

## Faith, Hope & Love Part38

### **1 John 4:18**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves *torment*, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

Well, I believe I opened up a can of worms last week with our discussion of fear. Fear is a far bigger problem than any of us have realized or been willing to admit. As we learned, fear is the antonym of faith—its polar opposite. As faith is with the Kingdom of God, fear is the first building block of the kingdom of this world; it's the foundation upon which the thrones of Lucifer and all his demonic hoards sit. And to the extent that you build any aspect of your life on fear, in that area of your life you will not know true Biblical faith. Consequently, you will also not know hope and love. Remember, without faith you cannot hope and without hope you cannot love with God's divine *agape* love. Being mortal enemies, fear and faith don't co-mingle; and, they are not to co-exist in the life of a believer.

According to **1 John 4:18**, if fear marks your life, then it is clear that you have not been completed or perfected in God's divine *agape* love. You have yet to arrive at that place of **faith** and **hope** where you **know** and **believe**, without any doubt, the love which God has for you; for perfect or completed love violently casts out and removes fear, for there is no fear in love. If you abide in fear, then there are some very specific areas of wrong belief and/or unbelief about God, His love, His name, and who you are to Him, which still dominates your being. I know we have

discussed these areas, but we will continue to go over them again and again and again until your knowledge about God and who you are to God moves from your head down deep into your soul and out through your body and establishes you in faith, because fear is the tool which the enemy uses to shipwreck our faith.

If we were honest, we would all have to admit that fear has had a devastating impact on our lives. Without exception, in the areas where our *flesh* still tends to dominate our lives, fear is at the root for fear leads to doubt, doubt leads to control, and control leads to all manner of *fleshly* behavior. In that place, fear invades every social transaction, it interferes with any opportunity we have of experiencing actual relational intimacy, it keeps us from being known, loved, and from freely loving without demand. Fear limits what we can achieve and it steals the joy of what we do achieve. Fear predicts our failure; it paralyzes us such that we end up failing; and then it shames us for failing. Fear causes us to obsess on ourselves, obsess on what others are thinking about us, and pushes us to try and control practically everything and anything we can in an attempt to keep ourselves safe. Fear keeps us afraid of what might be, and it has the ultimate effect of isolating us from our God and from others. Fear is a terror that lives and breathes in practically everyone.

Research has shown that the greatest need of a woman is security. She hunts for it in every relationship and every social transaction. And since **1 Corinthians 11:7** says that woman is the glory of man, or the representation of man before God, I think it is safe to say that as a people we are always seeking to find security. At first we look to our parents to provide it for us. And, for the most part, they try and do what they can; but they are powerless to actually secure us as people. In fact, their own issues and generational sin tend to reproduce in our souls many similar areas

of insecurity. And then we do the very same thing to our children. Next, we look to other people in our lives to secure us. But coming from a place of insecurity and deep wounding, they are simply unable to provide what we need even if they want to. Then we look to this world to provide our security. We work hard and perform for others foolishly believing we will be taken care of and it is crushing when we realize that this world will quickly discard us like loose change if we no longer fill its demands. With each disappointment, we learn to turn inward to find our security. We look to ourselves to be our own wisdom, protection, and our place of refuge. And, as we do, fear wraps its chords around our life and tightens its grip. We know, when it is all said and done, we are powerless to actually protect ourselves. But we run with this delusion as long as possible in an attempt to limit the amount of pain and rejection we actually experience in relationship.

When people finally come to the place that they will actually consider God, they become excited as they are finally looking to someone bigger and more powerful than they are to provide security. God says He is love and that He love them; and at first it is wonderful. But as soon as God does not do things for them the way they want or expect Him to, they inevitably start self-protecting from God and once again turn inward to be their own source of security. And then when they find out that God says He is behind all the things that has happened and are happening in their lives, people become deathly afraid of God.

As a result, fear binds people to this earth, to their emotions, and to the outcomes experienced in this life. In fact, fear is the reason most people worship an “if/then” god where they bet their lives on the false assumption that if they do this good or that good then God will be pleased and will bring them goodness in

terms of the outcomes of their lives. But when it seems that all their goodness is not enough to change God's course of action, they fearfully withdraw from Him and dive deeper into themselves. Fear leads us all to that place where our emotions regarding what is happening in our lives speaks louder than does the Word of God. Accordingly, a life ruled by fear is like a man or a woman who builds a house on a foundation of sand instead of on the rock. Fear provides a perilous dwelling place and it does not take much of a storm to cause the house to crumble.

The problem with fear, however, is that we cannot remove it from our lives; love casts it out. God's *agape* love literally displaces it and squeezes it out of our lives. According to **John 15**, if we cling to Jesus for everything in this life and willing lay down our lives for the beloved by surrendering our self-protection, our selfishness, and all the ways we keep ourselves safe, then God's love will have a place in our souls. But we know we will not willingly lay down anything we believe gives us a measure of security unless we become absolutely convinced and assured that we are loved by God every moment of our now—in the now of our past, in the now of our present, and what will be the now of our future.

