

Fear of Man

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon emphasizes the dangers of fearing man over God and encourages believers to trust in the Lord for courage and boldness in their faith.

Duration: 51:49

Scripture: Deuteronomy 20:5-8, Isaiah 49:16, Jeremiah 2:32, Matthew 10:30, Mark 16:15, Acts 16:30-31, Romans 8:31

Topics: "Fear Of Man"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses a group of people and asks them if they have unfinished business in their lives. He mentions those who have built houses but haven't dedicated them, those who have planted vineyards but haven't enjoyed the first fruits, and those who are engaged but not yet married. He advises these individuals to take care of these matters because they might not survive the upcoming battle. The speaker then emphasizes the importance of drawing near to God, cleansing oneself, and humbling oneself in order to experience revival and the power of the Holy Spirit. He also warns against the trap of fear and encourages putting trust in the Lord for safety. The sermon references James 4:8, Galatians 4:6, and Proverbs 29:25.

Transcript

Father, we read that the mighty God, even the Lord, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same. I will hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly. And then we read God, who spoke, has spoken in his son.

And Father, we do pray, most earnestly, that your voice might be heard. You said, let no man glory in men, and we don't want to make that tragic mistake tonight. Father, we have, as it were, empty hands and empty heads in your blessed presence, and we do pray for the wonderful ministry of your spirit, who came to glorify Christ and to bless your people.

In our Savior's name, amen. As Brother Don was concluding his message to us tonight, at the very end he mentioned something. He'd been talking, recall, about bitterness, and then he mentioned something about fear.

And he probably did not know this, but he was introducing my theme tonight. God has made it quite clear to me, this is what he wants me to share, Proverbs 29 and 25. The fear of man brings a snare, that is, a

trap, but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

The marginal reading says, shall be set on high. One translation calls it a man-fearing spirit. The fear of man, the best tool, the best trap that Satan ever had.

I honestly believe that more souls are lost eternally through the fear of man than through any other one thing. And I also believe that more opportunities for serving God are lost to Christian people through the fear of man than through any other one thing. Were I to read a scripture, it would be from Matthew chapter 10.

I'm not going to, but in just a few verses there, three times Christ said, fear them not. Fear them not, therefore. Fear them not.

He recognized the problem of fear. He didn't dismiss it lightly. He dealt with it.

Don't fear those that kill the body, he said, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. That's what he said in a parallel account over there in Luke's Gospel chapter 12.

A few other thoughts are added there, but it comes out the same. Don't be afraid of those people. All they can do is kill.

Take your life. They can't touch your immortal soul. God can.

Therefore, fear God. That's what Christ said. The fear of man.

There's much said about it in the word of God. Many, many references to it. As far as I know, the first would be in the life of Abraham, the great man of faith, believe it or not.

How strange that a great man of faith should fall into this sin. But he did. Not once, but at least twice.

Twice we have a record of, and maybe even more often than this, we do not know. He was going down to Egypt with his wife Sarah, who was a very beautiful person, and his faith failed him somehow, and he said to his wife, before they crossed the border into that land, honey, you're a beautiful girl, and these guys down in Egypt, they're a bunch of pagans, they don't know anything about God probably, so they're liable to knock me off and take you if they discover we're married. So tell them a little lie.

Just tell them we're not husband and wife, we are brother and sister. So she did that. And the princes of Pharaoh saw Sarah, and she was beautiful, and they recommended her to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh took her into his own house.

And then perhaps you remember what happened. God plagued Pharaoh and all his house with great plagues. And it was so clear to Pharaoh, he knew that Sarah was married to Abraham.

And so the man of God is called up on the carpet, and in effect he's asked, why did you do this? Can you fancy Abraham at that moment starting to talk about the living God and giving his personal testimony? He wouldn't dare. He'd been caught in a lie. So he has to put the best face on it he possibly can.

And finally, sneak away like a whipped dog with his tail between his legs. Genesis 12. Genesis 20, he did the same thing again, only this time in a different country.

He went down to Gerar among the Philistines. Abimelech was king. And incredibly, dear people, he did exactly the same thing.

