

MINI CAMP MEETING SABBATH SCHOOL

DATE: SATURDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 2018

LIVING ABOVE SATANIC FEAR IN CHRIST

BY

ELDER ENOCH OFORI JNR

Fear is Dead – except in the Imagination of the Fearful

There's a popular saying that "cowards die many times before their death, but the valiant taste death but once".

In reality, all men die only once, but the coward, plagued by fears and self-doubt, will have died several times over *psychologically* before he eventually succumbs to death by bodily demise!

The coward is a continual victim to negative thoughts and unfounded fears. The result is inertia, robbing him of the accomplishments and joy which come from daring acts of courage and positive thinking. Dreams die, hopes are dashed because fear is in control.

The coward is a victim of his own morbid thinking – for as he thinks, so is he (Prov. 23:7). Nothing uplifting happens in his life. He is as good as dead. He takes a defeatist view of life; his worldview is coloured by pessimism. The coward lives not for hope but in mournful expectancy of doom. Each challenging moment rouses fear, not courage to face the challenge squarely. In the process, he dies many times psychologically and spiritually before his physical death.

It's a phenomenon that's true in everyday life and in military life, but it is more so in the spiritual realm. A coward cannot win the war with Satan whose stock-in-trade is fear. The good news, however, is that the Lord Jesus offered up Himself to liberate us from the bondage of fear. Sadly, to this day, many so-called believers live in fear of Satan – they are reduced to trembling pessimistic wrecks before his 'fearsome' presence!

Still, the word proclaims loud and clear that Jesus died to kill the reign of fear in our lives:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).

Fear of the devil is synonymous with fear of death because of the great evil and suffering he's capable of inflicting. But Yeshua, the Christ, confronted the devil, the instrument of death and all human ills – every imaginable pain, evil and disease – in His incarnation, that is, as flesh and blood, and broke his power through His own death on the tree. He's the slain Lamb who has prevailed (Rev. 5:5-6).

Christ by His *victorious death* has disarmed the forces and powers of darkness over which Satan is the ruler (Col. 2:15). This is the spiritual reality which all believers must come to appreciate, but the mind will not automatically adapt to it. Unless we renew our minds as scripture instructs (Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2), the mind will still be prone to satanic fears and threats.

Fear is not something we can see or touch but has profound effects on the human soul. It is something abstract, something in the mind, a disease of the mind. But once it develops and festers, it produces a life wholly defined by it – a life shackled from realizing its full potential and purpose because of lack of faith and self-confidence.

This is the destructive power of fear Christ destroyed by destroying the source of it - Satan! What remains is for us to embrace by faith Christ's victory over fear by throwing off satanic fear in all its forms.

Because it's God-ordained and God-given, it will take God's help to live above fear of the enemy. Due to ignorance and lack of faith, fear has killed the potentials of many a believer and seized their victory banners in Messiah. This should not be the story of our lives. Christ's victory over fear – attained on our behalf – must be enforced in our individual lives.

Of course, we need to have faith that the victory is real, and that fear lies slain and defeated at our feet where it ought to be! (see Luke 10:19). But we also need to pray specifically to be granted that grace not to fear!

We pray not to create or conjure blessings of our own imaginations outside of God's decrees and purposes for us but to affirm and enforce what He has already given us. In this instance He has "not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). Moreover, we true believers "have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

It's with this background that David, under the direction of the Spirit, prays in Psalm 64:

*"Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
"Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity" (Ps. 64:1-2).*

Why this prayer?

The ‘why’ is partly answered in verse 2: The evil things the enemy plot to do against David should ordinarily frighten him, but they do not, because he has prayed to be preserved from fear! And so should we.

An enemy will hate us, plot our downfall and dislike us; it’s characteristic of an enemy to do such things, but let’s not fear. Our Redeemer has crushed the spirit of fear for us and given us “the Spirit of adoption”. Yes, we are the children of God by adoption, “accepted in the Beloved; In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:5-7).

So then, the loving Father is by our side; we need not fear. The devil is a defeated enemy.

His Salvation is Assured in the midst of Wicked Plots

Elsewhere David prays:

*“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.
“My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.
“Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Thy glory be above all the earth.
“They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.
“My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise” (Ps. 57:1, 4-7).*

The plots and machinations of the enemy are frightful things, but David is unafraid, even though his soul is surrounded by a phalanx of lions menacingly closing in on him. His heart is fixed in the saving power of God, and his heart, overwhelmed by God’s love, bursts into praise!

And what evil things do the enemy plan to carry out against David from which he prays for God to hide him?

The enemy conspire; “the workers of iniquity” (that’s all they do with passion) plot to unleash weapons from their arsenal of wickedness against him.

