

LOVE

"There is no fear in love; but **perfect love casts out fear**: because fear has torment," I John 4:18.

When it comes to the kind of fear John is preaching about, we have to realize that he doesn't mean physical fear. No matter how spiritual our thinking may be, the fact is, physical fear is normally present in every situation of life.

For example, flying on a commercial Jet; if fear isn't with us, why do we suspect that the guy sitting next to us on the plane might be a terrorist? Why is his head covered? A sudden jerk of the plane changes the point of focus; but, it is the same fear about safety that seizes our minds.

Heights; here's one phobia that I have never been able to overcome. Any time I get above eight feet, I'm stricken with fear. I could never walk the top plate while framing a one story house. Just standing up on the top plate caused me feel like Elvis and Belshazzar, at the same time - "All Shook Up" (1957) and with "knees striking one against another" (Dan 5:6).

So, John is **NOT** telling us that "**Perfect love casteth out (all) fear**." He means, I am certain, that "**perfect love**" casts out the fleshly sensations that cause men to give into fear, negating the Holy Spirit's leading. I'm no Calvinist.

While, there is no doubt that we have physical fear, we also know what the Lord has called us to do. Our confidence is in the Lord, knowing that He which is in us, is greater than the phobia's in the world (See **1st Jn 4:4**).

Therefore, we should not regulate physical fear to nothing. It is very real. Just because one becomes a servant of the Lord doesn't mean that all fleshly feelings are null and void. Christians get tired and hungry like everyone else. And, we have fear; just as before. Only now, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we overcome those physical hindrances, while marching onward to Zion.

Walking by faith does, indeed, cause physical fear to subside. But, until the resurrection, it will always be with believers. Paul agrees. "**I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling**," I Cor 2:3.

Paul got the job done, however. And, that's what John is saying. "**Perfect love**" allows the believer to **fight the good fight, finish the course and keep the faith** (2Tim 4:7).

Love Is Personally Attached To Someone We Respect

I think most of us understand that the real important things are done out of love. It is love that brings us to the whipping post and accept what we have coming. Love, also takes us to the Mercy Seat of God where confession is made unto salvation.

Yes, there was fear in Dad's belt, in the old days. However, we obeyed him because we loved him. And, didn't we feel terrible when we disappointed our parents? We cried real tears; not that we were caught, but that we had let them down. Love and respect were breached by our actions and we felt just awful because we hurt our loving parents.

Christians would rather die than hurt the Lord that saved them. But, Christians have to think about their responsibility; for, it is the result that matters.

Results became the downfall of the servant in Matthew 25. His defense was, "And, I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground..." V 25.

Although, the servant retained the talent, fear had caused him to let the Lord down and not use the talent for profit. Perfect love did not cast out his fear.

The finality of it all was regret, not reward. He lost what the other two gained - the reward of joy that comes by pleasing the Lord. [Note: All three met the Master at the same time. Further, they were judged on use of a gift; not, whether their name was written in the Book of Life.]

There is no question that the servant was thinking only of himself when it came to service. The Master, expecting to receive profit, orders the unprofitable slave to be cast into outer darkness (outside of the light) where it is not pleasant.

Such actions are Esau-like; resulting in tremendous sorrow. "Afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing he was rejected... though he sought for it (the inherited blessing) with tears," Hebrews 12:17. Esau was afraid of dying of hunger and sold his birthright position to Jacob - for a bowl of lentils.

When the Lord gives us responsibility, He expects us to care for it; whether a talent, gift, or the birthright of a first born son. When we fail on any level - spiritual or physical - sorrow comes calling; often, it stays with us for a very long time.

Thus, we must have "recompense of the reward," as recorded in the faith chapter of Hebrews 11. We must look forward to the day of the Lord and not upon the fear of this life, its distractions or its offers. For, assuredly, when we stand before the Lord, all **past grief and past joys**, will have a different look than when they occurred. We must "remember Lot's wife," Luke 17:32.

John says, "**Fear has torment.**" [Next week, we shall try to discern what John meant. The Greek word is different than what is normally thought. It is "**kolasis**" and carries the idea of punishment.]

In closing, without "**Perfect Love**," fear will plague us. Mental torment may lead to spiritual defeat in today's calling; as well as the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We read of many disappointed men; both in the New and Old Testaments. Some men rejected Christ as their Savior; other men rejected their calling to the Lord's service. In both cases, some repented and some did not.

Man's heart has to listen to what the spirit says to the churches (See Rev, chpts 3-4). That judgment day is coming! What was stated in two paragraphs above, Paul clearly sets forth, "**For we must all appear before the judgment Seat (Bema Seat) of Christ, that each one may be RECOMPENSED for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad,**" 2 Corinthians 5:10.

All of us have to make decisions in life. The choices we make may bring a sense of fear of offending people and losing friends. Nevertheless, we have to stay on the straight and narrow of never failing to be dutiful in the calling of the Lord.

Jesus Christ is more important than our family, peers, fellow workers or the job. Indeed, Jesus Christ is more precious than life, itself.