

# THE PROBLEM OF FEAR

## **Introduction:**

Fear is one of those things that is common to everyone. We all have fears. The causes differ, but the fears are there. Sometimes we are aware of them, but often they go unidentified. No one likes fear. It is the most unpleasant emotion we can experience. But more important, it is also the most debilitating. Fear paralyzes. If Satan can get us to listen to our fears, he doesn't have to destroy us. We're already as good as dead!

Fear can stop us from fulfilling our calling.

Paradoxically, fear is also necessary to our being used by God! There are bad fears - and there are good fears. Some debilitate, others empower. We will spend four sessions on this topic of fear, exploring a different dimension each time. We will look at;

- The problem of fear.
- The power of fear.
- Why does life have to be so fearful?
- Making our fears serve God's purposes.

## **I. THE PROBLEM OF FEAR**

Our purpose in this first study is to become aware of the problem of fear, of how it affects our personal lives and our ministries.

We want to begin to identify our fears and understand why it is important for us to overcome them.

A. BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF THINGS PEOPLE FEARED - AND HOW THEIR FEARS AFFECTED THEM:

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**The origin of fear:**

Gen 3:10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

**On the 12 spies sent into Canaan:**

**Deu 1:26-32** But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. <sup>27</sup> You grumbled in your tents and said, "The LORD hates us; so he brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us. <sup>28</sup> Where can we go? Our brothers have made us lose heart. They say, 'The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.'" <sup>29</sup> Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. <sup>30</sup> The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, <sup>31</sup> and in the desert. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place." <sup>32</sup> In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God,

**Zedekiah, King of Judah, consulting with Jeremiah:**

**Jer 38:17-21** Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down; you and your family will live. <sup>18</sup> But if you will not

## SCRIPTURE

## NOTES

### **(Jer 18:17-21 cont.)**

surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians and they will burn it down; you yourself will not escape from their hands." <sup>19</sup> King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have gone over to the Babylonians, for the Babylonians may hand me over to them and they will mistreat me." <sup>20</sup> "They will not hand you over," Jeremiah replied. "Obey the LORD by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you, and your life will be spared. <sup>21</sup> But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the LORD has revealed to me:

### **Zedekiah's response:**

**Jer 39:4-7** When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah. <sup>5</sup> But the Babylonian army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. <sup>6</sup> There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. <sup>7</sup> Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon.

### **Jesus on fear:**

**Mat 6:25-34** "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?"

## SCRIPTURE

## NOTES

**(Mat 6:25-34 - cont.)**

<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? <sup>28</sup> "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**Mark 4:35-41** That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." <sup>36</sup> Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. <sup>37</sup> A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. <sup>38</sup> Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" <sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" <sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this?"

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(Mark 4:35-41 - cont.)**

Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

**Things people fear:**

**John 7:11-13** Now at the Feast the Jews were watching for him and asking, "Where is that man?" <sup>12</sup> Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." <sup>13</sup> But no one would say anything publicly about him for fear of the Jews.

**John 9:20-23** "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. <sup>21</sup> But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

**John 12:42-43** Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

**2 Tim 1:7-12** For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. <sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(2 Tim 1:7-12 cont.)**

have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,<sup>10</sup> but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.<sup>11</sup> And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.<sup>12</sup> That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

**Heb 2:14-15** Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

**The ultimate fear:**

**Rev 6:15-17** Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.<sup>16</sup> They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"<sup>17</sup> For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

B. QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:

**Q.** What did you observe from these passages? What causes fear and what are its effects?

**Q.** Think about it. What are your fears?

- Personal

- Family

- Ministry

**Q.** How do they affect you? What would life be like for you if fear had no influence on your actions?

## II. THE POWER OF FEAR

Probably all of us have puzzled over the “terrifying God of the Old Testament.” In God’s dealings with the Nations He employs hardships and calamities for the sake of the larger picture. God uses fear! How do we explain this?

Also, He *wants* His People to fear Him. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;” Psalm 111:10. How does this healthy fear fit into our understanding of the subject?

