

HE SET THE CAPTIVES FREE—FROM FEAR Rev 1:17–18

***Christ Sets Us Free from the Fear of Life, Death and Eternity
Because Perfect love casts out fear***

Introduction:

1. **Ann Landers was a newspaper counselor, who received an average of 10,000** letters each month, and nearly all of them from people burdened with problems.
 - a. She was asked if there was any particular problem that dominated the others throughout the letters she receives—She said the one problem above all others seems to be fear.
2. **We Live in what has been called ‘the of Anxiety’ ...**
 - a. If You’ve Binge Watched the News then You Know What I Mean!
 - b. A 24 Hour Stream of Bad News Showing the Foundations of Society Crumbling
 - c. It creates anxiety Because There’s Nothing You Can Do About It
3. **At The Heart of Anxiety is Fear—and At the Heart of Fear is Our Focus**
**There are 3 Spheres of Concern for every human being—LIFE, DEATH & ETERNITY
And Christ Has Set Us Free from the Fear of Each One!**
 - In One Incredible Statement Christ Gives us Assurance NOT to Fear Life, Death or Eternity
 - Notice His words to John who’s banished to the Island of Patmos for His faith ([Rev 1:17-18](#))

I. CHRIST SETS US FREE FROM OUR FEAR OF LIFE

A. WE FACE MANY FEARS IN LIFE

1. **Some Rational and others irrational...**
 - (1) Fear of Failure (2) Fear of Rejection (3) Fear of the Future
 - (4) Fear of the Past (5) Fear of the unknown (6) Fear of death
 - (7) **And the Sum of All Fears: The Greatest Fear of All—public speaking!**
(Which actually ranks higher than the fear of death in almost every poll)
2. **Which proves that Fears don’t have to be rational to be real!**
 - a) I had to go to the dentist last year and they require you to fill out a form
 - b) I’m answering the questions, do I take medicine? Major Health problems? Allergies?
 - c) I’m answering no, no, no & halfway through 2nd page I’m feeling good about myself
 - d) No pre-existing conditions, no major surgeries, no prescriptions...
 - e) But then they threw in a question that stopped me cold:
Do you experience anxiety from Dentistry? —My perfect score was ruined
 - f) I had to admit—I have anxiety going to the dentist—I hate it!
 - g) As far back as I can remember — going to the dentist meant one thing: PAIN
3. **A Poll of Teenagers asked what they feared—Top 3 answers were:**
 - Failing School (44%) • Loneliness (33%)
 - Not having a boyfriend/girlfriend (30%) • Fear of Rejection (28%)
4. **And then there Are Phobias... Too many to list**
 - a) With all of these fears—sometimes we Worry Ourselves Sick...literally

B. FEAR CAN CAUSE A CHAIN-REACTION OF PROBLEMS

1. Fear Prevents Spiritual Growth

- a) John tells us that many of the rulers believed in Jesus, but because of the pharisees they would not confess Him for fear of being banished from the Synagog

2. Fear Takes Our Focus Away from the Lord

- a) Sometimes we focus more on our fear than on the Lord
- b) “Sorrow looks back, Worry looks around, Faith looks up” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

3. Fear Distorts Reality and Magnifies Our Problems

- a) Causing us to See the worst in everything: **FEAR: False Evidence that Appears Real**
- b) Fear can manifest as Jealousy, Bitterness, even Hatred for others or ourselves
- c) constantly comparing ourselves to others—rather than being thankful to God

4. Fear Can Cause People to Become Controllers...

- a) Since They Can't Control Their Fears, they try to control everything & everyone else
- b) For By Controlling Every aspect of their life—they might be able to eliminate their fear

5. Fear Steals Our Joy, our Peace, Our Hope and Love...

- a) For Even When a Fear is NOT Real—it is Real to the Person who Fears it
- b) **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (Jn 10:10)**

C. THERE IS ONE PROPER FORM OF FEAR...

1. The Bible Calls it “The Fear of the Lord”

It is Defined as Extreme Reverence and Awe Toward God

- a) The "fear of the Lord" is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7)
- b) The "fear of the Lord" will cause one to hate evil (Pr 8:13)
- c) The "fear of the Lord" will prolong life (Pr 10:27)
- d) The "fear of the Lord" is a fountain of life (Pr 14:26-27)
- e) The "fear of the Lord" leads to a satisfying life, sparing one from much evil (Pr 19:23)
- f) The "fear of the Lord" is the way to riches, honor, and life! (Pr 22:4)

2. "The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else." (Oswald Chambers)

3. Jesus Went to the Cross to Set the Captives Free! (John 16:31–17:5)

II. CHRIST SETS US FREE FROM OUR FEAR OF DEATH (v.18)

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. (Revelation 1:17-18a)

A. THE FEAR OF DEATH IS UNIVERSAL TO ALL HUMANITY...

1. In the book of Job, Death is called “The King of Terrors.”

—Solomon likened it to being caught in “a cruel net”.

