

## MESSAGE FOR

19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021.

Terror is a word that is sadly used widely today. Constantly on the news we hear about terrorist bombings in the Middle East and the subsequent promises of a war on terrorism by our own politicians. We are at war and the enemy is terrorism.

God has been at war with terror for a much longer time. To God, terror is not something new. The scriptures tell us that the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking those he might devour. A lion's roar terrorizes a herd of antelope and they flee in confusion. Then the lion will devour the weak stragglers. Terror is a terrible weapon.

Another word for terror is fear. 2 Timothy 1:7 says "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind". Fear has a myriad of faces. Sometimes it comes with a horrific, paralyzing shock. But more usually it appears in more subtle forms like worry or excessive stress or an underlying sense of anxiety and dread.

FEAR was once described to me as False Evidence Appearing Real. Mark Twain said: *My life has been filled with calamities, some of which actually happened.* There seems to be nothing more fictitious than the worry that goes on in our heads. Now there's a study that proves it. Researchers at the University of Cincinnati found that eight-five percent (*yes – 85%*) of what we worry about *never happens*. Moreover, the study found that 79% of us handle the 15% that does happen in ways that surprise us with our ability to turn the situation around. [\[1\]](#)

We laugh at Mark Twain's comment because we can see ourselves in it. But worry is no joke. It causes serious problems. The stress reactions worry excites flood the brain with stress hormones. This makes us prone to disease and emotional problems. Stress hormones also debilitate higher brain function, dampening memory, the capacity to learn and the ability to sustain peak performance. Seniors who worry are twice as likely to develop dementia. Worry is also the threshold to clinical depression.

Do we look into the future with hope and optimism? Or is there a subtle dread of what may happen next? Not just in the world as a whole, but in our individual lives. Are we being robbed of the joy in the present because of a fear of tomorrow? Do worries and anxieties drain our strength and steal our peace?

There is a healthy kind of fear that causes us to jump out of the way of a speeding car and stay alive. But there are many fears that have a negative influence on our lives and render us ineffective.

1 John 4:18 says "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love".

So, how can fear be counteracted by love in our lives? Firstly, to know that almighty God loves us and is seeking our highest good can relieve a lot of fear.

When we hand things over to God instead of spending our time worrying about them we find that our fear is lessened. As our reading from Matthew makes clear, God's love for us is so great and we are valued so

much that God does not want us to fear. The love that God shows us provokes a response of love in our hearts. “We love him because he first loved us. Therefore, instead of just loving ourselves we love God and his love causes us to love others in return.

The basis of fear is self-preservation. There is a healthy attitude towards self-preservation that God gives us. But when we become consumed with self we are vulnerable to all kinds of unhealthy fears. Self-centeredness is a breeding ground for fear. However, when love begins to dominate our thoughts and motives, the opportunity for fear is removed. “Perfect love casts out fear”. Instead of being focused on how events might affect us, we gain a far broader perspective. We become focused on others and how they are being affected and how we can help them. We become focused on God and how we can please him.

Fear cannot survive in an atmosphere of love. When we focus on God instead of what we fear, we are better able to keep things in proper perspective. God is our protector and our refuge.

It is truly amazing what people can fear:-

Porphyrophobia – colour purple.

Chactophobia – Hairy people.

Odontophobia – teeth

Cyberphobia – computers

Ecclesiophobia – Church

Chronetophobia – Money

Europhobia – Colour red

Homilphobia – sermons

Phobophobia Fear of fear (That’s for those who can’t think of anything else to fear.

God does not want us to live under irrational fears like that. God tells us not to fear because he is our reward. He rewards those who diligently seek him.

Fear, for example, that there might not be enough in the days ahead can be a terrible bondage. It can cause people to hold onto things that they ought to give to God. Ultimately, it can cause people to miss out on the blessings that God wants to give them. How many of us don’t use our best crockery because we are afraid it might get damaged?

Hetty Green's stinginess was legendary. She was said never to turn on the heat or use hot water. She wore one old black dress and undergarments that she changed only after they had been worn out, did not wash

her hands and rode in an old carriage. She ate mostly pies that cost fifteen cents. One tale claims that Green spent half a night searching her carriage for a lost stamp worth two cents. Another individual asserts that she instructed her laundress to wash only the dirtiest parts of her dresses (the hems) to save money on soap.

Green conducted much of her business at the offices of the Seaboard National Bank in New York, surrounded by trunks and suitcases full of her papers; she did not want to pay rent for her own office. Later unfounded rumors claimed that she ate only oatmeal, heated on the office radiator.

On July 3, 1916, Hetty Green died at age 81 at her son's New York City home. According to her longstanding "World's Greatest Miser" entry in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, she died of apoplexy after arguing with a maid over the virtues of skimmed milk. *The New York Times* reported she suffered a series of strokes leading up to her death.

Estimates of her net worth ranged from 3 to 4.5 billion dollars, making her arguably the richest woman in the world at the time.

Her fortune was split between her children, one of whom had needed a leg amputated after Hetty had spent far too long trying to find a free clinic to have him treated, so that by the time he did receive medical attention the infection was too advanced. Apparently, they enjoyed her fortune. Whereas she had not enjoyed a penny of it for fear of losing it.

The presence of God is a powerful source of comfort especially in times of trouble. We are not created to stand alone. We were designed to live in communion with both God and others

"I am inwardly fashioned for faith, not for fear. Fear is not my native land; faith is. I am so made that worry and anxiety are sand in the machinery of life; faith is the oil. I live better by faith and confidence than by fear, doubt, and anxiety. In anxiety and worry, my being is gasping for breath--these are not my native air. But in faith and confidence, I breathe freely--these are my native air. A John Hopkins University doctor says, "We do not know why it is that worriers die sooner than the non-worriers, but that is a fact." But I, who am simple of mind, think I know; We are inwardly constructed in nerve and tissue, brain cell and soul, for faith and not for fear. God made us that way. To live by worry is to live against reality."

Dr. E. Stanley Jones, [Transformed by Thorns](#), p. 95.