

FEARFUL VS. FEARLESS

Many of our phobias turn out to be no threat in reality because the “enemy” wants us to be fearful rather than trusting in God. Many of us also have legitimate fears of wars or *crazy climactic climate crises*. These days it seems that there is more political fear being stoked by both parties than I have ever witnessed in my life.

There is a fear one candidate is too old . . . and the fear the other candidate is too old. There is a fear that if one side wins, freedom will be gone . . . and if the other side wins, well, freedom will be gone. Fear of voter fraud . . . and fear of voter suppression. Fear that dead people will vote . . . and fear that people will say dead people voted when they really didn't because . . . they're dead! Or maybe if one side wins, Christianity will be gone . . . or if the other side wins, democracy will be gone. Fear that election results will lead to gun rights being taken away . . . and fear they will lead to more gun violence, mass shootings, and loved ones dying. Fear that people will believe lies, conspiracy theories, and disinformation without fact-checking to know the truth. *Fear of AI* because . . . well, I think we learned our lesson from *Artificial Sweeteners*. But on the other hand, AI (*Artificial Idiocy*) could actually make us feel better to compensate for *Real Human Idiocy*. It has been a biblical fear since OT days when they fought against an entire *city of AI* (Joshua 8).

There is a great fear-filled divide being formed by politicians to attempt to get you to vote for their party. There is the fear of being replaced or marginalized, and fears of political violence by sore losers not accepting results of the election or that our country is being taken over by communists, or socialists, or devil-worshipping pedophiles. To quote Tim Alberta: *“I detected one common feeling that binds together this deeply fractured nation: fear. Fear of violence. Fear for their livelihoods. Fear of far-left socialism or far-right authoritarianism. Fear that our best days are behind us. Fear that America is no longer capable of conquering its great challenges. Above all, fear that we are too alienated, too angry with each other, too fundamentally misunderstood by the other half of society to ever truly heal.”*

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7

Let me remind you that the most often repeated command in the Bible is “*Fear not!*” Why? Because God is greater than our fears and greater than anything a perceived opponent can do to us. We must remember that our battle is spiritual, and not with flesh and blood, which means we need to stop attacking or vilifying or being fearful of the “other side” (Eph. 6:12). 1 John 4:18 reminds us that “*Perfect love casts out fear.*” So we are called to be focused on loving others and not “owning” them or defeating them. I encourage those of us who follow Jesus Christ to TRUST God rather than our fears.

“How joyful are those who fear the Lord and delight in obeying his commands. Those who are righteous do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the Lord to care for them. They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly.” (Psalm 112:1, 6-8)

Peace is found NOT by changing our circumstances or distancing ourselves from trouble, but rather by drawing closer to Jesus.

C.S. LEWIS cleverly wrote the 31 *SCREWTAPE LETTERS* from the senior demon to advise his nephew, Wormwood, how to tempt humans to turn against The Enemy (who in their eyes is God). A few excerpts are crucial for us today in America. “*Let him begin by treating Patriotism as a part of his religion. Then let him, under the influence of partisan spirit, come to regard it as the most important part. All extremes, except extreme devotion to the Enemy, are to be encouraged.*” As Lewis warned and alluded to in his classic book, American nationalism has become an idol to some.