“The fear of death is so natural to man that all of his life is one long effort not to think about it”.
(William Barclay)

2. We Don't even like the word — so we use euphemisms:

- a) Someone “Passed away”, or “gone to be with the Lord...”

3. To Avoid the thought of dying—the world over-compensates...

- a) By Worshiping the cult of Youth and Beauty and Health...
- b) But This Only Makes it Worse—since our focus is entirely on SELF!
- c) But an unobtainable self—not found in reality, but in a social media fantasy!
- d) And the Result—is our sense of Alienation and Despair Grow Worse!

B. WHY DO WE FEAR DEATH?

1. Because Death is Mysterious and Unknown

- a) It's normal to fear the unknown: Moving to a new city, getting a new job, marriage
- b) But Death is greatest of all unknowns—no one returns to tell us of it

2. Because We Face Death Alone

- a) Death is the darkest door of all—and we pass through alone

3. Because we are Separated from Loved Ones

- a) Will we ever see our loved ones again?

4. Because Our Personal Hopes & Dreams Will Not Be Realized

- a) Death ends our hopes and dreams—
- b) we're no longer able to plan, learn, build or grow
- c) All we've accomplished is left for others—we can't take anything with us

5. Because We Fear the End of Life

- a) The process of dying is the ultimate humiliation
- b) But then after death—will there be life? or is it the end?

6. Because We Fear Judgement

- a) Another fear of death is fear of the judgement
- b) Even atheists who deny life after death—have a moral fear of judgement

7. Because Death is Unavoidable (List: Stephen Davis, cited by McDowell, Resurrection)

- a) Even Jesus experienced death—and we are not exempt from death either...

C. BUT CHRIST SETS US FREE FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH

BECAUSE HE DEFEATED DEATH BY HIS RESURRECTION!

Jesus Set the Captives Free! (Hebrews 2:14-15)

1. We Fear b/c Death is Mysterious and Unknown—(Romans 8:18)

2. We Fear b/c We Face Death Alone—But we will not be alone! (Psalm 23:4)

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me

3. We Fear b/c We are Separated from Loved Ones—

- a) (But we will be w/ loved ones again with No Death, No Sorrow, No Pain Forever!)

4. We Fear b/c Our Personal Hopes & Dreams Will Not Be Realized—

- a) But the Ultimate Hope—the Ultimate Dream WILL be realized!

5. We Fear b/c Death b/c We Fear the End of Life—

- a) But Death is not the end but the beginning of a new and eternal life!
- b) Jesus assured us: "I will be with you always, even unto the end of the Age"

6. We Fear Judgement—But Jesus Went to Cross to Set Us Free from Judgement

- a) (Romans 8:1) We no longer approach God as a criminal goes before a Judge, but as a child goes before his father!

7. We Fear Death b/c it is Unavoidable—

- a) Death is the darkest door—but it leads to the brightest light! (1 Cor 15:21–22)

Did You Think God Would Let Death Have the Last Say?

III. CHRIST SETS US FREE FROM OUR FEAR OF ETERNITY

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. (Revelation 1:17-18)

A. CHRIST SET US FREE FROM OUR WORST FEARS— BY HIS SACRIFICE OF LOVE ON CROSS

1. The Fear of What We Face in Life...
2. The Fear of Death...
3. The Fear of What Comes After Death (John 14:1-3)

B. HOW DO WE HAVE VICTORY OVER FEAR?

1. **FIRST:** If Your Worrying—Your Not Praying (Phil 4:6-7)
 - a) Worry is a Cue to start praying
2. **2nd:** If Your Focusing on Fear—Your Not Focusing on the Lord (Psalm 46)
 - (1) Psalm 46
 - (2) Story of Florence Chadwick in 1952, swimming from Catalina Island to Ca...
3. **THIRD:** If Fear is a Continual and Controlling Problem—Go to God’s Word
 - a) Your Not the Only One Who Has Struggled with Fear... David, Elijah, Apostles

C. IT’S SURPRISING HOW MANY ‘FEAR NOT’S’ ARE IN GOD’S WORD

1. When Feeling Overwhelmed (Isa. 41:13)
2. When Feeling Forgotten (Isaiah 43:1)
3. When Surrounded by Enemies (2 Kings 6:16)
4. When Tempted to Loneliness (Isa 41:10)
5. When Tempted to Despair (2 Chronicles 20:15)
6. When you fear losing everything (Hebrews 13:5–6)
7. When threatened by criticism of your faith (Mt 10:26)
8. When threatened with physical harm (Mt 10:28)
9. When Feeling Worthless and Forgotten (Matt 10:31)

CONCLUSION:

1. “Fear imprisons, faith liberates; fear paralyzes, faith empowers; fear disheartened, faith encourages; fear sickens, faith heals; fear makes useless, faith makes serviceable, and most of all, fear puts hopelessness at the heart of life, while faith rejoices in God.” (Harry Emerson Fosdick)
2. **Christ Sets the Captives Free...**
 - a) **Free from the Fear of Life, fear of Death, fear of Eternity**
Because Perfect love casts out fear
 - b) (2 Timothy 1:7) **For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**