Fear, Faith, Facts, Fables

March 8, 2020 · PM · https://letgodbetrue.com/sermons/2020/fear-faith-facts-fables/

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"

Matthew 8:26

"Be not afraid, only believe."

Mark 5:36

Introduction:

1. In early 2020 the world has found something new to fear, sensationalize, and worry and legislate about.
2. The Founder of our religion and Head of our church found fear and faith incompatible (Matt 8:23-27).
3. He responded to a life-threatening storm, fully beyond apostolic power, by reducing it to perfect calm.
4. The Founder of our religion and Head of our church encouraged faith in death (Mark 5:21-24,35-43).
5. He healed a girl after getting sick, being hospitalized, and dying from it. No, we do not raise the dead.
6. We are not foolishly presumptuous about danger; we emphasize faith over fear and facts over fables.
7. We may be mocked like mourners for Jairus's daughter, because we do not follow the world's sheep.
8. This short sermon will only cover a few high points for a reminder of faith in God. It is not exhaustive.
9. God by His providence led us to Isaiah 50 this morning, where two sources of light/truth are contrasted.
10. God by His providence recently had us consider the fabulous conditional promises of Psalm 91 again.
11. March Madness may be played in empty arenas; the Tokyo Olympics may be postponed or cancelled.
12. I am no expert on viruses, do not intend to be, do not want to be, do not need to be. It is not worth it.
13. **Influenza**. Commonly known as the flu, an infectious respiratory disease caused by an influenza virus.
14. **Epidemic**. A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.
15. **Pandemic**. A disease that is prevalent throughout an entire country, continent, or the whole world.
16. **Pestilence**. Any fatal epidemic disease, affecting man or beast, and destroying many victims.
17. Pestilence(s) is in the Bible 48 times. **Noisome**. Harmful, injurious, noxious. Noisome occurs 4 times.
18. This is not fulfilled prophecy! Matthew 24:7 warns of pestilences, but they occurred 2000 years ago.
19. Countless websites will inform you enough
20. How coronavirus compares to the flu.
21. These links have limited applicability; they are not the final answer; there are many links to compare.
22. Learn a little of the 1918 Spanish Flu.

Suggested Reading: Psalm 27; Psalm 34; Psalm 46; Psalm 91.

FEAR

A. What is fear*?* Emotional pain or uneasiness caused by the sense of impending danger.

B. The world around us, constantly looking for something to fear, has found a new virus.
   1. There is no peace, saith God, to the wicked, which is obviously true (Is 48:22; 57:21).
   2. They are hopeless, for they have no future or God, so this life becomes all important.
   3. If the virus disappeared, it would be global warming, President Trump, locusts, etc.
   4. The world shouts a slogan, *No Fear!* But they are also terrified e.g. global warming.
   5. Every little thing they can claim or create for fear distracts them from the real danger.
   6. They love their reports, projects, and crusades to deal with their many made-up fears.
   7. The usual trio is politics, health, weather, which they exaggerate and sensationalize.
   8. Good events are seldom reported, for they garner only a bored shrug from viewers.

C. The information age allows events large or small to be shared globally like never before.
   1. Radio, television, Internet, social media, twitter, etc. spread any news far and wide.
   2. A flu in China for 97% of world history would never have been known in Europe.
   3. Political, health, and weather disasters were only known well after they occurred.
   4. No one in world history ever heard about a mudslide in Bolivia that buried a baby.
   5. This point is quite important to grasp how the media and world always have a fear.
   6. World population is now near 8 billion and much more active for all lots of events.
   7. Everyone has a cell phone with video capability and social media for viral garbage.
   8. Individual cases like those that now go viral were not known even by those close by.
   9. No one before this century saw live audio-video feeds of events all over the world.

D. Internationalism has led to combining numbers to increase statistics for the needed fear.
   1. Countries now depend on each other's economic ability so all news is shared alike.
   2. Businessmen travel back and forth in just hours with ability to record all they see.
   3. Internet feeds from any part of the world are easily and freely obtained anywhere.
   4. Worldly compassion for other countries now jerks heart strings for ordinary events.
   5. If a building collapses in Mongolia, the news is shown in Madagascar and Mexico.