He agreed to lie, and they lied. And Abimelech took Sarah into his house. But God handled it in a different way this time.

He's a God of infinite variety. Not fifty-seven varieties either. Thousands.

So this time he came to Abimelech in a dream. And he said, if you touch this woman, you'll die. And everyone, everything you have, she's a man's wife.

And he pled for his life and said, well God, I did this in the innocency of my heart and hands. I didn't know. They told me.

They were brethren. God says, yes, I knew that, and I withheld you from sinning against me. Now restore the man his wife.

So in the morning, early in the morning, Abimelech called all his men together and told them what had happened, and then they called the man of God up on the carpet. And it's just a repeat of what happened, the scenario down in Egypt. He's caught in a lie.

He can't talk about God. He can't give his personal testimony. He's a liar.

And you know, I think of that verse in Isaiah 51, 57 rather, of whom have you been afraid or feared that you have lied and have not remembered me, that I am the Lord? Well then, more incredibly still, Abraham's son Isaac did exactly the same thing years later, recorded in Genesis 26, going down to Gerar, the same place, married to a beautiful girl named Rebekah. And they agreed they'd lie to save their necks. And sometimes when people are lying to save their necks, they don't think it's a lie.

And so they did the same thing. Now we don't know if it was the same person reigning then or not. We do not really know.

Some Bible scholars say the term Abimelech was like the term Pharaoh. There were many Pharaohs. There were many Abimelechs.

We don't really know. But it was certainly the same country. But Abimelech didn't touch Rebekah.

But one day he was looking out the window, and it says in the King James Version, he saw Isaac sporting, whatever that means, with Rebekah his wife. And whatever was going on, he knew they were not brother and sister. And so the man of God is called upon the carpet and faced up with his lie.

Three examples. In Genesis, and then there are many others, Aaron was older than Moses, and Aaron was a very good public speaker, and Moses wasn't. Moses was of slow speech.

Now normally, responsibility would fall to the oldest in the family, the oldest was chosen, the man of slow speech. He had trouble getting the words out, and Aaron was put in second place. And the following story will tell you why.

Moses was up in the mountain forty days and forty nights, and the people got a little edgy down in the camp, and they got ahold of Aaron who was in charge and said, we don't know what's happened to your

brother, and we'd like to have some gods we can see. And Aaron went along with it. Bring your golden earrings, so they did.

And he melted them down, and he built a clay base, I think the scripture indicates that, and then he covered the clay base with gold, and he said to the people, these be your gods, tomorrow we'll have a feast of Jehovah. He wanted to get Jehovah into this rotten thing too, you know. And so the following day God said to Moses, you'd better get down quickly because your people have corrupted themselves.

So he starts down the mountain with two tables of stone with the Ten Commandments. Halfway down he meets Joshua. Joshua doesn't know what's going on.

They're both somewhat concerned. Is it war? No, it's not war. They're singing.

And when they got close to the camp, Moses was enraged at what he saw. People of God dancing naked around a golden calf. It sounds like North America, 1982.

So he called a meeting of the elders. No, he didn't. He ran through the camp.

He grabbed the golden calf. I like this. And he smashed it.

You know, he threw it in the fire until the gold burnt off. Then he smashed the clay base to bits and threw the dust on the water and made the people drink the water, and he got a hold of Aaron, and in effect he shook him until his teeth rattled. What went wrong? And Aaron starts to weasel.

And he said one of the stupidest things I've ever listened to. He said, well you know what the people are like. They said, I'm mischief.

He said, I threw the gold in the fire and this calf walked out. That's what it says. He was afraid for his life.

And then Moses stood in the gate of the camp. He didn't know if he was all alone or not. And you know what? He didn't care.

Because one with God is always a glorious majority. He said, who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me. And nobody came.

He didn't really care. You know, all the host of heaven was standing with Moses if people had eyes to see him. And the tribe of Levi fell out and stood with him.

So he said, gird on every man his sword and go through the camp and slay every man his brother, companion, and neighbor. And three thousand people died that day because Aaron allowed the fear of man to get a hold of his heart. What a sad story.

