

Take The Cure for the Coronavirus Fear – Works on Current Pandemics and Future Calamities Too

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Fear is the mind-killer and faith-killer. Faith can conquer fear and avoid a worse outcome. Herewith Psalm 91, God's own antidote.

Over a decade ago I heard a teaching series titled "Pulling the Plug on Fear." I listened to the series several times to get the message drilled deep down into me. I have practiced the Biblical precepts of that teaching on fear for so long it has become my primary nature in life to simply give no place to fear. Fear is no longer a factor for consideration in any matter of my life.



The Bible repeatedly says: fear not

The command to "Fear Not" (in its varying forms) appears in scripture perhaps more often than any other. It's as clear as "thou shalt not steal," or "thou shalt not kill." Therefore, fear is as clearly sin (i.e., error, or missing the mark¹) as to lie or commit adultery. Because it deviates from our maker's design for us.

Why is fear the wrong answer?

Not only is fear a clear violation of a direct command of our king and the laws of his kingdom, but it's one of the most spiritually dangerous activities we can engage in. Fear is a chief tactic of Satan that he uses to bring people into bondage and subject them to torment. (Romans 8:15, Hebrews 2:15, 1 John 4:18.) Faith and fear are direct spiritual opposites that are mutually exclusive. Fear negates faith. Therefore, yielding to fear renders the lives of born-again believers spiritually ineffective. Any Christian endeavor impregnated with fear will be stillborn.

Fear is belief in the power of evil to harm us and expectation of its doing so. Faith is belief in the power and promises of God to deliver us from evil and expectation of His doing so.

When "defense" does not suffice

Thanks to that teaching about pulling the plug on fear, and decades of practicing it, the thought of fearing coronavirus hasn't even been a consideration for me. That's not boasting. That's a testimony as to the effect of a lifestyle of practicing what God says.

However, I was driving down the street one day, a few weeks after the onset of full-blown coronavirus panic pandemic. And it occurred to me that simply not fearing is defensive in nature. I found myself questioning whether there was an offensive course of action that I should also be taking.

The answer...

After hitting the fast-food drive-through window for a breakfast burrito, and the gas station for a cup of coffee (the gas station has stronger coffee), I began to endeavor to describe to God what I thought would be a long and complex question and prayer project of asking what proactive, offensive measures to take. However, before I could finish framing the question, the Lord interrupted me with Psalm 91 playing in my head. I've become highly perceptive of the Holy Spirit's leading, and quick to respond. So He only had to interrupt my prayer two or three times before I caught on. And I realized He was giving me the answer.

Psalm 91: the Divine antidote to fear

Praying Psalm 91 is the offensive measure to take against coronavirus and the fear it's engendering. For that matter, it's an effective weapon against any pandemic or general calamity coming on the world around us. Of course, any and every promise of God's word can act as an offensive weapon. See Ephesians 6:17 which calls the word of God, "the sword of the Spirit." But for the present matter, the Lord directed me to Psalm 91.

What Psalm 91 can do

When Jairus received the news that his daughter was dead, Jesus told him to "Fear not: believe only" (Luke 8:50). In every peril of life, the goal is to first avert the impending disaster, then overcome it and achieve victory. God is telling us that the way to not be destroyed, but to overcome, is to:

1. First say "No" to fear ("fear not") and its expectation of evil, then
2. Say "Yes" to faith ("believe only") and its expectation of good through God and the promises of His word.

So, we're not just looking for ways to not fear, but also to activate faith as our offensive weapon. Being a collection of some of the most potent promises of God's deliverance, Psalm 91 fits that bill. Let's do a close reading of the text and consider its conditions and provisions.

Psalm 91 (KJV)

Verse 1

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

Notice that this psalm, from the first verse, is about one who “dwells” (“to live as a resident”) in the secret place of the Most High. The provisions of deliverance in the following passages are not for the *drive-by Christian* who gives the occasional *nod-to-God*. These provisions are the heritage of those who make the secret place of the Most High their permanent address.

