

THAT NAMELESS, UNREASONING, UNJUSTIFIED TERROR

In an era of great distress, President Franklin Roosevelt offered our nation some wise words of comfort. His sentiments were never more needed than now.

What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of rejection; of not being loved? Are you afraid that change would bring about new failures? Would another personal defeat be unbearable? If it's the present you fear, or the future, you're not alone. You have lots of company—every man and woman on earth.

Justifiable fear guards against recklessness. But that “nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance” - that is something we ought to fear.

The American people elected Franklin D. Roosevelt to the nation's highest office in a time known as the Great Depression. When President Roosevelt delivered his first inaugural address, his rhetoric became one of the most recognized speeches in American history. He opened his address by saying:

“I am certain that my fellow Americans expect on my induction into the presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our people impel.

This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

Everyone fears the unknown, but those who act in spite of their fears muster the courage to “convert retreat to advance.”

Fear huts the family. Fear paralyzes the church. Fear and happiness don't mix. Fear and success are incompatible. When fear dominates one's perspective, a person refuses to initiate the steps that will lead to better days and prosperity. Solomon encouraged:

“Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes; fear Jehovah, and depart from evil: I will be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honor Jehovah with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy vats shall overflow with new wine” (Proverbs 3:5-10).

Some people avoid risks, fearing the unknown. They like the “safe place” Even if the “safe place” is misery, they prefer it because it's familiar.

Fearful people are selfish. Avoiding personal growth “risks,” they remain in their misery—it's what's “good” for them. So what, if there is a spouse and children who are dependent on them? What if there is a congregation who could use their involvement. They are entitled to their pity—other people should try to understand them!

Is happiness the prize possession of the “lucky” - those who haven't suffered reversals? Or can anyone tap into the power to be happy and successful Christian husbands, fathers, wives, mothers, and involved Christians?

Against Solomon wrote: *“Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh; for the youth and the dawn of life are vanity”* (Ecclesiastes 11:10).

Appealing to our practicality, Solomon reasons with us, affirming we can remove sorrow. We won't be in the prime of our lives very long. Happiness only becomes more difficult.

So live a good life—today. See the good things in your life. See God's gifts all around you. Your children won't wait for you to get happy; they will continue to have birthdays as you pout, and in their twenties and thirties, they'll be trying to figure it all out.

Get up in the morning. Have a glass of orange juice. Visit with your children before work and school. Start the day with a good memory and build on the opportunity

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...” (Amos 7:8)

SIGNS ON THE ROAD OF LIFE

Text: _____

I. _____ - _____

Notes:

II. _____ - _____

Notes:

III. _____ - _____

Notes:

IV. _____ - _____

Notes:

SATAN’S DART HITS HOME

Satan attacked a Christian. First, he shot a poisonous dart at the Christian’s heel; but the Christian was unharmed because he has his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Satan’s next attempt was at his loins; but the Christian repelled this because he had his loins girt about with truth. Unsuccessfully, the Devil tried a shot at his breast; but there was the breastplate of righteousness. The Christian knocked away another dart with the shield of faith and his helmet repelled another. But the Devil, not discouraged, slipped around behind the Christian and shot him in the pocketbook, and killed him dead as a hammer!

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (II Corinthians 9:7).

that you have the gift of life—another day. Love your wife. Love your husband. Live for Jesus. Involve yourself in the Lord’s church. So what are you afraid of?
-Jason Jackson