Then you think of King Saul. God never short changed him physically or intellectually. The record shows us that.

He was very successful in military expeditions, a man of great resource. He stood head and shoulders above every man in Israel. But when God asked him to do something and the people suggested do something different, he listened to the people.

And first of all, when Samuel the prophet charged him with a sin, he tried to put a better face on it. And then when Samuel told him, I mean really slammed him against the wall with the truth, then he got honest

and he said, I feared the people, and I obeyed their voice. And he went down the tube.

One of the saddest, most tragic cases in the whole of the Bible. He couldn't even commit suicide right. He fell on his sword and somehow missed.

And he had to get someone else to do the job. I don't know if they had to pay him or not. What a sad story.

Now when Israel came to Kadesh Barnei, remember the twelve spies went out and ten came back with a bad report and two came back with a glorious report. I like that report, you know, that Caleb and Joshua brought. Do you know what they said? Let's go, we'll eat them up.

Did he really say that? That sounds kind of modern, doesn't it? He did. He said, they're bread for us. Well, what do you do with bread? You eat it up.

Let's go. They're bread for us. But you know, the other guy said, well, they're pretty big.

And you know, scientists tell us that some of those men in the land of Canaan, they had rib cages fourteen feet around. How would you like to tangle with someone like that? Oh boy. I tell you, he could eat you for breakfast and go home hungry.

And they were looking at the giants, and they said, we were like grasshoppers in front of these men. And they lost out through the fear of man. Then they wandered for forty years in the wilderness until that whole adult generation died and their bones bleached under that hot desert sun.

And their children went into the promised land eventually. But Paul tells us in Romans 15 that whatever things were written before were written for our learning, our instruction. And that story is no exception.

It's written for our instruction as well. Don't allow the fear of man to take over in your heart, because if you do, you'll bring yourself into disfavor with God. You can get yourself into all kinds of problems.

You can bring other people, drag other people into serious problems also through the fear of man. King Zedekiah, one of the saddest stories in the Bible. He was Israel's king.

The Babylonian army had come down. We're besieging Jerusalem. Jeremiah was the prophet.

And this king, he'd have frequent consultations with the prophet Jeremiah, and he wavered between yes and no, between God's way and Satan's way, his own way. And he came so close to doing what was right, but never did it. And on one occasion, Jeremiah said, Listen, king, if you'll surrender to the Babylonians, here's what God will do.

Jerusalem will not be burned, the city will not be destroyed, and you and all your family will live. What did King Zedekiah say? I'm afraid of the Jews. You see, what had happened was many of the Jewish people in the city had gone out at nighttime probably and surrendered to the Babylonians, and there was a great number, hundreds of them out there, and the king said, I'm afraid of the Jews that if I give myself up, that they'll mock me, they'll make fun of me.

And Jeremiah said, They won't. But Zedekiah didn't listen. He was afraid of being mocked by the Jews.

And he did not obey the voice of God. And his story, the end of his story, is given three times in the Word of God as God's warning to you and I. How sad. They caught him.

He tried to flee away on a horse at night, and they got him. And they took him up to Rebel in the land of Hamath, and they gave judgment upon him, and here's what they did. They slew all the nobles of Judah in front of his eyes.

Then they brought his boys. He was only thirty-three years old, so his boys were not very old. And they murdered his boys in front of his eyes.

And then what? Then they bored the eyes out of his head. The last thing he saw were his men and his sons lying in blood on the ground, and then they blinded him and carried him off to Babylon. What a warning, people, about the fear of man.

A man fearing. There's a happier story. Nehemiah chapter 6. You read that if you want to get a little tonic sometime when you're feeling afraid.

Six times in that one chapter we're told how they tried to get him to run, to get him to fear. They spread rumors, and they wrote letters. And people came and warned him personally, they're going to get you.

You better hide in the temple. They're going to assassinate you. And he said, should such a man as I flee, God's with me.

Why should I run? And he never did. Thank God. He never did.

I had a friend named Colley Olson. And Colley, the first day in college, here's what happened. In the States it was some years ago.

