

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“I Was Afraid...” A Study of Fear Pt. 2

By Brian Meade

The Greek word for fear is the word phobos. It is defined as: “that which may cause flight,” (a) “fear, dread, terror,” (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vol. 2, p. 230)*). We still have the word phobia that represents fear of some form. Whether it is a fear of snakes (ophidiophobia), the fear of spiders (arachnophobia), the fear of confined spaces (claustrophobia), the fear of the dark (nyctophobia), the fear of heights (acrophobia), or even the fear of clowns (coulrophobia)— all are real fears that cause changes in the behavior of the one afflicted with that type of phobia.



Those with coulrophobia will generally stay away from the circus type events if they know that clowns will be present. Those who are claustrophobic will be extremely uneasy in or refuse to ride elevators or other confined areas. And those afflicted with acrophobia do not go up where it is high because of their fears! It keeps them from doing certain things in life.

Now the point of all of that is this: what if we let our fears keep us from doing God’s will? Fear then would essentially keep us from going to heaven! But just how could fear keep someone from doing the necessary commands or duties to God that requires from each of us individually?

The fear of water (aquaphobia) could be a fear that someone would have to overcome to obey the gospel in being baptism for the remission of sins (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). It would be difficult, but not impossible to do what God wants from them and even adds a greater sacrifice in obedience that many would not have as an issue. But that fear does not change or alter the command to obey God. What if Naaman had had a fear of water in 2 Kings 5:9-14? He would still would have to overcome that fear of water to dip seven times in the Jordan River. Now that is just hypothetical, but the command for water baptism is a universal command for salvation; one that with the Lord’s help, we can see past it and be saved!

Now the rest of our study will look at real life situations for us today thanks to brother R.W. Stovall. His sermon outline is the basis for most of what we will talk about concerning several points of fear and its hindrance in keeping God’s will.

I. I Was Afraid To Study The Bible.....

Some people seem to have a fear of studying the Bible because they might find out some things that they just don’t want to know. They might find out exactly how they are neglecting the commands of God in salvation and conduct of life (Hebrews 2:3; Ephesians 4:17-32). Along this line, author and humorist Mark Twain (1835-1910) is quoted as saying, “It ain’t those parts of the Bible that I can’t understand that bothers me, it’s the parts that I do understand.” It may well be those very parts that are easily understood that keep people afraid to learn the Scriptures. They might learn words like: submission, repentance, obedience, commitment, sacrifice, honesty, purity, and holiness.



Others are afraid to study the Bible because they know they would have to give up sin—but they love certain sins! They know enough about the Bible to be scared to seriously study sin and see its nature and consequences because they just might want to give up all their evil deeds! They might turn from sexual immorality, drinking beer or wine, lying, stealing, or other vile sins that Paul says, *“For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,”* (Colossians 3:6)

But the main reason they don’t go any further than a passing glance at God’s word is simple: *“For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”* (John 3:20)

Still others, who are deceived in false religion, might find that their religious train was wrong. They might learn from studying with a member of the church that denominationalism has no basis in scripture (Ephesians 4:4; Romans 16:16), that instrumental music has no authority in New Testament worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16-17), that Sabbath keeping ended at the cross of Calvary (Colossians 2:14), that man does have freewill in coming to God for salvation (Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17), and that baptism is in order to have the remission of sins and be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:37-38; 1 Peter 3:21).

One of the hardest barriers to overcome in converting the lost in religious error is getting someone to study with you on these subjects. Fear of being wrong and having to change can cause people to run from such studies; but they need to overcome such fear to learn the truth and obey it.

II. I Was Afraid To Obey The Gospel.....

Jesus teaches us the importance of counting the cost of following Him in Luke 14:26-33. He begins in verse 28, *“For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Jesus wanted His disciples to not just make a good start in beginning to follow Him, but to go on to finish well with Him. Following Jesus is a BIG commitment! We have known before we start out, that we are willing to be more devoted than anything else to the cause of Christ.*

Some may be afraid to obey the gospel because they don’t know if they can stay faithful all their life to the end; especially young people struggle with this level of devotion and commitment year after year....

Commitment to Jesus is much like the commitment we make in marriage in that we make it for a lifetime! We have to be sure in both commitments to stick it out through the difficult times when it is not easy to do so.

While it is true that many are afraid of that level of commitment, we must put that aside with great resolve to do what’s right. We must focus on the reward for such commitment, as God rewards us far greater than what we give up (Hebrews 11:6; 8-10; 24-26).

III. I Was Afraid To Stand For Truth.....

Some fear taking a stand for truth and right because they might not do a good job presenting their case before others (Exodus 3:11-12; 4:1; also Jeremiah 1:6-10). Could it be this fear is because they have not prepared their arguments or they haven’t become fully persuaded in the truth enough to defend it?

That’s why Peter tells us, *“Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;”* (1 Peter 3:13-15). That’s why Bible study is a must! We must study with a purpose to answer or defend properly the truth when called upon to do so. Souls are at stake in this battle for eternity!

It could be fear may have been a possible reason why some did not stand at first with the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:14-17, *“Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me....”*

The fear of persecution can be a factor of whether or not we seek the truth (Jeremiah 20:7-9). Jesus knew it would be a factor as he said to His disciples in Matthew 10:26-28, *“Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. “What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

It could be very why John records the words of those who would be in the lake of fire beginning with, *“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”* (Revelation 21:8)

The cowardly and fearful are afraid to take a stand for Jesus and fully live for Him! Fear can keep us from going to heaven, if we give in to it and never be courageous for the Lord as we should be!

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Gaddy Hall, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Linda Harris, Katie Ward Coburn, Kathryn's grandmother, Hazel Corner, Clay Ford, & Allison (12 year old girl that received burns from a house fire/ 80% of her body was burned), Karey Trimble, Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt.

Our Gospel Meeting begins September 29th and goes through October 4th. Jarrod Jacobs from Caneyville, Ky. will be our speaker for the week. Service times are 7:00 PM Monday through Friday.

A Gospel Meeting begins today at Starkville, Ms. (Details in the foyer)

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Sam Johnson
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: "The Christian And His Money"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Jerry Kennemur
The Book of Acts (Jason Longstreth)
Page 71 Question #22

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Paul Johnson
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Lee Busby
Psalm 84:1-4
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Lord's Supper: Sam Johnson
Assisting: Russell Briggs & Chris Callahan
Singing Service: Men of the Congregation Lead in Singing
Invitation: Sam Johnson
Closing Prayer: Brian Meade

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

August 28th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Johnson
The Book of Job (Mike Willis)
Page 37, Question #1
Invitation: Paul Busby
Song Leader: Russell Briggs
Closing Prayer: Nathan Meade