CHILDREN IN CHURCH

- Three year old, Reese: “Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is his name. Amen.”
- A little boy was overheard praying: “Lord, if you can’t make me a better boy, don’t worry about it. I’m having a real good time like I am.”
- A Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted, “Thou shalt not take covers off the neighbor’s wife.”
- Jason sobbed in the back seat all the way home. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, he replied, “That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys.”
- I had been teaching my three year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord’s Prayer for several evenings at bedtime. She would repeat the lines of the prayer after me. Finally, she decided to go solo. I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word right up to the end of the pray. “Lead us not into temptation,” she prayed, “but deliver us some email. Amen.”
- One four year old prayed, “And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets.”
- A Sunday school teacher asked her children, as they were one the way to church service, “And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?” One bright girl replied, “Because people are sleeping.”
- Six year old Angie and her four year old brother Joel were sitting together. Joel giggled, sang, and talked. Finally, big sister had had enough. “You’re not supposed to talk in church.” “Why? Who’s going to stop me?” Joel asked. Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, “See those two men standing by the door? They’re hushers.”
- A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. They began to argue over who got the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. “If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, ‘Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.’” Kevin turned to his youngest brother and said, “Ryan, you play the part of Jesus!”
- A father was at the beach with his children when the four year old son ran up to him, grabbed hi hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. “Daddy, what happened to him?” the boy asked. “He died and went to Heaven,” replied the Dad. The boy thought a moment and then said, “Did God throw him back down?”

PRAYER POINTERS

Prayer can be and should be a daily ritual for every child of God. It is one means by which man can keep his lines of communication with God open (the other being Bible study), and one means by which man can derive strength and encouragement for the life he faces ahead. But while many and most know the fundamental “how, what, why, and when?” of prayer, many still view prayer from the outside and never understand the practicality and personality of prayer. Thus, look at some Biblical pointers as to how a New Testament Christian can approach prayer, and hopefully allow prayer to be seen in a new light.

First, make prayer thoughtful. Obviously prayer is sometimes a “spur of the moment” action, but there should be certain times during the day at which prayer is planned and expected. Those occasions might be immediately after waking up, before each meal, before departing the house for the day, just before going to bed, or a variety of other times. Whether prayer is spurious or planned, thought should be put into what is being said. Now, do not confuse being thoughtful with scripting prayer with what Christ referred to as “*vain repetitions*” (Matthew 6:7). God, through Paul, gave suggestions as to those things upon which man may think and express gratitude to Him for providing. “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*” (Philippians 4:8). Anything that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report comes from God and we should be thankful for them. If we were to address any powerful figure in the world, we would likely put thought into what we would say when meeting them. Should God receive anything less?

Second, make prayer personal. Just because prayer should be thoughtful does not mean that prayer cannot or should not be personal. Throughout the Bible are provided examples of people who would literally pour their hearts out in prayer unto God knowing that it was only upon Him they could rely. One need not read too far into the book of Psalms, especially, before they see it to be a reality. Psalms 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, etc. all are examples of occasions on which the Psalmist, David or other, literally laid it all out. Christ, Himself, multiple times in recorded prayers poured His heart out unto the Father, none more perhaps than in the Garden. In Luke 22:41-44, the physician poignantly illustrates the degree of anguish Christ felt and expressed in His prayer to His father:

“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

Perhaps prayer had never been and never will be more personal. There are times in our lives in which we need to and can pour our hearts out unto God relying upon Him and Him alone for strength. That is His promise and that is our hope.

Third, make prayer effectual. James 5:16 is perhaps one of the most, if not the most, quoted verse from the Bible as pertaining to prayer. “*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*” Prayer, then should be effectual and fervent, but what does that mean. The word translated “effectual fervent” is literally defined by Strong’s as “to be active, efficient.” To make prayer effectual then means we should have active prayer lives. Sadly, too many view prayer as a chore, and thus lead inactive, lazy, lackadaisical lives of prayer—and then often wonder why their prayers might not be answered according to their desire. If we want prayer to avail much as James says it can, we must effectually and fervently, be leading active lives of prayer. Ultimately it comes down to Paul’s words of I Thessalonians 5:17—“*Pray without ceasing.*” Prayer can be and is a powerful tool in the life of a child of God, thus DON’T GIVE UP!!!

Like most other parts of our lives, we should desire our prayer lives to grow and thrive. It is our greatest opportunity this side of heaven to commune with God. Thus in the words of the Hebrews writer, “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*”

-Andy Brewer