About secret places and shadows

- The “secret place” is an intimate place of personal fellowship, like when a bride locks herself away in her husband’s private chamber, closes herself off to the outside world, and gives herself completely to the one to whom she belongs in a relationship that is secluded from, or a secret to, the outside world. For the believer, this is a spiritual place of worshipful devotion to our Lord and reliance by faith upon his every promise of supernatural protection and provision.
- To “abide under the shadow” of the Almighty means remaining so close that His shadow is continually cast over us. While a parent may love all their children equally, the child who stays close enough to be under the parent’s shadow is more likely to experience consistent rescue from trouble than the one who keeps wandering off down the block, around the corner, and out onto the highway.

Verse 2: a refuge and a fortress

“I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”

The protections of this Psalm are not for the haphazard or timid believer just waiting around to see what God might do. These provisions are for the determined believer of bold faith. Such a one exercises their will to audibly proclaim the LORD as their refuge and fortress. Will works here both to trust and to speak according to that trust.

Many images

There is a lot of imagery at work in this Psalm, and in the word of God in general. These images correlate to spirit realm realities. Such things really exist in the spirit realm and have natural realm equivalents that correspond. So, ponder the imagery and picture yourself inside the spirit realm places of refuge and protection that God provides you. The spirit realm is the master realm. We, by faith, take our place inside the spirit realm provisions afforded us in Christ. Then the natural realm has to comply and act accordingly. Because faith gives substance to the things we confidently expect through the promises of God's word (Hebrews 11:1).

Verse 3: deliverance from sources of fear

"Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence."

- "Surely" and "shall" - a double absolute positive. There are no two ways about it.
- A bird is meant to fly aloft, not be bound down to the earth. Satan, the fowler, seeks to snare us in traps that bind us down to the earth, to the natural realm. (And to those things that mere mortal flesh can do.) God wants to deliver us from those snares, loose us to reach up to heaven, and take hold of the powers of heaven and the things that only He can do.
- Some translations replace the rather archaic "noisome pestilence" with "deadly disease."

Verse 4: armor against fear

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler."

- This again speaks to the closeness of our walk with the Lord. We trust in Him from a position of being so close that He need only stretch out his wings and we will be covered.
- The New Living Translation renders the latter part of this verse "His faithful promises are your armor and protection." One thing about armor is you have to put it on for it to do any good. We have to wear the armor of God's promises by faith every day. We do not just go look for our armor out in the garage when we're in trouble.

Verses 5-7: a command

5 "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;

6 *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday."

This is not only an authorization to go free from fear, but it is a command to *not be afraid*. Claiming the Lord as our refuge and fortress (verse 2) won't do much good if we let ourselves get frightened by the enemy's arrows, break cover and run for it, thus leaving our place of protection.

7 "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand. *But* it shall not come nigh thee.

Verses 8-10

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Not only do we not have to be among those who fall, but we can dwell so deep inside that secret place of trust and protection of the Most High that the arrows of the enemy don't even set off our proximity sensors. Only our eyes will see what's going on in the outside world. But none of the other physical senses experience "the reward of the wicked."

9 Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

Once again, the provision of no evil befalling us in verse 10 depends on verse 9. We make our willful choice to "make" the LORD our "habitation," or place of habitual dwelling.

Verses 11-14

11 "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.²

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known my name."

The condition: repose your trust and you have no ground for fear

Verses 11 through 13 are quite exciting, but once again there's a condition. Verse 14 tells us that this deliverance is happening "Because" we've set our love on the Lord. Love is more than an emotion. Love is the value we place on a person or thing. This kind of love begins at the point of valuing and treasuring the Lord. And it requires full devotion and faithful allegiance to Him above all else. (Think pearl of great price, Matthew 13:46.)

God wants to put us on high, not down low

The latter half of verse 14 tells us that it is God's will to set us on high, not leaving us down in the dumps. However, it will happen "because" we have "known His name." This isn't about being able to spell the word "God." This is about intimate, personal, knowing, and experiencing of His character, nature, virtue, integrity, honor, goodness, and glory. All these are in His name (a name identifies a person and all that they are). You cannot fully "know His name" and have room for anything but full faith and devotion.

