

Thought of Week – Are Your Eyes Open? (Week: 20180423)  
By Jim Fannin

2 Kings 6:15-17

*15 Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" 16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*

Although we may not realize it, fear must be more of an issue in our lives than we think, or are willing to admit. Before you dismiss the idea, consider this. Scripture mentions "fear," and its synonym "afraid," combined more than 540 times. By comparison, the word "hell," in all its derivative forms, appears less than 25 times and the word "redeem or redeemer," in all its various forms, appears about 100 times. The terms, hell and redeem(er) describe significant, essential theological concepts of Christianity. Yet fear is mentioned more than 540 times, which is 5 to 20 times more often! Apparently, God thinks, or should I say, "knows," that fear affects us more and, in more ways than we know or admit.

As a side note, it is well documented that fear activates physical, and psychological responses in our bodies which can adversely affect us in multiple ways. \*\*

Returning to the verses above, we know that servants were often responsible for much more than just menial tasks. Servants were often in charge of all their master's affairs and property, including security and often, for the master himself. Knowing this, the fact the servant expressed he was overwhelmed, is significant. Further, that he then asked Elisha what to do, indicated he was so impaired by fear he could not even begin to formulate an escape or defense.

In a similar circumstance, we might react like Elisha's servant ... with an expression of being overwhelmed and the inability to even think. Of course, not everyone reacts this way to fear. Reactions can range from general anxiety about a nonspecific threat, to such things as very visceral, physical and mental symptoms, including muscular paralysis in perceived high fear circumstances.

Sometimes our reaction may be a learned reflex that allows us to cope with lesser threats rather than acting on our natural desire to escape. In perceived high threat circumstances, we may panic or exhibit significant physical symptoms.

Studies show that even low-level fear over a very long term can eventually alter our behavior. In some circumstances, we may have simple reactions such as

avoidance behavior, while in other instances we might develop more severe, life altering conditions.

Clearly, fear has the potential to affect all areas of our life, including our relationship to God. With that in mind, ask yourself, what fear do you have in your life? Is it a fear of failure, a fear that you are unworthy to serve, or are not up to the job?

Perhaps you fear commitments or finances, a family issue, dealing with a staff issue, or church member issue? Maybe you fear that your job is not secure, or that God may be leading you in a direction you are not comfortable with. Fear can appear suddenly as with Elisha's servant, or it may creep in quietly until one day we wake up, and find it surrounding us.

Is an undiagnosed fear in your life hindering your relationship with the Holy Spirit and robbing you of the Spirit's full power and joy? We must be willing to examine every area of our life for any fear that may be hindering the Holy Spirit in our life.

Although tempting, we must not ignore any fear in our life. Unresolved, it can disrupt our physical, mental and spiritual health. On the other hand, as Elisha demonstrates, **fear flees in the face of knowledge**. So we must arm ourselves with the knowledge of God's word and His watch care over us.

As we see in the verses above, **knowledge** not only dispels but can prevent fear. Elisha was not afraid because **he**

**possessed knowledge the servant did not have.** Elisha knew that an army of God's angels was protecting them, and they were more powerful than the Assyrian army.

Once we identify our fears and we arm ourselves with faith and the knowledge of God's word, we should face our fears and remember these words of Hezekiah:

*2 Chronicles 32:7-8*, Hezekiah says to his people,

*“Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.”*

Hezekiah's words remind us that our fear is a spiritual battle and we need to ask God to open our eyes as Elisha did his servants. Our eyes are opened by Holy Spirit through the knowledge of God's word, and faith that He is true to His promises.

Each day this week, evaluate an area of your life. Humbly with awe and reverence, ask God to open your eyes, to endow you through the Holy Spirit, with knowledge from His word. Then face your fear and release the full power of the Holy Spirit and let the joy of salvation fill your life.

\*\* You can read more about the nature of fear and how our bodies and minds respond in this article by Dr. Thierry Steimer,

PhD., at **US National Library of Medicine for the National Institutes of Health** at this link:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3181681/>