

## Does the Devil Have You Scared?

Scripture Text: Hebrews 2:9–18

### Introduction

Does the Devil have you scared? Are you afraid of something? There are many fears people have. For instance, many couples fear bringing a baby into the world and how to raise a child. Parents fear what may happen to their children or grandchildren in such a dangerous world. Many fear whether they will get a job or keep the job they have. Some fear how to provide for their families or how to make ends meet. Others fear how to get out debt or how to pay their taxes. Many of you fear what is going to happen to our nation. Some of you fear what is going to happen to a friend or family member who is struggling with some terrible illness. All of us I believe have one common fear, though. We all fear death, or we will at some point, when we perceive it getting closer. We seem to live in a state of fear. None of us want to fear these things, but we seem naturally drawn to them. If you were to boil all our fears into one thing, though, it would most likely be a fear of the unknown. We do not know the future and that scares us.

Easter is a time that should give us great comfort. Good Friday is a day to remember the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross for us, but Easter is a time to remember that a lot can happen in just a few days. But even on the first Easter morning, there was fear. There was much joy on that day, but there was also much fear. If you recall, there was a great earthquake. There was a terrifying angel who rolled back the stone that was in front of Jesus' tomb. The guards who were watching the tomb through the night were so afraid that they became like dead men. The women who came to the tomb early that morning were also afraid. After the angel told them the of Jesus' resurrection, they ran from the tomb with both fear and great joy. Even Jesus met them on the way and had to tell them, "Do not be afraid." In the midst of the most glorious event in human history, they were captives to fear, as we are. Fear comes natural. But the good news of the resurrection, is that it gives us courage, freedom, and hope to conquer our fears.

### The Resurrection Gives Courage in Suffering

Do you ever wonder if anyone else knows what you are going through? One of the most comforting things to know about God is that He knows. God is not the "man upstairs" who is aloof and knows nothing about humanity. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, in the form of human flesh to experience what it means to be human. Jesus knows what it is like to stub your toe. He knows what it is like to get sick. He knows what it is like to be rejected. He also knows what it is like to experience pain and suffering. Look at verses nine and ten of this passage.

**Hebrews 2:9–10** <sup>9</sup> But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. <sup>10</sup> For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

God sent His one and only Son to earth in order to suffer and die just like the rest of us. Jesus put aside the joys of Heaven to experience the pain and suffering of humanity. Jesus knows your fears. He knows your sufferings. He knows what you are going through. When He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was crucified, He feared the suffering that was about to happen. He feared the separation from His Heavenly Father. He prayed that the cup of God's wrath would be removed from Him but He also said, "Not my will, but yours be done, Father." Jesus knows suffering and He knows what you are suffering. The good news of the Gospel is that the resurrection gives courage in the midst of suffering. The resurrection means a better day is on the way. Suffering was on Friday, but thanks be to God, the joy of Sunday was coming. When Jesus rose on that first Easter morning, He proved that suffering was not the end of the road. He proved that there is a far better thing that will happen than anything we suffer in this life. So, whatever you are going through, just know it does not compare to the glorious riches that await you when you are resurrected to new life in Jesus Christ.

### **The Resurrection Frees Us From Condemnation**

Another fear that many have is being condemned. Students do not want to be put in detention or to go to the principal's office. Most people do not want to go to jail. No one wants to go to hell. We all want to escape condemnation and live forever in heaven. The bad news is that we are all sinners separated from a holy God. What that means is that we have all rejected God and what God has told us to do. We have all "played god" and have done what we want. That is sin and the punishment for sin is eternal separation from God. That is the bad news. But the good news is that through the resurrection, we can be forgiven of our sins and be "at one" with God. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can have fellowship with Him. Look at the following verses.

**Hebrews 2:16–17** <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

These verses tell us a couple of things. One is that God did not send His one and only Son to help the angels. He sent Jesus to help mankind. That means you are special. You are made in the image of God. Did you know that there is great joy in heaven over one person who turns to God? (Luke 15:7) God wants to save you. Secondly, Jesus became human just like you, so that He could suffer God's wrath on the cross in your place. He did that so that you would not have to suffer that punishment. Prisoners are condemned to prison. They are in bondage until they have served their sentence. Those who are found guilty of capital crimes, are sentenced to death and will wait in prison, in bondage, under fear, until the day of their execution. Sinners are eternally condemned. As a result of the resurrection, those who place their trust in Jesus Christ will not be condemned. Those who confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead are set free from the guilt of sin. Jesus Christ came to set the prisoners of sin free so that they would no longer be condemned. If you accept Him, you will be forgiven and you will not be condemned. You do not need to fear condemnation any longer.