We will be looking at these questions in this second study.

### A. CALAMITIES, DISASTERS AND THE PURPOSES OF GOD:

#### SCRIPTURE

#### NOTES

**Lev 18:24-19:1** "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. <sup>25</sup> Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. <sup>26</sup> But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, <sup>27</sup> for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. <sup>28</sup> And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you. <sup>29</sup> "Everyone who does any of these detestable things--such persons must be cut off from their people. <sup>30</sup> Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God." <sup>19:1</sup> The LORD said to Moses,

**Lev 26:14-22** "But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands,<sup>15</sup> and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and

#### SCRIPTURE

#### NOTES

**(Lev 26:14-22 cont.)**

so violate my covenant, <sup>16</sup> then I will do this to you: I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. <sup>17</sup> I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you. <sup>18</sup> "If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. <sup>19</sup> I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. <sup>20</sup> Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of the land yield their fruit. <sup>21</sup> "If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. <sup>22</sup> I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted.

**Hab 1:5-11** "Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. <sup>6</sup> I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. <sup>7</sup> They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. <sup>8</sup> Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour; <sup>9</sup> they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(Hab 1:5-11 cont.)**

gather prisoners like sand. <sup>10</sup> They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them. <sup>11</sup> Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."

**Isa 8:12-13** "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. <sup>13</sup> The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread,

**Isa 26:9-10** My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you. When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. <sup>10</sup> Though grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and regard not the majesty of the LORD.

**Joel 2:11-13** The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? <sup>12</sup> 'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' <sup>13</sup> Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

**Ezek 18:25-32** "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear, O house of Israel: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? <sup>26</sup> If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(Ezek 18:25-32 cont.)**

has committed he will die. <sup>27</sup> But if a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he will save his life. <sup>28</sup>

Because he considers all the offenses he has committed and turns away from them, he will surely live; he will not die. <sup>29</sup> Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Are my ways unjust, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust? <sup>30</sup> "Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. <sup>31</sup> Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel?

<sup>32</sup> For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

**B. QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:**

**Q.** What do these passages tell us about God?

**Q.** What do they tell us about ourselves?

**Q.** How should this influence the Gospel we preach?

C. THE FEAR OF THE LORD: THE HEALTHY FEAR:

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**Psa 111:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

**Psa 112:1-8** Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. <sup>2</sup> His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. <sup>3</sup> Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever. <sup>4</sup> Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. <sup>5</sup> Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. <sup>6</sup> Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever. <sup>7</sup> He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. <sup>8</sup> His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.

**Isa 6:1-8** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(Isa 6:1-8 cont.)**

Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." <sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

**D. QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:**

**Q.** How would you describe the Fear of the Lord?

**Q.** How does it affect a person?

### III. WHY DOES LIFE HAVE TO BE SO FEARFUL?

We live in a fearsome world, filled with evil. Danger surrounds us - and intensifies as we engage in service to Christ.

Wouldn't it be nice if we had a promise from God that He will always deliver us from the things we fear? He could do that, of course, and often does! But many of the promises run in the opposite direction. He promises we *will* suffer.

#### SCRIPTURE

#### NOTES

**Mat 10:22-23** All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>23</sup> When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

**Phil 1:29** For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,

**1 Pet 4:12-13** Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

**Question:** Why is suffering a part of our calling? Three reasons:

- A. SUFFERING BRINGS PROOF OF GUILT AND JUDGEMENT UPON THE UNGODLY:

#### SCRIPTURE

#### NOTES

**Mat 23:29-39** "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You

#### SCRIPTURE

#### NOTES

**(Mat 23:29-39 - cont.)**

build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. <sup>30</sup> And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

<sup>31</sup> So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! <sup>33</sup> "You

snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? <sup>34</sup>

Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. <sup>35</sup> And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. <sup>36</sup> I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. <sup>37</sup> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. <sup>38</sup> Look, your house is left to you desolate. <sup>39</sup> For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

## B. OUR SUFFERING IS A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH:

### SCRIPTURE

### NOTES

**Rev 6:9-11** When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. <sup>10</sup>

They called out in a loud voice, "How

### SCRIPTURE

### NOTES

**(Rev 6:9-11 cont.)**

long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" <sup>11</sup> Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.