Verses 15-16

15 "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him. I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

There is no promise of avoiding times of trouble (verse 15). But we have assurance that the Lord will be with us in the midst of whatever trouble comes. Furthermore, He won't leave us there, but will deliver us out of it. And not just barely, but with a deliverance that bestows honor upon us and saves us with a tangible salvation. (Verse 16).

An overview

We should rejoice over the wonderful provisions promised in this psalm, and of course, to let those promises stir our faith. But the real power, and key, is in living the Psalm 91 lifestyle. That lifestyle means setting our love upon the Lord and giving Him our full allegiance. It means seeking and abiding in His presence in the secret place. And it means letting the knowledge of His name bring faith alive. Then we can shout aloud in the face of every circumstance:

| The LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Fear is Here

There is a cure for the coronavirus itself. We may find that cure in faith in God, His power, and His promises to save, deliver, and heal.

However, the greatest threat facing America, the church, and believers individually is not the virus but the fear surrounding it. That produces panic purchasing, toilet paper shortages, quarantining people who aren't even sick, closing businesses, closing churches, and closing economies. All of these are the product of fear, not faith.

Americans have almost uniformly acquiesced to the forfeiture of God-given rights and fundamental liberties once held inviolable. The church has curtailed worship and the assembling of ourselves together. The pursuit of happiness through meaningful employment and productivity was snatched away from millions overnight. Faith doesn't motivate people to forfeit liberty, but fear does bring into bondage.

I once wondered how an antichrist figure could ever get people to submit to his rule and accept his mark.³ But I watch people's reactions, including those of many professing Christians, to a virus now rebranded a pandemic. Bill Gates proposes global vaccination and digital branding of the world's population to prove who's safe to be let out of their house. Now I can see how Satan's tool of fear could be used to bring the whole planet under bondage.

America, and most of the church, treat the six o'clock news as more real than the word of God. If that's not so, then why aren't we out there boldly living like Psalm 91 is true? Why not treat the arrows of virus flying around us as of no consequence to us because *the Lord is our refuge and fortress*?

Where bondage begins

Bondage begins where expectation in the power of evil to harm us outweighs trust in the faithfulness of God to deliver us.

America and the church show more symptoms of the spiritually deadly disease of fear than that of a mere virus. But there is a cure.

The Cure for the Fear

The cure for the pandemic of fear is to:

1. Silence the voices feeding it, and then
2. Feed and activate faith until it flushes out the fear and there's no place left for it.

Romans 10:17 tells us that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Not surprisingly, fear comes the same way, by hearing, and by hearing how big and bad the dreaded evil is that's going to huff, and puff, and blow your house down.

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Luke 21:26 tells us that men's hearts can fail them for fear and for

| looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

But Isaiah 26:3 tells us that the Lord will

| keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.

To what will we constantly listen?

What we hear, or look after, or keep our minds stayed on absolutely does matter. For it determines whether our heart, our inner man, will:

- Conceive faith or fear;
- Trust in God to deliver us or believe in the power of evil to harm us,
- Crumble under the weight of fear for things coming on the world around us or stay in perfect peace.

Are we serious about following Jesus' admonition to "Fear not: believe only"? Will we thereby both:

- Avert the peril confronting us by not fearing it, then
- Obtaining God's deliverance and victory over the peril by only believing His report?

Then we must be extremely vigilant in guarding ourselves against voices that feed fear.

Intentional or not, the excessive coverage feeds fear

I'm not necessarily saying the six o'clock news or anyone else is purposely trying to make us afraid. But I am saying that their *all pandemic all the time* coverage is inundating our senses with awareness of the illness and its power to harm us. Simply hearing the word "coronavirus," or "COVID-19," or seeing that super-magnified image of a virus on our TV screen that looks like it's six feet tall and it's coming after us – all of that feeds fear, even if only subtly. It's like dropping one grain of sand at a time into a pipe. Eventually your whole faith pipe clogs with fear. Then you wonder why you're having trouble trusting God.

So tune it out!

