep heart’s desire in us to be pleasing to our Lord and to walk in a manner worthy of Him that gives us the power to overcome evil.

So our understanding of many other Scriptures became solidified in our hearts as being grounded on God’s love for us and our love and reverential awe of Him. The word “fear” in 2 Cor. 7:15 could therefore only mean reverential awe and love: **“His [that is, Titus’] affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling.”**

Yes, Beloved, as we said last month, when we follow the love-flow of Jesus, miracles will happen. The miracle power to overcome the enemy’s increasingly potent and ever-present temptations to immorality of all sorts will manifest in our lives. It won’t be a battle or a struggle! It will be a flow of the irresistible, awesome, and “uncounterfeitable” love and reverence of the God of Love, Himself, that will break every yoke of sin and defilement.

So, Beloved, be fearsome, but not fearful! Recognize that the only fear that the Lord wants in our life with Him is the awesome and reverential awe kind of fear— *the fear of the Lord!*

Hugs,



Ministry Report:

As we were finishing a very precious Holy Spirit-led prayer and share session of Higher Ground International Church in my cozy apartment, the Lord opened my eyes in the Spirit to see an extraordinary vision. It was troubling, as all of you who lived here through the horrific 1993 floods will recognize, so I hesitated to share it. But a firm “kick in the pants” from the Holy Spirit encouraged me to speak:

I saw a raging river, full to its banks and rising up on the levees on both sides. Suddenly I saw the levees being dynamited up in huge explosions. I said: *Lord, that is so destructive and traumatic, how can I share that?* To which I clearly heard Him respond: *Not destruction Paul, reconstruction! You are seeing My River of Life in full outpouring, and I Am the One blowing up the levees because I will no longer permit man to constrict and direct the flow of My River of Life. I Am going to flood areas of My creation that have been kept dry from My Spirit for generations, and I Am going to bring forth great new harvests from this overflow of My Spirit.*

May the Lord give you discernment of this word.