E. Media's need to sensationalize will never inform their audience what are normal events.
   1. If five are shot in Sacramento, Savannah must grieve, though 55 are killed each day.
   2. If lightning in Omaha kills a child, it is highlighted over 465 accidental deaths daily.
   3. Many watch weather channels daily, though statistically no one dies from weather.
   4. In America in 2020, every day … 465 accidental deaths, 129 suicides, 55 murders.
   5. The personal information with pictures and heart-jerking stories fuels man's fear.

F. Jesus told His disciples what to fear – and it is factual, real, and terrible (Luke 12:4-5).
    1. He clearly distinguished harm to a body and death versus terrible eternal torment.
    2. The world has much more to fear than their ideas – they are deceived to distraction.
    3. They worry about every FDA and PTA suggestion while ignoring the wrath of God.
    4. Paul said real terror was standing before the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor 5:9-11).
    5. They fear global warming, but the only and terminal global warming is in the Bible.

G. One of the things about fear is that enough fear will be self-fulfilling in consequences.
    1. FDR said in 1933, "Only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."
    2. When fear becomes widespread, the foolish reactions by fools cause the real grief.
    3. You can have a night without bread, milk, or toilet paper in SC with news of flurries.
    4. Chinese Americans are buying guns for protection from revenge for Wuhan origin.
    5. Self-imposed or government-imposed quarantines could change lifestyle for a while.

H. What did our Lord Jesus and His apostles do about current events taking precious lives?
    1. They had more events of war, famine, pestilence, nature, etc. than our last 50 years.
    2. The Jews were despised by all men, and the Romans had an occupying force there.
    3. Think! Rome could make you travel 70 miles pregnant for taxes or kill all the babies.
    4. When Jesus was asked about disasters or fear, He reacted spiritually (Luke 13:1-5).
    5. Paul, Peter, and Luke knew some in advance for history and giving (Acts 11:27-30).

I. Is fear a tool of the devil? Yes! He destroys men's lives, and fear is one of the best tools.
    1. The Bible states the first two traits of those in hell are fear and unbelief (Rev 21:8).
    2. It is not fear of coronavirus and unbelief in God's protection, but it is worth noting.
    3. The wicked fear without a real cause (Prov 28:1; 1:26-27; Isaiah 7:2; 48:22; 57:21).
    4. The wiles of the devil require faith, so fear must be one of them against Christians.
    5. Fear … compromises faith and witness, directs to man for help, distracts life, hinders productivity, chases a man day and night, reduces boldness for greatness, etc.

J. Most agendas work better with fear than faith … think! … the world needs fearful news.
    1. Politically astute men know that fear is a great tool to increase governmental control.
    2. What just happened? The Fed lowered rates due to fear – though almost negative.
    3. What might happen? Congress will lower taxes – though we are fiscally in trouble.
    4. David Stockman, Matt Drudge, Rush Limbaugh, and Nouriel Roubini get face time.
    5. Consider the JBS; they could not survive or thrive with good news; it had to be bad.
    6. Everyone with an agenda that could benefit by COVID-19 will use it for advantage.
    7. If you are prudent and wise like Proverbs teaches us, you will not fall for their fears.

K. Fear is contagious, and God knows; therefore you should avoid the fearful (Deut 20:8).
    1. A benefit of a church is to have fellow encouragers to remember God and hate fear.

2. Faith is also contagious, which we can gladly do for others (Acts 28:15; I Thes 3:7).
3. In a time of focused fear, like this virus fear, the media lets you think of nothing else.
4. Let water cooler conversations be about football rather than comparing virus notes.
5. Let the people of God recount God's use of diseases and protection from diseases.

