



# Fear Not

Message for November 2018 - 12

## International Missionary Society Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement

YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Dear Youth:

I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, asking that His blessings, love, and guidance be with you in abundance.

### Fear

Today we have a meditation on a Gospel passage found in the book of Mark: **“As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, ‘Do not be afraid; only believe.’”** Mark 5:36. These words are framed within a very touching story, because the chief of the synagogue, while he was with Jesus, received the terrible news that his daughter had died. Who would not tremble from head to toe if he received this communication?

Since the human being fell into sin, fear was introduced into human nature. Before sin man did not know what fear was; he lived in peace and experienced true happiness, but after he decided to disobey God, he has come to know fear and hides (Genesis 3:10). What a loathsome feeling Adam and his wife must have suffered! What once brought them pleasure and joy, after sinning, now produced terror. If we analyze the text and its context, we will observe that Adam's response to his feeling of fear is caused by his nakedness. It seems a

contradiction, because in chapter two of the same book he says that “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” Genesis 2:25.

There is an explanation for this apparent discrepancy. Before they sinned they were saints, they reflected the image of God, His character, and although they were naked a mantle of glory covered them. After sinning the cloak disappears, because sin makes us like the devil. That is when they see their nakedness and realize that something tremendous has happened; sin has robbed them of their innocence and therefore their intimate communion with God. Sin embitters us, degrades us, and distances us from the Creator. Far from the One who has created us, we can only experience cold, loneliness, lack of love, insecurity, and above all, fear. Remember this, youth, fear is the result of alienation from God. The closer we are to God, the less fear we will experience, to the point that it disappears.

To reinforce this affirmation, we will remember the history of Israel. How much love God lavished on them! However, how little they valued it! They always complained, they always murmured; they did not focus on the blessings received but on what they did not possess. They forgot to thank and recognize God as their supreme benefactor. It is not surprising that they saw difficulties and enemies every step of the way, anguishing their hearts under the pressure of fear. Surely you will remember when a group of people went to inspect the land they had to conquer, upon returning these were their words: “And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, ‘The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like[b] grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.’” Numbers 13:32-33.

This language reflects a deep sense of insecurity, uncertainty, and fear, as seen in the reaction that the people had: “So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.” Numbers 14:1. The disciples of Christ also experienced fear: “But the boat was now [a]in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear.” Matthew 14:24-26. Throughout history, fear has been present in every culture, civilization, and person.

### **True love**

Fear puts Satan in the heart, but only if we leave Him. When we love God above all things and trust in Christ as our personal Savior, why fear? “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18.

If the spies had trusted God and His promises, they would not have hesitated, as was the case with Joshua and Caleb, who were also with them, but

perceived things differently: “If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’ Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them.” Numbers 14:8, 9.

What a wonderful assurance these two men of faith expressed! They had also inspected the land and had contemplated the difficulties, but what problem is so great that God cannot solve it? And they knew it, they had this certainty; they had made experiences with the God of Israel. It was no longer a matter of believing to believe, but a personal experience. Their faith had grown as they collaborated with God. One can only know another as one associates with the other.

Dear youth, it is the same thing in the spiritual realm. The pastor is not the one who will give you more faith, neither your friends, nor your family. They can help you, of course, but genuine faith which lasts, grows, and develops in strength, will only be given by God and no one else. Your faith must be autonomous; it is a matter of personal decision. Remember the case of the Samaritan woman who was by Jacob's well. When she met Christ, she made the decision to accept Him as her personal Savior. She did not wait for others to convince her or give her a “nudge.” There she embraced saving faith and decided that her life would be based, from that moment, in the word of Christ.

If you study other lives you will see that they acted in the same fashion. For example, the apostle Paul, when he met Christ at the Damascus gate, asked: “Lord, what do You want me to do?” And based his life on his personal relationship with Jesus. The community of believers is necessary to share our faith with others and to socialize with those with whom we will go to heaven. It is an instrument for evangelization. Likewise, God gives us gifts to edify the church, but trust in the word of God is something personal. It's like eating, nobody can eat for you; you eat or die of starvation.

Joshua and Caleb are worthy to imitate; they show security in God, confidence, courage, no fear... A child of God rejoices in leaving all in the hands of the One who can do everything. This is the result of having cultivated trust in God. These two great men remained steadfast, and in the conquest of the promised land they showed their unalterable security and courage. Do you relate to the Lord of Joshua and Caleb? Do you know Him? Do you love Him? Do you trust Him?

When we come to know God by our own experience, we learn to trust his word. “If God says it, I believe it and in Him I hope.” This is the position that each one of us should take in life. I invite you to do it youth. The psalmist believed thus: “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.” Psalm 56:3. Our Lord Jesus also teaches us to believe in His word and not to fear: “Let not your heart be troubled...” John 14:1.

## **Conclusion**

We return to the story of the chief of the synagogue. When he receives the sad news of the death of his daughter, his whole world crumbles. But Jesus intervenes and invites him to trust in Him: “Do not be afraid; only believe.” Mark 5:36. The religious man had two options: believe Christ and not fear, or let himself be taken away by despair and fear. From what is understood, Jairus decided to believe and not to fear. Jesus resurrected the girl and restored joy to the hearts of the parents and the rest of the family. What is your decision in front of the difficulties that instill fear?

The resurrection of the daughter of the chief of the synagogue is a supernatural act; an extraordinary miracle, and tells us about the Lord's restoring power; His ability to conquer death. If we lose family and friends on the path of life, God's promise is that whoever believes in Jesus will not be eternally dead (John 11:25, 26). It may be that Jesus does not allow a loved one of ours to descend into the world of silence, but sooner or later this will happen; it is the law of life. However, we have a wonderful promise of resurrection. This should encourage us deeply and dispel fear.

I do not know what will happen in the life of each one of us, dear youth. This world is a valley of pain where Satan's kingdom reigns. Jesus said that in this world we would have affliction, but His message does not end there; He assures us that we must trust Him because He has overcome the evil one and is in a position to give us perfect peace, which does not depend on the external circumstances we live in (John 16:33). Do not be afraid, young person, Christ has the capacity to help you in every situation and emergency. I invite you to make yours the words of the psalmist and that you can meditate on them in the reading meeting: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1. God bless you.

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