## The Resurrection Destroys The Power of Death

The greatest fear that we all have is death. Each one of us fears it. We love our lives. Unless you are an absolute thrill seeker or have a death wish, you will hold on to your life as hard as you can. If someone points a gun at you, you will get out of the way. If your spouse is driving recklessly, you will pray. If you have a serious illness, you will seek medical help. We fear death and will avoid it at all costs. Death, however, is that enemy to us all that will eventually claim our lives. As time moves on we will all sense the presence of death moving closer and closer to us until the day it knocks on our door. It is like Captain Hook in Peter Pan who feared the tick tock of the clock that warned him of that dreaded crocodile that ate his hand. Hook feared that crocodile, and death is like that crocodile to us, with its sharp teeth ready to devour us. The tick tock is a reminder that time moves on and death gets closer and closer every day. But, the resurrection proves that death is not the end of the story. Look at verses fourteen and fifteen.

**Hebrews 2:14–15** <sup>14</sup> *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,* <sup>15</sup> *and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

The resurrection proves that death could not hold Jesus Christ. The Jews and the Romans thought they had gotten rid of Jesus by killing Him. They thought they had put an end to this troublemaker. Jesus showed that you cannot keep the Son of God down. He may have died on Friday, but on that first Easter morning, He walked out of the tomb alive and very well. But many may think, “So what that Jesus rose from the grave. What does that mean for me?” Can Jesus’ resurrection do anything for you? Yes! Since the beginning of time, man has lived in a fear of death. From the moment we are born into this world, we begin to slowly walk down the road to death. Each of us will face this fate. Satan, however, has hung over our heads this fear of dying since Adam and Eve lived on this earth. Jesus said Satan was a murderer from the beginning. (John 8:44) Satan seduced our first parents to rebel against God and consequently brought sin, suffering, and death on us all. We have been in bondage to the fear of death ever since.

So, does the Devil have you scared? The good news of the Gospel is that because of the resurrection we do not have to fear that ole crocodile. We do not have to fear the power of death or Satan anymore. The resurrection destroys Satan’s grip over us. Death was defeated when our Lord and Savior rose from the grave. Though we have all been enslaved in sin and under the fear of death, when Jesus rose from the grave, He broke the chains of sin and death that shackled us all. Jesus offers us freedom and a hope for new life, for a real life, with no need to fear Satan or death. Maybe that is you. Maybe you live in a fear of death. Maybe Satan has you scared to death. The good news is you do not need to fear it any longer. If we have such a great salvation provided by such a great Savior Who was sent by such a great love of the Father, what is there to fear? God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish, would not die, and would not have to fear death, but will have everlasting life. That is the power of the resurrection and it is good news.

## Call to Salvation

From this passage we read about at least three real fears we face — a fear of suffering, a fear of condemnation, a fear of death. There is a more basic fear that encompasses all of these. It is a fear of the unknown. What is going to happen when this life is over? What is going to happen when you draw your last breath? As bad as it is, death is not the worst fate. Eternity in Hell is much, much worse. Complete separation from God is much, much worse. Many of us are shocked by the senseless evil in the world, but what would it be like to be completely removed from God's presence? What would it be like to experience evil, pain and suffering for all eternity? Hell is a place of eternal punishment and separation from God that is far worse than death itself. The good news is that you do not have to fear it if you are in Christ. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are adopted into God's family and do not need to fear. Look at the following promise.

**Romans 8:15** <sup>15</sup> *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"*

God's children have nothing to fear. Are you a child of God? If not, you can be!

## Conclusion

In closing, Easter is a time that should give us great comfort. It is a time to remember that we can know what is going to happen because it has already happened. Jesus' resurrection means He is still alive and among us today. When we say "Jesus is risen!" we can say, "He is here with us today!" The great message that runs throughout scripture is "do not be afraid". It is in many ways the hallmark of good news. The good news of the resurrection is that Christ suffered death so that we would not have to fear it. Christ was also raised from the dead so that you, too, will be raised from the dead. If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have nothing to fear.

To the unbeliever, though, you have much to fear. You are living under the wrath of God. You are living with a fear of death, and not only death, but eternal damnation. The good news of Jesus Christ is that you do not have to live in fear anymore. The good news is that you can turn to Christ today, accept and confess Him as your Lord and Savior, and be rescued from eternal death. The Devil does not need to scare you anymore. Jesus Christ came to save sinners. He died and rose again to provide salvation and eternal life for you. All you have to do is to believe it, trust Him, and confess Him as your Lord.

To the believer, you have a choice to make. When you die in Christ, you go straight to Him. For those who believe in Jesus Christ and have accepted Him as Lord and Savior, there is no death, but only eternal life with our Lord. The resurrection gives us something to look forward to. But also, no fear of death means no hesitation about living! The question is this: What is holding you back from living boldly for Christ? What fears do you have today that hold you back from serving Christ fully and faithfully? The resurrection does not just give us strength in the face of death, it also gives us courage to live boldly for Christ now. That is good news. Thanks be to God. Amen!