



Standing Tall Against the Fear of Disease and Death

August 10, 2003

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Introduction:

We have covered many fears during this series. Today we want to look at standing tall against the fear of disease and death.

The fact and reality is that all of us someday will die, unless Jesus comes back first. Many will die of old age, others will die of sickness.

Listen to what God's word tells us in [Eccles. 3:1-2](#). "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: ²a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot."

There are those among us who have faced the fear of disease, and can testify that even though they may have had some fears, they found that God was especially real to them. There are those who sit here this morning who have walked through the valley of death with a family member, with a close friend, with a neighbor, and even though it is difficult, God was there to give peace, strength, and hope.

There are many reasons why people dread disease and death, but there are powerful truths that enable us to stand tall in the face of these fears. How important it is to know the Great Physician! When walking through the dark valley of death, what truth could come close to what Jesus said in John 11? "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, they will live again." The Bible addresses disease and death and though the passages don't give us all the answers, they certainly provide enough help to calm our fears.

I. Standing tall against the fear of disease

So often we are afraid of disease. There are certain things that we have control over and then there are other things that only God has control of. When it comes to our health, there are things that we should do so we don't end up at risk.

Remember your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We should be taking care of the physical residence of God's Spirit. Don't abuse your body with the idea that if you get sick, you can trust God to heal you.

Too much fat is not good in our diet, too much sugar, too much red meat, too much caffeine. People smoke and drink and then wonder why they get cancer and cirrhoses.

So you have taken care of yourself and you still get sick. How do you stand tall against the fear of disease?

1. We can stand tall against the fear of sickness and disease by understanding that healing is available through Christ the great Physician – by His stripes I am healed.

Isaiah 53:5 – But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed.

Psalm 103:3 – “...who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.”

I hope we come to Christ first when we have pain, or something that we suspect is not right. Give God a chance to work. Then if He chooses not to bring a divine miracle into your life and body, seek medical treatment.

2. We can stand tall against the fear of sickness and disease by obeying the principles of God’s word and showing our trust in God.

There were many diseases that were rampant in the history of God’s people. God communicated this truth to His people that if they would obey His words and the laws He was giving them, that they would not suffer any of the diseases that the people around them suffered. God’s way is always the best way.

Exodus 15:26 – He said, “If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His eyes, if you pay attention to His commands and keep all His decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you.”

3. We can stand tall against the fear of sickness and disease with the understanding that as followers of Christ, we no longer live for ourselves but for Christ.

Paul writes these words in **Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

We understand that our life is now in God’s hands, and it’s not about our comfort, our well being, but about the testimony and witness of His Purpose to those around us.

4. We can stand tall against the fear of disease with the understanding that Jesus is the victory over death and life itself.

We look at the account of Lazarus – Lazarus became sick and died. There was a greater witness to the power of God in Jesus raising Lazarus from death than in healing him from sickness. In the conversation with Lazarus sister, Jesus identifies Himself in this way.

John 11:23-26 - Jesus said to her, “**Your brother will rise again.**” ²⁴Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?**”

II. Standing tall against the fear of death

Ben Franklin said this about death.

“Fear not death; for the sooner we die, the longer shall we be immortal.”

In the movie *Peter Pan*, Captain Hook and Peter Pan discussed how death was the “last great adventure.” For many people, however, death is not an adventure, but a terror. There are a few main reasons why death is so terrifying.

- We are afraid of having our sins judged by an Almighty Holy God.
- We are afraid of the unknown.
- We are afraid of the intense pain and suffering sometimes associated with death.
- We are afraid of leaving loved ones behind or of being left behind.
- We are afraid of not realizing our goals and dreams.

Let’s take a few minutes and look at each of these this morning.

1. We can stand tall against the fear of death because those who follow Christ have peace about the sin issue.

Psalm 103:12 – As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

When we stand before God we will stand there justified. For every sin charged to our account Jesus will answer, “I received the wages for that sin.” The penalty has been paid in full.

Romans 5:1 – Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. We can stand tall against the fear of death because God’s word gives us insight as to what Heaven is like.

The fear of the unknown is a powerful fear and can be overwhelming. Extensive studies have shown that we would rather face a known adversary (even if it is fierce and dangerous) than face an unknown adversary. There is no way of preparing yourself or creating a defense when you don’t know what you are up against.