L. Our president often decries the *fake news* of our media – we should decry the *fear news*.
1. He knows the media is against conservative Americans and often slants their reports.
2. Various studies indicate around 90% of the reporting is against this elected president.
3. We know the media craves sensationalism and exaggerates or slants their reports.
4. But apply godly prudence also to hyping this flu, political primaries, weather, etc.
5. The 330 million Americans do not need sob stories about personal, tragic flu deaths.

M. A conscientious, critical viewer will observe that most Hollywood movies end
1. Even their feel-good stories have no foundation or substantive reason for future joy.
2. Many end like the writer died before the final scenes, and viewers are left hanging.
3. Call *Romeo and Juliet* and movies like it tragedies, but life is more than a tragedy.
4. The world is hopeless without God, rules for great living, and hope of eternal life.
5. The Bible's worst stories (Stephen) are good; its best (Ruth, Esther) are fabulous.
6.

FAITH

A. What is faith*?* Confidence and trust in God to do you good against any danger or enemy.

B. The Christian should have such faith that they are not afraid of most threatened dangers.
1. Since fear is a big part of life, the Bible deals with it thoroughly in both testaments.
2. God's children are not to be afraid (Gen 15:1; 21:17; 26:24; 35:17; 46:3; Deut 31:6-8; Josh 1:5; I Chr 28:20; Psalm 37:25; Isaiah 41:10; Luke 12:4-5; Heb 13:5-6; etc.).

C. David is a great example; he often faced real dangers, and he confessed his fears often.
1. The threats on David's life were from many enemies, far more than you could have.
2. He admitted fear, but he said God saved him (Ps 18:1-19; 23:4; 31:13; 34:4; 64:1).
3. Therefore, he declared he would not be afraid (Ps 23:4; 27:1-3; 34:7; 46:1-3; 62:2,6).
4. David knew exactly what to do when fearful (I Sam 30:6; Psalm 27:13-14; 56:3-4).

D. David gave a great inoculation for fear when he wrote the promises of God (Psalm 91).
1. This psalm deals with pestilences and other dangers lurking out of sight and sound.
2. But all readers of Psalm 91 must learn that its precious promises are very conditional.
3. Exposition of Psalm 91.

E. Jesus the Son of David comforted people with promises and exhortations about faith.
1. God takes care of sparrows and has your hairs numbered, so relax (Matt 10:29-31).

2. Do not think or worry about tomorrow, for God will take care of it (Matt 6:19-34).
3. Read the events again with texts in the title for faith over fear (Mat 8:26; Mark 5:36).

F. Paul warned that prayer with thanksgiving is to be made without anxiety (Phil 4:6-7).
1. Fear of circumstances indicate a lack of faith which renders prayer useless (Jas 1:7).
2. You cannot pray believing while languishing in fear (Ps 3:5; 4:8; 127:1-2; Pr 21:31).

G. The doctrine and knowledge of God and truth the Bible teaches are the antidotes to fear.
1. GOD Jehovah is the foundation and source of faith over fear (Isaiah 12:2-3; 26:3-4).
2. Prepare to die each day; live each day as if your last; then death will not frighten.
3. The world deserves COVID-19 and much, much worse; faith in God should not fear.
4. Your kind and loving Father has provided you a golden parachute in the worst case.
5. Paul said death was gain and far better than life (Phil 1:21-24; II Cor 4:17-18; 5:8).
6. Faith wants to live, not due to fear of death, but for more time for God (Is 38:18-19).

H. We have an agenda and cause … faith, kingdom, God, gospel, worldview, boldness, etc.

I. Like the contagion of fear, faith is also contagious (Deut 20:8; Acts 28:15; I Thess 3:7).

J. Can a Christian be afraid? Indeed! Fear, fight or flight, is the normal reaction to danger.
1. David was afraid, but how did David respond to fear. He trusted God and then acted.
2. He did not despair, just like Paul (II Cor 4:8-12). He chose to trust God (I Sam 30:6).
3. He did not quit. He did not get depressed/distracted. He did not look to man for help.
4. Fear and faith should be opposites. *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith* (Mat 8:26)?
5. Fear and faith should usually be opposites. *Be not afraid, only believe* (Mark 5:36).

