



Standing Tall Against the Fear of War and Terrorism

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Introduction:

When we really get down to it, everyone struggles with fear of some sort at different times in their lives. But those harassing fears, the ones that are deep in our soul that probably no one knows about but you and God and perhaps a close friend, are the ones that the enemy of our soul loves to use to wreak havoc in our lives. Our Heavenly Father knows our fears and longs for us to realize that He can help us to stand tall and strong against them. Each Sunday during July and August, we are going to be focusing on different types of fear, and looking to God to deliver us from the fears that are common to us as human beings, and learn new ways to rely on our Great God for His strength for our weakness.

Today we are celebrating the independence of our country. Our nation has faced war here at several times in its history. We faced it when we fought for independence. We faced it during the civil war that was fought for civil rights. We have sent our troops to other countries around the world to maintain our freedom, and now we have a new war that we are fighting – a war on terrorism.

Most people are alarmed when they turn on the news or pick up the newspaper and hear or read about the level of terrorism being raised from yellow to orange. Since 911 there is a new understanding of our vulnerability to death and destruction. We generally feel pretty safe here in Mayville, Horicon, Campbellsport, Lomira, Iron Ridge, Beaver Dam, yet there are still things could happen close to us that would seriously impact our lives, our homes, our health, our businesses, our family.

Every morning about 4:00 military planes fly over us from Madison. I remember right after 911 waking up many times at that hour and hearing the planes going overhead, and praying for their protection, and that terrorism in our country would not be successful.

I read the story of Stephen who was 8 and invited to stay overnight for the first time. It all sounded like an exciting adventure, but when his mom and dad took him there, he started to get that homesick feeling in the pit of his stomach. With tears glistening in his eyes and his voice quivering, he said, “Mommy, I don’t feel so good. I’d better go home with you.” Stephen’s mom responded, “It’s up to you, but I know you’d have a good time.” Stephen said, “But mom, they said they were going to climb a big hill tomorrow and I’ve never been there before.”

We can become fearful as we look ahead, because we have never been there before. Just as the Lord took care of Joshua and Israel, He will take care of us.

Living where terrorists strike repeatedly is like having the same bad dream night after night. War is worse. We see it on the evening news, reflected in the faces of people who are fearful for their lives, their businesses, their friends, their freedoms, their countries of Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Here in America, how do we

deal with the fear that comes to our mind when we think of terrorism and war? Let's explore this further. Let's look at what we can do to deal with the fear that we face as Americans in light of terrorism.

Let's look back in history to the people of Israel. Perhaps we can understand better why they were not really too excited when their new leader Joshua told them it was time to possess the land that had been promised to them. They had to conquer it. God was not just handing it to them on a silver platter.

I. BE NOT AFRAID – **Deut. 1:28**

Where can we go? Our brothers have made us lose heart. They say, "The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there."

Fear often comes from uncertainty or the unknown. When we talk about war and terrorism, it is because we are not sure what the outcome of war may bring us. We are not certain what the next target of terrorists might be.

I don't know of any nation that wants to go to war, just to go to war. War is costly. It is costly when it comes to lives being taken or injuries. It is costly when it comes to the economy. It is costly when it comes to future relationship with the people who were warred with. It is costly for the families who send loved ones to do the fighting. It is costly for the people who are warred against.

God spoke through Moses saying, "You have stayed here at Mt. Horeb long enough. Go to the hills and take the country that God had promised you. Do not be afraid – for God is with you." What did they do? They used all kinds of excuses, based on fear.

- A. Deut 1:28 – Where can we go? Our brothers have made us lose heart!

Fear dominates when we lose heart. – **DON'T LOSE HEART.** God is with us.

I know that we have strayed far as a country from where our founding fathers were, but God has been with this nation throughout our history. One stunning example as to God's providence in the settling and founding of our nation happened during the 1st year of the Revolutionary war. America had almost lost the entire conflict. The British forces led by General Howe had cornered Washington's army in Brooklyn Heights. These forces surrounded the American forces in a great semicircle, and behind them British ships could close them off at any time. In fact, the British intended to do just that the next day and end the war.

The American soldiers had no way to escape. Nevertheless, that night Washington endeavored to escape. Realizing the hopelessness of their situation, he collected every vessel he could find from rowboats to sloops, and set about to evacuate his troops by night. Counselors advised against such an escape because the British would see them in the moonlight and hear the splashing of the oars. But Washington was determined to go ahead anyway. Just as the American troops began to launch their vessels, a strange and unusual fog rose up and completely covered all of them! The next morning, when General Howe gave the orders to close the trap, he was astonished to find that Washington and his entire army had disappeared.