Can you see why this fear such a serious problem? In order for fear to be evicted from our lives, we have to **know** and come to **believe** mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and in our physical body, that everything God has caused and allowed to happen to us has been an expression of His great love. According to **1 John 4:16**, we must have a firm conviction that, despite the horrors, rejection, pain, terror, and evil of all we have endured, we have always been safe the entire time, as our Father has always been in control of every single detail the entire time. Therefore, we can now live trusting that we will be safe all the time no matter what is

happening. This is why we must walk by faith and not by sight (**2 Corinthians 5:7**).

By faith you become convinced and assured that every moment of your now, no matter what is going on in your life, you are safe and loved. Accordingly, there is no reason to self-protect, control, or live in your selfishness—no reason at all! Our momentary circumstances may seem as if they give us every reason to self-protect, control, and be selfish, but contextually that is not the case. If we really consider what God has accomplished in our lives, from beginning to end, we know that is not the case. And then add to our consideration the promise He made to make us like Him, and we have every reason to live without fear and all that fear produces in our lives. For example, Paul gives us the Spirit's perspective of this life and our current suffering (and keep in mind, Paul's sufferings were intense as he was part of a persecuted people):

### ***2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5***

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to

be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

The pathway to a life without fear is found when we choose to walk by faith and not by sight maintaining the proper perspective of our current circumstances by **knowing** and **believing** that anything God is taking you through is purposeful, intentional, is measured, must happen, and is perfectly prescribed to accomplish His goal of teaching you to live as an alien and stranger in this place. And this is how it has always been. And the presence of the Spirit of God in our lives is our ever present reminder that we do not belong to this place, this world is not our home, this trouble is only temporary, and what we must do here is just a training exercise for all that God has planned for us in eternity. And if God is love (**1 John 4:16**), then His love encompasses everything we do all the time. Thus, we must learn to live in His love and be perfected in His love.

Living without fear is a fruit that comes with spiritual maturity. It is a result of a deep understanding of God and His love for you. This freedom comes when you realize and accept that God, in His love, did what He had to do in order to wake you up from the dead, separate you from this world (literally circumcise you from all your attachments to this world), and put to death your *flesh*. And He did this (and is still doing it) in order that you might be called a true child of God and be conformed into the image of His Son. This is something He does with all true children of God. And the reality is that there was no other way to accomplish these purposes than down the path that He prescribed for you. According to **Psalm 139**,

He knows you inside and out, He knows your soul, and even before you were born He knew everything about you; thus, He knew exactly what would be needed to draw you to His love. He knew exactly what wounds were needed to cause you to turn to Him and to keep turning to Him. He knew it all and He did it all.

If you think about it, fear is an evil which preys on the vulnerable—on those who are not established in the truth about God or the truth about who they are to God. Fear preys on those to whom the Word of God is still largely suggestive and not absolutely authoritative. Fear preys on those who have indulged in their emotions as they react to all that has happened and is happening to them. Fear preys on those afraid they can never escape their past convinced it will be repeated in their future. Fear preys on the fantasies, imaginations, and musings of those who are emotionally shut down, have turned inward, and have built walls of protection to keep people out. Fear preys on those who are attached to this world; find their identity, purpose, and meaning in this world; are obsessed with what others think of them; and are afraid to separate from this world—even though **all** that is in the world is not from the Father (**1 John 2:16**). Fear preys on those who love their illusion of control. And fundamentally, fear preys on those who do not truly believe: 1) Jesus is the Lord, in control of every little thing all the time; or 2) He is good and everything He has allowed and caused to happen in their life has been motivated by His love and has been for the purpose of making them like Him; or 3) this world can never provide what they need to feel safe and secure.

As I said before, being the enemy of faith, fear is clearly a much a bigger problem in the life of the beloved than most people have ever realized. It seems fear has been working undercover deep behind the scenes to cripple our ability to live by

faith—to bet our lives on the names of Jesus. And in the place of true Biblical faith, fear has offered up a replacement: all manner of religious rules, laws, and forms of control; all of which have been passed off as “godly,” “righteous,” and filled with “practical wisdom.” As we have learned, however, all these fear based religious rules (every single one of them), from the rules governing the relationships between men and women to the controls intended to curb our “bad” behavior, are an affront to God and stand in opposition to Him. Such means of control are a product of our religious *flesh* and are not of the Spirit. And, like all things of the *flesh*, these rules, laws, and forms of control have the exact opposite of the desired effect. Instead of godliness, righteousness, and wisdom, they actually produce all manner of sin: “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these (**Galatians 5:19-21**). It is just that typically, within the church, these things are tucked away and hidden, done in secret, and every effort is made to ensure they remain unseen.

