

Sunday January 6, 2019
“My Heart Shall Not Fear”
Psalm 27

What are you afraid of? What is it that lies ahead in 2019 that might make you afraid?

Every person is afraid of someone or something. Some of our fears are similar and some are different from one another.

One study I recently read listed the top ten common fears and phobias that people face. Let’s see if you can relate:

10. The Fear of Getting Old

9. The Fear of Getting Poisoned

8. The Fear of Being a Coward

7. Germophobia (fear of bacteria and microorganisms)

6. The Fear of Going Crazy

5. The Fear of Intimacy

4. The Fear of spiders, rats, cockroaches, snakes, airplanes, monsters, demons, mirrors, high heels

Their common root lies in an undeveloped imaginative type of thinking

3. Social Phobia (fear of public speaking) and agoraphobia (fear of open spaces)

Both have to do with our fear of sounding or looking stupid or incompetent

to others

2. Fear of Death

Associated with this are the fears of enclosed spaces, drowning, blood, heights, corpses, and pain.

1. Fear of Loneliness

Some of these seem silly, but deep down inside all of us reside real fears... fears of something.

It might be the fear of the unknown – things that might happen that are outside of our control.

- **An accident, an illness, a false accusation or getting hurt by someone else's bad decisions**
- **Trying something new or stopping something that needs to stop**

It might be a fear of failing

- **Wasted time, effort, and now you appear incompetent to others.**

It might be a financial fear

Are you afraid you can't pay the bills or pay off that debt?

It might be a fear associated with an addiction

- **Is your addiction only going to get worse?**
- **Is it going to start affecting or hurting others?**
- **Are you afraid that someone will find out about that secret habit?**

Lots of things can cause us to be afraid.

Is there any way to eliminate fear? I can remember with each of our four boys, when they were very young, trying to provide calm assurance and "proof" for them that they don't have to be afraid – but rarely did my assurance immediately assuage their fears.

I can identify in my own life things that I've been intrigued by, but fearful of...

Public speaking

Running far distances

Being alone in the woods in the dark

In each of these cases, I've had to face the vulnerability of my fears, knowing that fear does not have to keep me from what I think I should do.

Over time, I've grown more confident, and the things I used to fear, I now pursue and love. There are other fears that I have not yet overcome. And no I'm not going to tell you those things. Maybe I have a fear of being a coward. ☺

So what is the solution to fear? Is it possible to truly say, *My Heart Shall Not Fear?*

Read Psalm 27:1-14

In this Psalm, David transparently wrestles through many of his fears. He identifies what he is doing about them right now. And He identifies what He will do about them in the future.

I. Identify Your Fears

a. David is afraid of enemies

- Vs 2 – evildoers who assail him to eat up his flesh; my adversaries and foes.
- Vs 3 – an army encamped against him and war arising against him.
- Vs 6 – (don't read) His enemies all around him

There might be actual people enemies in your life.

But if not, you can be sure there are spiritual enemies – Satan and His demons who target and attack... not just to give you a hard time and a bad day – but to ruin your faith in the Lord.

b. David is afraid God will be absent

- Vs 9 -4x He expresses this fear
- If the one in whom you trust is silent and absent, where do you turn?
- He's not speaking theologically here, he's speaking out of vulnerability and fear.

c. David is afraid from loneliness

- In all these verses, it is him alone against the world (his enemies)
- Feelings of defeat and future defeat can be crushing. Loneliness can accentuate those feelings.

As his UCLA football team suffered through a poor season in the early 1970s, head coach Pepper Rodgers came under intense criticism and pressure from alumni and fans. Things got so bad, he remembers with a smile, that friends became hard to find. "My dog was my only true friend," Rodgers says of that year. "I told my wife that every man needs at least two good friends" ;and she bought me another dog."

- If you remember, the fear of loneliness is supposedly the #1 fear in people's lives in the US. A person can periodically enjoy solitude, but when true loneliness sets in, it is a dark hopeless state.
- People who seem to be at the top are lonely. People who are stuck at the bottom are lonely. And people in the middle, fearing the bottom and striving for the top are often lonely.
- Vs 10 – even David's own father and mother have forsaken him. Maybe this actually happened, or maybe it just appeared that way – the bottom line is – He felt alone and he was afraid as a result.

d. David is afraid from false accusations

- Vs 12
- These not only make us angry, they make us fear the worst – that others will believe the false accusations. It would be like a crushing avalanche on top of all the good he's been trying to accomplish.
- No matter who you are, if you're trying to do something great for the glory of God, you will at some point deal with false accusations. Sometimes they're from well-meaning people who have a misunderstanding, and sometimes they're from

evil people who are trying to do you wrong. This is something legit that we fear.

There's something frightening about identifying your fears. Because deep inside, if we identify them, we have to think about them. And we might have to respond to them. And we might even have to face them. It takes both vulnerability and courage to identify your fears before God.

II. Firmly Declare the Lord as Your Strength

You might need to hear yourself say it – *The Lord is my strength. Whom shall I fear?*

If you're going to say that and mean that, then you must think quite highly of God. And you should.

- He loves you with an everlasting love
- He sent His Son, Jesus to be your personal sin-bearer
- His Son rose from the dead and conquered death
- His Spirit is our Comforter and Counselor
- He promises to come back as our Conquering King
- He also promises to never leave or forsake us
- Even though we walk through the darkest valleys – even the valley of the shadow of death, we don't have to fear – because He is with us. The Lord is our strength.

You need to be firm about your faith in the Lord. Keep it on the forefront of your mind – your reliance on Him for everything and through everything – your reliance on Him is unwavering and strong.

Vs 1 – declare it!

Vs 8 – actively do it!

Vs 11-12 – tell this to the Lord!

With each of your fears – talk directly to the Lord about it and declare His superiority over that fear!

He may not eliminate the source of fear itself, but He will be there in the future to help you deal with it. It is an exciting moment when you receive strength from the Lord to address your fears instead of running from them or being overtaken by them.

Vs 13-14

III. Anticipate God's Protection and Provision in Time

We've already talked about identifying your fears. And about declaring God as your strength.

But as you face situations wrought with fear, in each one, you must actively Anticipate His mighty role in bringing victory through His protection and provision. Vs 14 contains the only commands for us in the entire Psalm...

This does not mean that all problems cease...

It does not mean that all enemies immediately fall...

It does not mean that dark days will not come...

But look at the example of one who is anticipating God's protection and provision in the course of time...

Vs 2-3 (I will be confident...)

Vs 5 (He will hide me; He will conceal me; He will lift me high)

There's a lot of confident future tense going coming forth from the lips of a person being beset by fear.

In closing, there one phrase that stands out to me in this Psalm that make all the difference when saying, "My Heart Shall Not Fear." Those words are in vs 4

IV. Pray About An Increasing Closeness to God

This is the most important thing! Don't dwell on the fear. Don't ponder the what if's. Bring it before the Lord and Leave it in God's Hands. If, during a fearful struggle, if you can pray about an increasing closeness to God like vs 4, then you can truthfully say, My Heart Shall Not Fear.