Because of many incidents like this, Washington wrote after the war, "I am sure that never was a people, who had more reason to acknowledge a divine interposition in their affairs than the United States."

We don't have to fear terrorism and war if our heart is fixed on God.

- B. Deut 1:28 – People are stronger, taller, cities are larger, there are giants there.

Fear dominates when we see ourselves smaller and weaker than our foe – **IF GOD IS FOR US WHO CAN STAND AGAINST US?**

Verse 29-31 says ²⁹Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. ³⁰The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, ³¹and in the desert. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place."

We see God encouraged them to not be afraid; He encouraged them that He would go before them.

Fear dominates when we believe we are alone. – **GOD GOES BEFORE US**

God's response to them for this fear is found in verses 29-31 where he encourages them not to be

afraid. He would fight for them, He would lead them to places where they should camp, and He would go before them.

Deut 1:32-33 says ³²In spite of this, you did not trust in the LORD your God, ³³who went ahead of you on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out places for you to camp and to show you the way you should go.

II. TRUST GOD – The Lord told the people, “You did not trust me”.

Fear dominates when trust is misplaced in self or strength, and not GOD.

What does it mean to trust? It means to rely. We learn to trust early in life.

Obedience is the response of trusting heart that says, because I believe I will follow your word. I know that your word is true.

When my dad was teaching me to swim, I was young and somewhat afraid. I had to obey dad when he said, “I’ve got you – relax.” I had to obey dad when he said, “Come a little deeper.” He was not going to hurt me, or drown me, he knew that in order to learn to swim, I had to be deep enough that I couldn’t touch bottom, and the water had to be over my head.

So it is with God. There are times we are over our heads, and in a place where we can’t touch bottom so to speak. It is in that place that we learn the lesson of trusting and obeying God and facing our fear.

Babies learn to trust those around them to comfort them and help them and not hurt them. As we grow and mature in life, we all face issues of trust. There are people who struggle with fears all their lives, because early in life their trust was smashed by someone they looked up to who let them down.

Trust is not automatic, it is something earned. It is something that is developed over a period of time. The result is that one becomes confident of a person’s word or response because over time there is consistency, and there is little doubt that the response this time will be different than it was in the past.

If a person of authority in your life has let you down, not followed through, or done something that was hurtful to you, then you may have issues of trust that need to be dealt with.

Has God ever let you down? There are times we look at circumstances or things that happen in our lives that way. Sometimes we look at answered prayer that way. Where was God last week, when terrorists blew themselves up and injured or killed innocent bystanders? He is still there for us. God never lets us down. Look in the word and you will see His track record over several thousand years. God is eternally the same – yesterday, today and forever.

The word for fear or terror comes from a Hebrew word that means the feeling of alarm or dread, or great fear, *pachad*.

In Psalm 91:5, we read “you will not fear the terror of night nor the arrow that flies by day.” Why is this? It’s because the Lord is with us. Over a period of time, we can see that God is trustworthy. We can be confident in His ability, in His power, in His consistency and not doubt that He is ever faithful, ever true, ever present, and ever available.

III. RELY ON HIS UNFAILING LOVE

Fear dominates when love fades.

Romans 8:38-39

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Here we are assured that there is nothing that can separate us from God’s love. That fact should soothe our fears regardless of what happens in this world, around us, in our country, in our community, whether we have peace or war, whether we have high terrorist alerts or not. He is with us and nothing can separate us from His love toward us.

Conclusion:

Job 5:19-26 speaks about the 6 calamities from which God will rescue us.

1. In famine – from death
2. In battle – from the stroke of the sword
3. From the lash of the tongue – from destruction
4. From fear from the beasts of the earth
5. Insecurity of our home or tent – that nothing is missing
6. That we will be childless – children will be many
7. Weakness in old age – come to the grave in vigor

When fearful, remind yourself of these truths.

1. You have ability to stand against fear and control its influence in your life and mind. Do not be afraid – don't loose heart – God is with you.
2. Trust God – learn that He is with us in all situations and learn to show your trust through obedience to Him.
3. God is with us – nothing can interfere with HIS mighty love for us.