Death is the greatest unknown of all; nothing else even comes close. Although the Bible has given us a partial description of what lies beyond the vale of death, we have never personally seen or experienced it. None of our acquaintances have died and have come back to tell us about it. It is very easy (even for a believer) to dread this dark vale and be apprehensive about dying. We know that past the experience of the death of the body, scripture talks about a place of peace. There is color in heaven, because in John’s vision all the colors from the spectrum were present around the throne. There are streets of gold; there are trees with fruit for the healing of the nations. There is a crystal river that flows from the throne of God.

Compounding our fear of death is the fact that we have to face it alone. It doesn’t matter how many friends you have or how many people are with you when you die, you must still pass through the vale of death by yourself. This can be very disconcerting. We are social creatures and we don’t like to face intense adversities by ourselves. This is even true for people who are “loners.”

God promises to be with us as we face our most difficult times. He will even be with us when we enter the dark shadows of death and pass into eternity. The believer doesn’t die alone. God said, “I will never leave you or forsake you” (Heb. 13:5, Josh. 1:5). We can either control fear or let it control us. Either we choose to trust God’s promises and reap the rewards or we choose to ignore His promises and suffer the consequences. The choice is up to us.

Death cannot encompass a believer with darkness; it can only cast a shadow on him. Think about it, there cannot be a shadow without a source of light.

Therefore, the existence of the shadow actually proves the existence of the light. Death can only temporarily block the light; it cannot eliminate it. So, when death starts to darken your world, remember that the light it’s trying to block is still waiting for you.

Although God promises to be with the believer in their darkest hours, peace is not automatic. Peace only comes when the believer claims God’s promises. We must *choose*, by the act of our will, to put our trust in Him. If we don’t make this choice, we won’t be able to draw on God’s strength and we are opening ourselves up to be controlled by fear.

When we have loved ones who depend on us for support, nurturing, and financial support, it can be difficult contemplating leaving them behind. We may think of how will my family cope? Who will take my place in the family?

This was not a fear, but Jesus was thinking about this at the last supper, and when He was dying on the cross. He had tried to prepare His disciples for His leaving them. He told them this in John 14:1 – do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

He attempted to give some insight about what was in store for Him and them at the end of this life. After all who better should know the plan of God, and the place of heaven, than Jesus HIMSELF?

3. We can stand tall against the fear of death by being sure that we have taken care of what we are responsible for here.

Even though Jesus was not afraid of leaving His disciples and His mother behind, I’m sure He was thinking, will they be strong enough to stand? Did I cover the basic principles with them about my kingdom? At the cross, remember how He instructed John to care for his mother.

4. We can stand tall against the fear of death by living life fully and completing what we can each day.

The apostle came to the end of this life and wrote these words – I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. I don’t think there is a better way of standing tall against the fear of death. I read into this statement that as he pur-

posed to follow Christ, there was a sense of fulfillment in the fight of faith he engaged in. He persevered in the race that was laid before him, and still maintained his walk of faith. If we fear death, perhaps it is because we have not fulfilled our dreams or goals, or aspirations.

Paul in his letter to the Philippians writes this.

[Philippians 1:21](#) – “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain, but if I am going to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me. And I don’t know which to choose, having the desire to depart and be with God for that is very much better.

Long Life in America

It’s easy to live a long life, at least in America. Look at the statistics: Out of every 100,000 persons, 88,361 reach 50 years of age, more than 70,000 make it to 70, and almost 17,000 get to 85 or more. Staying around a long time, however, should not be our primary goal. Rather, we should be concerned with giving significance and value to all our years and not letting them end in shame and disgrace. How we finish the race depends a great deal on the pace we set along the way. Joseph Wittig remarked that when we write people’s biographies we should start with their death, not their birth. After all, we have nothing to do with the way our life began, but we have a lot to do with the way it ends.

[Our Daily Bread, February 24, 1995](#)

Conclusion:

God does not want us to live our life in fear, but to trust Him, even when it comes to sickness and death. By trusting Him, many of the fears we might otherwise face evaporate and the witness we leave to others is much more powerful.

God wants us to have peace with Him, and if you are afraid of death this morning because you haven’t made peace with Him, and you have assurance of heaven when you die, then this morning is your opportunity to eliminate that fear from your life. Trust God alone for your eternal life.