

PART 1

Deliverance from Fear

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

—2 TIMOTHY 1:7

1

How One Man's Practice of Fear Paid Off with Calamity

Fear is the forerunner of calamity. It is the creator of bad things. It is an attitude that brings the human being into captivity, confusion, frustration, inner conflicts, and tension.

Psychologists say man is not born with fear. The Bible says, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear" (2 Timothy 1:7).

If we are not born with fear and God did not give it to us, where does it come from? Jesus says, "As thou hast believed, so be it unto thee" (Matthew 8:13).

We human beings are influenced by our believing. We have faith when we believe right. We have fear when we believe wrong.

Take the story of Job. He said, "The thing which I greatly feared

is come upon me and that which I was afraid of is come unto me” (Job 3:25).

What he feared, Job said, happened to him. It did what he believed it would do. He could not escape the results of his own fear.

Active fear is created by active wrong believing.

How did Job believe wrong? What did he greatly fear?

He feared that the hedge of protection around him would be destroyed and his good estate taken from him. The good things which a good God had blessed him with wouldn't last. Something would happen to mar his happiness.

That is what he feared. That is what he thought about and came to believe. He became negative in his thinking and believing and filled his mind with fear. He doubted God's goodness.

There is a strange belief among people today that when some terrible calamity overtakes them, God is back of it. If they get sick, it is the will of the Creator. If they get in need, they are supposed to suffer want. If they do not succeed, that is their lot in life.

This is a throwback to the Garden of Eden where the devil filled man with doubt. Man's first sin is also his present sin; the sin of doubting the Word and goodness of God. This sin is being cultivated by man. It has become a part of his thinking. When something terrible happens to him he says, "Why did God let this happen to me? What did I do to deserve it?" His response to the wonderful blessings God bestows upon him is, "This won't last. It will be taken away from me."

In his calamity he blames God; in his blessings he fears God will take them away from him.

This is practicing negative thinking in the worst form, and it is directly opposite to right believing and the proper understanding of God.

While I was growing up, I was confused because I believed these things about God. Even after I was converted, this kind of believing plagued me. But, thank God, the Word of God enlightened me and gave me a new understanding of God's love and goodness. Since then, my believing has been steering me in the right direction for God's blessings to continually be upon my life.

The greatest discovery I ever made was the discovery that God is good, totally good. I made this discovery while reading the Bible. I never shall forget when I first read 3 John 2; Luke 9:56; John 10:10; and other similar scriptures. They changed my thinking and put me to believing right. Take 3 John 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

God wants to save us, heal us, prosper us, bless us. This is His nature, His desire, His practice, His will.

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He says, "The son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them" (Luke 9:56).

He tells us that the devil is back of the powers that rob us of life and destroy us. "The thief [the devil] cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy," he says, "but I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

God doesn't want to take anything good away from us but to add

further blessings to us. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) teaches us this. If we use the talents or possessions right that God gives us, they will be increased to us. Not decreased, but increased!

Job could not escape the results of his fear. It happened to him like he feared it would.

“For fifteen years,” a famous preacher said to me, “I feared that some day I would be flat on my back both physically and spiritually. And in fifteen years I was flat on my back, exactly as I feared I would be!”

Laugh if you wish, but it is a definite fact that what you actively fear will ultimately affect your life.

Job’s fear drove him toward trouble, and the day came when he was in such trouble he cursed the day he was born and wished he was dead.

Fear is positive. It is just as positive as faith is positive. It is powerful. Just as powerful in its realm as faith is in its realm. It is a product of wrong believing just as faith is a product of right believing.

Wrong believing is a reversed form of right believing, which means fear is a reversed form of faith. It is our believing-power used in the wrong way.

In other words, there is a believing that is faith and a believing that is fear.

The human being was created a free moral agent, and because of that, he is a believing creature. Being a free moral agent, he has to be a believing creature. There is no free moral agency unless he can direct his believing.

This capacity and power to believe is under the control of each

individual. He can believe the way he wants to. His believing takes one of two forms: right believing or wrong believing.