The hypocrisy of the religious *flesh* knows no bounds; but it has been very, very effective in keeping believers building their life on fear instead of faith. And if the enemy, even for a moment, thinks that you might begin to truly trust yourself to God, he starts whispering all sorts of lies and distortions in your ears in order to keep you bound and enslaved to fear, unable to walk by faith. The result of fear is always the same—torment. **1 John 4:18** confirms that fear involves torment. This torment takes the form of worry, anxiety, sleeplessness, obsession, addiction, OCD, isolation, and all sorts of other means of control. This torment is a downward spiral, a trap, as fear entangles us in so many chords that it chokes the life out of us.

Yet, over and over again, God commands us to not fear, almost as if it is to be an easy thing and an obvious reaction to Him. But I believe that the only way we can obey this command is to live in **hope**—the second building block of the Kingdom of God. In fact, I believe that **hope** is the only thing stronger than fear. Clearly, fear can devastate our faith, but **hope** keeps everything in proper perspective allowing us to overwhelmingly conquer fear no matter how much it raises its ugly head (**Romans 8:37**). Going back to our key passage we studied about **hope**:

***Psalm 33:18-22***

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

As those who truly fear the Lord, this passage provides us perspective on this life. God promises that His eye is upon those who **hope** for Him to save them from their *flesh*. We know He will do it; after all, He desires us to be like Him. But our job is to trust Him, wait for Him, and rejoice in Him confident that through it all He is our help and our shield. **Romans 8:29** makes it clear that being conformed into the image of His Son is the Father's goal for our life. Do you have the same goal? Do you share His hatred of your *flesh*? Do you actually fear Him? The answer to these questions will determine whether or not you will continue to live in fear or find

freedom from your fear and live in His peace and rest.

The volume of “do not fear” scriptures is large. I have picked out a few to share with you so you can get a feel for why God says we have absolutely no reason to live in fear. Moreover, do not fear is often coupled with such instruction as “do not be dismayed,” “anxious,” “filled with worry,” “discouraged,” or “demoralized.” And this instruction is always coupled with the reason we don’t have to live this way—the truth about God and the truth about us. He does not ask us to just believe, He always gives us the reason to believe. The Lord says to us:

- I am a shield to you.
- I am with you.
- I go ahead of you; I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you.
- I have given them {your enemies} into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you.
- I am your light, your salvation, and the defense of your life.
- I am for you.
- Even when the onslaught of the wicked comes, I am your confidence and I will keep your foot from being caught.
- If you trust in me I will exalt you.
- Do not fear, but take courage. I will come with vengeance; I will repay your enemies, and I will save you.
- Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.
- Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; and do not feel humiliated, for

you will not be disgraced.

- Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

***Genesis 15:1; 26:24; Deuteronomy 31:8; Joshua 10:8-9; Psalm 23:4; 27:1; 118:6; Proverbs 3:25-26; 29:25; Isaiah 35:4; 41:10; 43:5; 54:4; and Matthew 10:28-31.***

Oh and there is another verse of which you should take note. Consider the amazing promise of God to the person who comes to **know** and **believe** the love which God has for them.

### ***Jeremiah 17:7-8***

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.

The Lord gives us absolutely no reason we should let fear dominate our lives. We just need a perspective shift so we will not hold on so tightly to this world and our experiences in this world. As it says in **1 Corinthians 2:6, 7:31**; and **1 John 2:17**, this world is passing away; therefore, we must let it go. We are merely the Lord's ambassadors sent here on assignment by our Father to do the works He has

assigned us. Accordingly, we have to let the Word of God be the ultimate authority over our lives and make that emotional and mental shift understanding that every bad thing that has ever happened to us was for a beautiful purpose. It was all part of God fulfilling His promise to make us like Him. It was so we can live like the aliens and stranger that we are and know the abundant life, intimacy in relationship, and to love and be loved. We do not need to be afraid, we do not need to live in fear, for we are never really in danger and never really at risk. God has our lives in His hands; we are safe and no one can do anything to us that He has not prescribed.

For example, in **Matthew 8:23-27** Jesus took His disciples on a boat ride desiring to teach them a lesson. Knowing there would be a big storm, He decided to take a nap and leave the sailing to the disciples. However, the disciples began to freak out when the storm hit. Many of them were fishermen and were used to the waves, but this storm was crazy and they literally believed their lives were at risk. They came to Jesus saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" But Jesus knew they were completely safe no matter what was happening around them because He was with them. This was a physical lesson of a spiritual principle. Jesus said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. The disciples were clearly amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Far too often we have that same response to the storms of our life. We say Jesus is God but we don't live like He is the Lord our God Almighty. We are still emotionally disconnected from the truth. In **Hebrews 13:5-6**, Jesus promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us; and since His name is **Jehovah Shammah**, the Lord who is always there, like the disciples, we are always safe and secure no

matter what is happening to us. Even with terrors of our past; He was always there and we were always safe and secure. The pain was necessary (we have to believe this to be true) and it was all administered by the hands of our loving God. It felt horrible, it still feels horrible, we hated it all; but it is the very thing that has brought us life and has brought us to Jesus. This is why we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, **I will not be afraid**. What can man do to me?” With this perspective, we can actually rejoice, as it said in **Psalm 33**, for our heart trusts in Him.

