



Trusting God When Afraid

By Wayne S. Walker

“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You” (Psalm 56:3). Jesus told us, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). The fact is that “God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7). Indeed, as John reminds us, “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” (I John 4:18). In other words, there is really nothing in this life of which the child of God needs to be afraid.

While the Christian knows these things to be true, fear is still a natural human emotion to certain situations. When we are threatened with danger, when economic conditions point to a possible loss of job, when we are stricken with a serious illness, or when other problems arise which might disrupt our normal lives, we are likely to become afraid. What makes us most fearful about all such situations is that we simply do not know what the future holds. As long as things are going reasonably well, we usually assume that they will continue to do so and are not fearful. However, difficulties cause us more to look to the future and

remind us that we do not know what will happen, so we feel afraid.

It is certainly true that “you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (James 4:14). John Henry Newman noted, “I was not ever thus, nor ever asked that Thou Shouldst lead me on; I loved to choose and see my path; but now Lead Thou me on.” When events occur that darken the way so that I cannot “choose and see my path,” I tend to become somewhat frightened. That is why Jesus teaches me, “Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:34).

The Psalmist knew that times would arise when he would be afraid. However, his determination was that in such times he would trust the Lord. In fact, he went on to say, “In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust: I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” (v.4). The Hebrew writer quotes this statement to remind us that we need to trust God whenever we are afraid. “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5-6).