**Phil 1:27-30** Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel <sup>28</sup> without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved--and that by God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, <sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

**1 Pet 2:18-21** Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. <sup>19</sup> For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. <sup>20</sup> But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

**John 21:19** Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(John 21:19 cont.)**

God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

C. SUFFERING PRODUCES GODLY CHARACTER:

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**Rom 5:1-5** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

**James 1:2-4** Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

**1 Pet 1:6-7** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup> These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

**2 Cor 1:8-11** We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(2 Cor 1:8-11 - cont.)**

ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup> He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, <sup>11</sup> as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

**Observations:**

**D. GOD'S PROVISION FOR US IN OUR SUFFERING:**

It is obvious from the above that sufferings of various sorts are inevitable for those who would participate in Christ's life. The question is, how can we embrace this calling without being intimidated, or paralyzed, by our fears?

**Q.** What does the Bible tell us that helps us gain perspective?

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**Psa 34:4-7** I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. <sup>5</sup> Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

<sup>6</sup> This poor man called, and the LORD

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(Psa 34:4-7 - cont.)**

heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. <sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

**Mat 10:26-31** "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. <sup>27</sup> What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. <sup>28</sup> Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup> Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. <sup>30</sup> And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

**Rom 8:15-18** For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. <sup>18</sup> I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

**Rom 8:35-39** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(Rom 8:35-39 - cont.)**

<sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**2 Cor 4:16-5:10** Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup>So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. <sup>5:1</sup>Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. <sup>2</sup>Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup>because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. <sup>6</sup>Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. <sup>7</sup>We live by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(2 Cor 4:16-5:10 - cont.)**

the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

**Heb 11:13-16** All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

**Rev 12:9-12** The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. <sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. <sup>11</sup> They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

**Q.** What is the message of these Scriptures?

**Q.** How should they help us with our problems with fear?

**Q.** Do they, really?

#### IV. MAKING OUR FEARS SERVE GOD'S PURPOSES

In this final section we'll see what the Bible says about overcoming our fears. We have our fears, we've admitted it. And we've recognized that they affect our behavior.

We understand that God uses fear to deliver the rebellious from something worse than even their greatest fears - His judgement!

For those that are His, to fear the Lord more than everything else combined, is *wise*. Life goes right for those who are attentive to God.

Finally we saw how our two primary sources of fear have already lost their power; Satan and death. Christ destroyed them both.

Now all we have to do is quit being afraid!! How do we do that?

##### A. BRING OUR FEARS OUT INTO THE OPEN:

###### SCRIPTURE

###### NOTES

**Acts 4:23-31** On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. <sup>25</sup> You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' <sup>27</sup> Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. <sup>28</sup> They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. <sup>29</sup> Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. <sup>30</sup> Stretch out your hand to heal

###### SCRIPTURE

###### NOTES

**(Acts 4:23-31 cont.)**

and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." <sup>31</sup> After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

**Eph 6:19-20** Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

**1 Pet 5:6-11** Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup> Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. <sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

**Phil 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**John 3:19-21** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**(John 3:19-21 cont.)**

were evil. <sup>20</sup> Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

<sup>21</sup> But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

**Q.** What's involved in bringing one's fears into the open?

- Before whom do we do this?

- How?

- What is the result?

**B. MAKE OUR FEARS WORK FOR US:**

The first century believers were never really free of their fears. We probably won't be either. If the goal is not the absence of fear, then what is it?

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**1 Cor 2:1-5** When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**2 Cor 12:9-10** But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. <sup>10</sup> That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

**Heb 13:5-6** Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

**Eph 3:20** Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

C. HE PROMISES HE WILL ALWAYS KEEP US:

**SCRIPTURE**

**NOTES**

**2 Tim 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

D. CONCLUSION:

In reflecting on these four studies, what is God saying to you about your fears?

What might He be saying to us?