In closing, I want to remind you of the name. The name gives us an answer to every single one of our fears. In **Romans 10:13** the Lord says that all who call upon His name will be saved (just like He promised in **Psalm 33**); and in **Romans 10:11** He says that everyone who believes in His name will not be disappointed or disgraced. After all, He is **El Shaddai**—the Lord our God Almighty. He directs the affairs of our life, is always in control, and no one (whether demon or man) is more powerful than He is. In this we can rest. He is **El Elyon**—the Most High God and **El Gibbor**—the mighty God; there is no one higher and no one stronger, which is why He is **Adonai**, my Lord and Master. I am to listen to only Him and only do what He commands me to do. And regardless of what He asks I can trust that as my **Yahweh**, my “I Am,” He is my provision for everything I need for life and godliness.

He is **Jehovah Nissi**, my refugee of safety and my banner. His banner flies high over my life and I can run to Him whenever I am afraid, confident He will keep me safe in the shelter of His wings. He is **Jehovah Raah**, the one who will shepherd me to green fields and to fresh water. With His rod and staff He will guard and protect me from wolves, lions, and thieves. As one of His sheep, I know His voice and I must simply follow wherever He leads; and wherever He leads me I can be confident that

**Jehovah Shammah**—the Lord is there, for He never leaves me nor forsakes me. And **Jehovah Tisdkenu**—the Lord our righteousness—has given me His goodness, His holiness, and His righteousness as my covering. I can stand confident knowing that no matter what I have done, I am always righteous before Him. **Jehovah Mekoddishkem**—the Lord who sanctifies—is the one who chose me and set me apart from amongst all others and called me His own. He has set me aside for His purposes and His alone.

He is also **Elohim**—quite simply, God. He lives outside of time; knows all things; understands all things; is above all of creation (including Satan); is self-sufficient; needs no one and nothing and is therefore unchangeable; is truly incomprehensible except for what He reveals; and is everywhere all the time. This is the one who plans my life according to His great and infinite wisdom. He knows all things, has planned for all things (including every single one of my choices), and He ensures that all things happen just as He determines. And He is quite particular about this because He is **Jehovah Qanna**—the Lord who is jealous. He is jealous of me. He wants me, all of me, and He will do everything and anything to have all of me. Nothing is off limits (which explains all our wounds). Accordingly, He will go to war against every enemy in my soul which keeps me from being wholly devoted to Him. With that said, He is also **Jehovah Jireh** and has provided everything I need and will always provide everything I need to do and accomplish everything He has asked of me. The burden is on Him, I just need to be willing to appropriate His provision.

He is **Jehovah Sabaoth**—the Lord of Hosts. He is in control of every little detail of his heavenly armies, both good and bad. They are all His servants and our servants. Even the bad angels are just tools which the Lord uses to serve as our

training guides and sparing partners as He trains us to trust in Him and to depend only on Him. We have nothing to fear of the unseen; whereas, they have everything to fear, for their Lord and Master lives within us. And finally, He is **Jehovah Shalom**—the Lord is peace. This name guarantees that we are safe all the time. There is no conflict that ever exists between us and God; He has cleared it all away for all time. We always have peace with God regardless of what we have done, are doing, or ever will do. Thus, shame, guilt, condemnation, and defeat are not our reality. It may be our experience because we have chosen to believe the lie, but it is not our reality. Every cause of shame, guilt, condemnation, and defeat has been remedied on the cross by Jesus through the shedding of His precious blood. He has saved us from these things and over and over again He makes us right in His sight.

Once again, if we believe in the name we would have **NO** reason to live in fear for we would understand the love which God has for us. We would know that He has moved time and space just to ensure we get to be with Him and stay with Him. He has provided for us, protected us, led us down the perfect paths, guided all the angelic beings in how they were permitted to interact with us, and He has done everything because He is jealous for us and wants every little tiny bit of us. Let these truths comfort you. Place your **hope** in Jesus Christ for He will finish the work of salvation He began in you (***Philippians 1:6***); and, before long, you will be like Him. Embrace this work, hold on to it, and let this perspective of His working out His salvation in your life allow you to turn to His love so fear can be expelled from your soul. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves *torment*, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

Let's Pray