I mean really, how often must you hear about a virus to know what it is and how it spreads? Don't you know already why shouldn't walk around Walmart kissing strangers on the mouth? Everything beyond that basic knowledge is just reinforcing and feeding fear.

If I were you, I would do what I did over a decade ago:

- Put down the newspaper (did that in the 90s),
- Turn off the TV news (secular humanist worldview and feeding fear),
- Tune out the talk radio (political fear-mongering), and
- Be very selective about what little social media you allow yourself to look at while staying in touch with friends (most of whom are caught up in fear).

The virus will not kill everyone

We already know from God's word that the Coronavirus is not going to kill everyone. There will still be people here when Jesus returns. We also know that until Jesus returns there will continue to be plagues, wars, and calamities. Plus everything else the six o'clock news has ever told us to fear. And there will always be another election around the corner. At that time your favorite party's political pundits will be telling you to fear the other party. The pundits will say if they get in, "we'll all die." But we haven't, and we won't. And if we do, I'd rather die trusting God than cowering in a corner paralyzed with fear.

An imperative

We must begin to practice the Psalm 91 lifestyle now. And we must continue in it until the next calamity that comes on the world around us. Else it will catch us unprepared once again and take us in the grip of fear and its torment. This in turn will drive us to even greater bondage in the future.

So, if you haven't already done so, commit to living a Psalm 91 lifestyle now. And pursue adherence to its conditions and faith for all its provisions.

Then, turn off the TV and silence the voices of fear. Pick up a Bible and feed your faith with the word until God starts to look bigger than the problem. Then, pray Psalm 91 as an aggressive offensive attack against Satan and his tactic of fear. Do this all as though your life depends on it – because it does.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

(Proverbs 4:23)

A simpler version of the cure for the fear

For those not acquainted with the idea of personalizing and praying a passage of scripture, here's a sample for praying Psalm 91. God doesn't intend His word to be a one-way conversation. He intends for us to:

- Believe His words,

- Receive them as being for us in Christ,
- Apply them to ourselves and our situations, then
- Speak them back to Him in prayer and faith,

believing His word will not return to Him void but will accomplish what He pleases and prosper in what He sent it to do (Isaiah 55:11).

Psalm 91 Prayer

(Based mostly on NKJV)

1 I dwell in the secret place of the Most High by faith. And I Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of you LORD, you are my refuge, you are my fortress. You are My God and in you, I will trust.

3 Surely, You shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler, and from the deadly disease. (NLT)

4 You shall cover me with your feathers, and under Your wings I shall take refuge. Your faithful promises are my armor and protection. (NLT)

5 As a soldier in your army oh Lord, I choose to obey your direct command to "Fear Not," therefore, I shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,

6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.

Continues...

7 A thousand may fall at my side, And ten thousand at my right hand. But it shall not come near me.

8 Only with my eyes shall I look, And see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because I have made you oh LORD, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, my dwelling place,

10 No evil shall befall me, Nor shall any plague come near my dwelling;

11 For You shall give Your angels charge over me, To keep me in all my ways of obedience and service to You. (AMP)

12 In their hands, they shall bear me up, Lest I so much as dash my foot against a stone.

13 I shall tread upon the lion and the cobra at your command. The young lion and the serpent I shall trample underfoot.

The last condition

14 Because I have set my love, all value, treasuring, and full allegiance upon you oh Lord. Therefore You will deliver me. You will set me on high because I have known and trusted in the honor and integrity of Your name.

15 I shall call upon you, and you will answer me. You will be with me in trouble; You will deliver me and honor me.

16 With long life you will satisfy me, and show me all of Your wonderful, marvelous, glorious salvation.

Editor's Notes

1 Greek *hamartia* a missing of the mark in target practice.

2 Satan twists these two verses to try to persuade Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the Temple. (Matthew 4:5-7; Luke 4:9-12.)

3 i.e., the cattle-brand-like stamp (Greek *charagma*) without which "none may buy nor sell." (Revelation 13:16-18)

An image of fear

This image is, of course, Edvard Munch's famous *Scream*, from 1893.