A man gets into his car. He places his hand on the gear shift and puts it into the gear he wants it. The car obeys that gear, whether it is forward or reverse. The driver chooses the way the car goes. He puts forth the same energy and effort in shifting the car into reverse as he does in shifting it into forward.

The same is true in our believing. We use the same energy or effort to believe wrong as we do to believe right. The only difference is the direction our believing takes. When we believe right, our faith puts us in the right direction for the blessings of God to come to us and remain with us. When we believe wrong, our fear puts us in the wrong direction, filling us with confusion and panic.

REMEMBER THESE THINGS

God is good, totally good. Yet, negative thinking and believing filled Job's mind. When we, like Job, doubt the goodness of God, we become prey to the calamity of inner conflict. It is our own lack of faith that brings destruction, not God. God brings increase and enlightenment through his Word. Fear brings destruction. There is positive power in belief. It's up to you to choose right believing—faith—or wrong believing—fear. The choice you make will determine the direction your life takes today!

Behold, I give unto you power to tread . . . over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

—LUKE 10:19

2

How Right Believing Takes Away Your Fear

My wife and I had just boarded a plane in Mobile, Alabama, to go to Jacksonville, Florida. We were fastening our seat belts when suddenly a man reached over, grabbed my right hand, and shook it. I looked up just in time to see him disappearing up the aisle toward the front.

“Who was that man, Oral?” Evelyn asked.

“I am sure I don’t know,” I replied.

When we landed, this man came over to me and said, “Mr. Roberts, I am the man who shook your hand on the plane back in Mobile. I guess you are wondering who I am.”

When I nodded, he said, “You will never know what it meant to me for you to be on that plane.”

“Why?”

“Because you helped me overcome my fear.”

“What are you afraid of and what did I do to help you?”

“I have a fear of riding in planes,” he said, “and was I relieved to see you get on board! When I saw you and Mrs. Roberts getting on the plane ahead of me, I said to myself, ‘This is one time I won’t be afraid the plane will fall.’ I was so thrilled that all I could think of was to shake your hand and hurry on to my seat. I was perfectly relaxed. I knew that since a man of God was aboard, the plane wouldn’t fall.”

“What difference did my being on board make?”

“Well, when I saw you, I believed the plane would be safe.”

After talking to him for several minutes, I found out that he had built a great business through faith and hard work. His business carried him all over the nation and he had to fly often. Although he had used his faith to build up a great business, he had not overcome the fear of riding in planes. The faith he had in God to help him build up his business he laid aside when he boarded a plane. The moment he entered a plane, he quit using his faith. He let his imagination run wild. Every time the plane hit an air current and began to bounce around, he believed the plane was falling. He was beside himself with panic.

Yet, on the ground he was perfectly relaxed and calm. In the air, he was possessed with fear.

When he saw a man who practices his faith get on the same plane he was riding, he said, “It took the fear right out of me. I didn’t see any reason to be afraid. For the first time I enjoyed my plane trip.

The wrong use of his believing brought panic, confusion, and fear to him. When he began using his faith, he relaxed and enjoyed his plane trip.

When my oldest daughter, Rebecca, was small and we left her with a baby sitter, the lady said, “You better be good while your parents are gone or those old ghosts in the dark will get you.” Rebecca never had been afraid to go into a dark room by herself before. After that she wouldn’t go into a room by herself.

When Ronald David came along and got big enough to walk, Rebecca would make him go with her when she had to go into a dark room.

Rebecca believed what the sitter had told her and it made her afraid. Through this kind of believing, she created her fear of the dark.

When she grew older and realized there were no ghosts, she changed her believing and was no longer afraid of the dark.

The right use of her believing destroyed her fear of the dark.

Actually, fear is the absence of faith.

Fear is the absence of faith just as darkness is the absence of light.

There is an old fable that once a group of people came to the sun and said, “Sun, there is a place of midnight darkness on the earth where it is dark twenty-four hours a day.”

The sun said, “I will go search for it.”