

## Fear

What are you afraid of?

There is a good kind of fear and a bad kind of fear. The key to overcoming the bad kind of fear is learning to practice the good kind of fear. As Jesus said, "Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt. 10:28 HCSB).

Easier said than done, I'll grant you that. But still the key to overcoming fear in our lives is right there in that passage. *The key to fear is learning to fear the right thing.*

I find that I fear the wrong thing quite often. I fear what the stock market is going to do to my retirement savings. I fear what someone is going to think about a sermon. I fear a bad lab report from my doctor. I fear losing someone I love. I fear criticism and attacks. I fear conflict. I fear making a mess of things. I fear what kind of boy is going to come home with my teenage daughter.

I am absolutely convinced that these fears represent Satan's attempt to put a wedge between me and the Lord. These fears are temptations; their purpose is to get me focused on something other than the One I really ought to fear.

If I understand Jesus' words correctly, he is saying that if I am living in the holy fear of the Lord and seeking to obey Him and put Him first in all I do, then I really don't have anything else to worry about. This does not mean that nothing bad will happen to me. After all, I live in a fallen world and bad stuff happens. But if I fear the Lord, then He will take care of me – body and soul, now and forever.

Think of the power and the freedom that will come if we actually believe that and live it out. From Satan's perspective, we would be thoroughly dangerous people! I believe that's why he works so hard to make us slaves of our fears.

I have decided not to live in fear, at least not in the bad kind. I have decided to do what the pastor at my ordination, Keith Evans of Greater Gresham Baptist Church in Oregon, charged me with many years ago: "Say what is true, do what is right, and leave the results to God."

Want to join me? What would happen to your practice of ministry leadership if you decided to fear the right thing? What would happen in the areas of church planting and church revitalization if ministry leaders learned to practice the good kind of fear instead of the bad kind of fear?

I am convinced that the future of kingdom work in our association is tied to church planting and church revitalization, and I am convinced that the effectiveness of these two ministries is directly tied to God-called ministry leaders who fear only "Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Therefore, I have written this personal mission statement to guide my ministry in Bluebonnet Association: *To fearlessly help church leaders who have decided not to stay within the constraints of fear and criticism.* Since the association's mission is to assist churches, this will be my way of carrying out the mission.

Brothers, let us commit ourselves to be thoroughly dangerous, God-fearing men!