FACTS

A. <u>What are facts</u>*?* Truth about anything matching the Bible or proven by honest analysis.

B. Adam sinned in Eden and brought all health issues and every cause of death upon man.
1. Men die, children die, and unborn children die because of sin … SIN (Rom 5:12-14).
2. Ideas about health, sickness, death … or cures … without the sin factor are laughable.
3. All persons get sick. All persons die. No man, program, or government can stop it.
4. The life expectancy of man is still about 73 – the same for 3500 years (Psalm 90:10).
5. While all men should be prudent, terror about sickness and death is stupid thinking.

C. The Creator God of heaven and earth is in absolute, full, and final control of all disease.
1. All epidemics, pandemics, pestilences are fully ruled by Almighty God our Father.
2. His law brought sickness, weakness, and death in the Garden of Eden due to our sin.
3. He sent a pestilence and death in Egypt until He destroyed them (Ex 9:15; 12:12).
4. He made a perfect difference between Egyptians and Israelites in Egypt's Goshen.
5. He promised He would save Israel from Egypt's diseases for obedience (Ex 15:26).

6. He promised Israel He would give them Egypt's diseases for sin (Deut 28:27,35,60).
7. Phinehas did not get the coronavirus in Numbers 25, for he was faithful against sin.
8. Why did 70,000 die from the coronavirus in II Samuel 24? Sins against Israel's God.
9. God killed David's first child by Bathsheba, and he reacted right (II Sam 12:14-24).
10. God gave Asa gout or some other foot disease due to his proud sins (II Chr 16:12).
11. God warned Judah by Jeremiah He would kill by pestilence (Jer 14:12; 24:10; etc.).
12. Herod Agrippa I was justly eaten by worms for murder and pride (Acts 12:20-23).
13. Many Corinthians were sickly and weak because of their carnality (I Cor 11:30-32).
14. Paul had a thorn in his flesh for good reasons, though he disliked it (II Cor 12:7-10).

D. Christians see the bright side of such events, for the fear contagion will affect markets.
1. Recent pictures of Mecca completely shut down for disinfecting was a great sight.
2. Interest rates have plummeted for you to refinance due to fear of economic turmoil.
3. Oil has plummeted for you to drive with the cheapest gas in a long time very soon.
4. Fearful employees will bail, and you can keep perfect attendance if prudent to do so.
5. The government may lower taxes, so Christians living prudently benefit the most.

E. You do not have to be perfect … but you have to fear, love, and obey God imperfectly.

FABLES

A. <u>What are fables</u>*?* Facts or stories exaggerated, leveraged, or slanted to push an agenda.

B. Prudent Christians assess all statistics, not just those the media throw at you to terrify.
1. Only the simple believe every word – prudent men prove every word (Prov 14:15,8).
2. The human heart is deceitful; the devil is the father of lies; so the world usually lies.
3. Figures don't lie, but liars figure. To be sensational, they use those for their agenda.
4. The world monopolizes the news from any source to pursue their depressing agenda.
5. They must promote sensationalism to sell advertising, protection, government, etc.
6. Simple Americans want it so – bombard my senses with the same stuff I cannot stop.
7. Let me hear wagging heads over and over for the comfort they give my fearful soul.

C. Sensationalism sells, for most Americans are eagerly ready for the next big scare tactic.
1. If we limited ourselves to the current century, we have to begin with the Y2K hoax.
2. If we merely survey each year since then … flu, anthrax, E. coli, Ebola, SARS, etc.
3. A current hoax is global warming with its infant, confused leader, Greta Thunberg.
4. This speaker recalls the despised Arab oil embargo of 1973 (gas from $.38 to $.55).
5. American patriots, as they call themselves, are quite vulnerable to hoaxes, lies, etc.
6. If it were not COVID-19, it would be end of seasons, but read (Gen 8:22; Jer 5:24).