The first weapon they intend to unleash is the acerbic weapon of their mouths:

*“Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.
“That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
(Ps. 64:3-4).*

It follows a pattern long in use. The enemy always begins with words of calumny as the opening salvos of their war with the righteous. And they “shoot in secret”; they spread the slander by rumour, making it difficult to trace it to a definite source. Their attack with words always take the victim by surprise; it so sudden, but they have no scruples about manufacturing wicked lies

about an innocent person. They “fear not”; they don’t care if he’s hurt or depressed or cries or suffers in any way. In fact, that is the very result they aim at. They are character assassins!

They have understudied their master and father very well. When the Lord Jesus branded the devil “a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44), it was a veiled reference to the rebellion he staged against God by sedition and hurtful lies before erupting into a full-scale “war in heaven” (Isa. 14:12-15; Rev. 12:7-9). Interestingly, it takes the same use of words – but now words of Divine truth – to bring him down (1 John 2:14; Rev. 12:11). The Master showed the way when, in His encounter with the devil in the wilderness, He successfully countered every temptation of the tempter with the sword of the Spirit unsheathed and drawn at him. The very first defensive strike Christ made with the drawn sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17b; Heb. 4:12), was His quotation of scripture that the Word of God was the life and sustenance of man – and not bread which the devil, using flattery, urged him to conjure from stones:

“And when the tempter came to him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

“But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:3-4).

So when we are hurt by the words of the enemy, our comfort and defence is in the word. (See Rom. 15:4).

The enemy soon move past the slander stage. Presumably, their words failed to break our spirits. Or they will move on to the next stage of non-verbal attacks anyway:

“They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

“They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep” (Ps. 64:5-6).

They are a devoted evil lot committed to the destruction of the righteous. They leave no stone unturned in their determination to see to his ruin. Although they may fail many times in their wicked plans, they don’t despair. “They encourage themselves” in that same evil plot: ‘perhaps we will succeed this time’, they say to themselves, ‘or succeed with this method or weapon’.

They lay not one snare but many “snares privily”. The plans are deep; their hearts are a pit of darkness and evil which breeds and invents atrocities. We are wrestling not with flesh and blood but against demonic principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places (Eph. 6:12). But one feeling God won’t want us to have is the feeling of fear.

Once we fear, it betrays our trust in the power and ability of God to give us the victory over the current battles we are engaged in with the enemy. And the truth is that we have absolutely no reason for fear. For greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

Before long, God will be shooting His arrows of vengeance out of heaven hitting the enemy like a thunderbolt:

*“But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.
“So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.
“And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.
“The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory” (Ps. 64:7-10).*

In the spiritual war between good and evil, the Creator and the Adversary; Elohiym is not pictured as a genial old man cooling off in an armchair. He is described in scripture as “a man of war”, a warrior, who fights the enemy in battle and defeats them. Moses extolled the military credentials of YHWH in song after He overthrew the power of Pharaoh in the sea:

*“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.
“The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him.
“The LORD is a man of war: the LORD (YHWH) is His name” (Ex. 15:1-3).*

At the start of the war, the enemy has already suffered defeat at the hands of Christ. The current round of fighting must therefore be seen as an opportunity to perpetuate his defeat by affirming (or enforcing) the victory of Christ in every area of our life.

And the spiritual tools to keep the devil in his state of defeat has been given to us. By the Spirit of God by which demons are cast out thereby enforcing the will and rule of the kingdom of God, we are able to bind the strong man (Satan) and spoil his house – that is to say, undo his evil works (Matt. 12:28-29). “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of (satanic) strong holds” (2 Cor. 10:3-4).

Whilst we are flesh and blood, we don’t wage war in the flesh, according to the principles of carnal warfare. The weapons we wield, being spiritual not carnal, are effective through God, causing the demolition of demonic fortresses! It’s never through us! The spiritual weapons of our warfare only find their operational effectiveness “through” God Almighty and only through Him that is, through the power that is in Him—and that as we submit ourselves to Him. (See Jam.4:7; Prov. 18:10).

We have an invincible defender in God. The evil the enemies planned and discussed with their mouths against us will become the story of their own lives. Hence “they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves”, and people of their kind will be seized with fear.

The good news of God’s deliverance and revenge on the wicked will lead many to the fear of God, and they will declare His wonderful work in us.

In the camp of the righteous will be joy galore – out of a deepened sense of gratitude and joy in the salvation of Yahweh has delivered afresh!

This will only cause our faith to grow stronger and stronger and glory of the Lord greater and greater in our lives.

Fear has no place in our lives of faith because the author of it has been dealt an irreversible defeat both positionally and at the personal level. Glory to Elohiym! Amein!