7. If it were not COVID-19, it would be life extension by vegetarianism (I Tim 4:1-5).

D. Modern communication helps spread exaggerated or fake news worldwide to all men.
   1. People lived better when they did not know of tornados in Kansas or rain in Florida.
   2. The world has had countless viruses over the centuries, though no one knew of them?
   3. Many Americans turn on the news for their daily brainwashing including fear tactics.
   4. The media survives with sports and sensationalism – for its non-thinking audience.

E. A fable is exposed very easily by accessing a few facts to bring your mind back to rest.
   1. How many Americans die daily … by accident? 465! … suicide? 129! … murder? 55!
   2. How many Americans die daily … by tornado? 0! … Hurricane? 0! … Lightning? 0!
   3. What of annual flu (17/18)? … Sick? 45 million! … Hospital? 810k! … Deaths? 61k!
   4. What of coronavirus? … Sick? 100,000! … Deaths? 3,500! God controls the future.
   5. America survived the Spanish Flu of 1918; she then entered the Roaring Twenties.

F. Age and experience can be helpful, for older thinking men learn to doubt or to mock.
   1. Paul taught from a righteous angle that tribulations work experience (Rom 5:1-5).
   2. Due to the world's hopeless, sensational angle, prudent men learn to discount news.
   3. This 62-year-old speaker/writer has heard and seen countless, dire threats disappear.
   4. As a 6-year-old, he read in the Weekly Reader of the NEA about a coming ice age.
   5. As a 7-year-old (1964), he knew of Russia, spy satellites, electrical grid knockout, Cuba, communists in government, None Dare Call It Treason, Barry Goldwater, etc.

Conclusion:

1. *"Keep it simple, stupid" was coined by Kelly Johnson of Lockheed Skunk Works (SR-71 Blackbird).*
2. The first rule of Bible systems, including health – is love, trust, obey God (Psalm 23, 27, 34, 37, 91).
3. You need favorite Bible verses against fear as antidotes and encouragement in your times of anxiety.
4. Long earthly life is not a priority, but rather boldly serving His kingdom (Matt 6:33-34; Phil 1:21-23).
5. Only reasonable precautions are needed, for God wants us to trust Him and sleep (Ps 127:1-2; 4:6-8).
6. The horse is prepared against the day of battle (Pr 21:31), so wash your hands and store some salmon.
7. Do not believe all you hear or read, for most information today is exaggerated or slanted (Pr 14:15).
8. We trust the Bible … so from evolution to global warming to life extension … we know they are lies.
9. We know God is in complete and total control of everything from sparrows to the hairs on your head.
10. We must give thanks in everything, so give thanks for a great health system and other related blessings.
11. Be a reprover, teacher, and warner to stop the fears of the fearful and to build up the faith of believers.

Suggested Links:

1. The Only Right Worldview.
2. Health, Sickness, and Death (PPT).

3. Fear – Good and Bad.
4. *Commentary of* Proverbs 14:15.
5. *Commentary of* Proverbs 13:16.
6. *Commentary of* Proverbs 14:8.
7. *Commentary of* Proverbs 16:33.
8. *Exposition of* Psalm 91.
9. Hallelujah Diet *(health heresy)*.
10. When Things Seem Hopeless.
11. Bad Things Happen to Christians.
12. How Big Is Your Faith? (PPT).
13. Dominion of God *(over all things)*.
14. Emerods and Mice *(spread of disease)*.
15. Current Events from a Bible Perspective.
16. Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds.
17. *Media use of Fear (external link) …* how epidemic news coverage stokes unnecessary fear (niemanlab.org).
18. *Media use of Fear (external link) …* The Use of Fear in the Media (makaylaheisler.wordpress.com).
19. *Media use of Fear (external link) …* Why We're Living in the Age of Fear (rollingstone.com).
20. *Media use of Fear (external link) …* an article on media fear tactics (gdba.com).
21. *Media use of Fear (external link) …* If It Bleeds, It Leads: fear-based media (psychologytoday.com).