First day in college. He got there a little bit late, and he got the last seat down by the door. And the professor was saying to the class, we're going to have a short get-acquainted time.

We don't want anyone to be longer than two or three minutes, but we want you to get up, tell us who you are, where you're from, and tell us two things, what you believe about politics and what you believe about God. He said, starting with this gentleman over here. Well, the fellow sitting over there was a handsome hero, football type, real handsome guy.

And so he gets to his seat, and when it came to God, he really ran it down. He criticized the Bible, he mocked the Bible, he mocked the church, he mocked Christians, he mocked God, the whole thing. And Colley said, you know what, Bill? He said, every kid in the class did the same thing when it came to God.

He said, boy, I could hardly wait for my turn. And finally it was his turn. He shot to his feet.

He said, Colley Olson, he told him where he was from. Politics, never bottom of my head. Religion, that's where I shine.

He said, I believe the Bible is the word of God from cover to cover. I even believe the cover because it says Holy Bible on the front. And then he preached the gospel message for about five minutes.

He told him how to get saved. And he wound up his little discourse by saying, and if you don't read the Bible, you're a total ignoramus. Well, that's pretty strong talk.

Now, when Colley was all through, the professor cleared his throat and said, Mr. Olson, I'd like to have words with you at the conclusion of the class. And Colley said, he said to himself, oh boy, first day in

college and I'm in hot water already. Well, praise the Lord.

So after the class was over, he went up to see the professor. He said, the professor got to his feet and he stuck out his hand. He says, Olson, man, stick her there.

I want to shake your hand. He said, I'm no Christian. He said, but if a guy like me can pray, I was sitting here praying that somebody would say something like you said today.

He said, like a bunch of stupid sheep. He said, they were all afraid because of what the first guy said. I'm so glad for what you said.

And this little gospel thing you preached today, now it's kind of interesting. He said, once a month, I'm going to call on you, Colley. I'm going to give you 15 or 20 minutes.

You'll be ready once a month for the little gospel thing? Colley said, yeah, I'll be ready. And then the professor looked at him and he said, say, man, can you get me a Bible? I don't want to be an ignoramus. As you were having that class that year, Colley led 15 or 20 of those kids to Christ.

But let me tell you something. If Colley Olson had been like the average kid, the Christian kid in high school or college today, he wouldn't have opened his mouth. And that's the problem with North America today.

In our schools, the Christians are all hiding in the woodwork. You know, following the revival in Saskatoon, as a matter of fact, before the seven weeks of that revival movement was over, in the high school right across the street from the church where it all began, Aidan Bowman Collegiate, 1,200 kids, the Christian kids have been struggling, you know, to keep one little Bible study going a week. They had five Bible studies going before the seven weeks of the meeting were over, and 14 kids were saved in that school in one week.

That could be happening all the time in our schools if the Christian kids would come out of the woodwork and stop hiding. And then we'd do it down at the job. We're doing it all over the country.

I'm not opposed to Christian schools. And I see a need for them. But I'm concerned about taking all the light and all the salt out of the public schools.

I think of one school in Canada, a high school that had a drug problem. Then they had a revival. Then they had a God problem in the high school.

And they knew how to handle a drug problem, but they didn't know how to handle a God problem. So the principal issued directives, no more evangelism on campus, no distribution of literature on campus, and so on. So the Christian kids got their noggins together.

They did it a different way. They found out where the traffic was heaviest in the school, in the hallways, you know, when the kids were moving out of the classes, and the Christian kids would all congregate there by prearrangement. They'd jam the hallway up so nobody could get through, and one kid by a point would preach the gospel.

And they wound up preaching the gospel to the principal himself. All right. The fear of man, it brings a snare.

In Matthew 10, Christ said, the things that I've taught you in the ear, I want you to preach on the housetops. Let me tell you, there isn't much housetop preaching today. Everybody's hiding.

Everybody's pussyfooting. Everybody's afraid of his shadow, afraid of losing their job, afraid of being looked down at, sneered at, or maybe even persecuted. And Christ said, Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

When you're persecuted, what did He say to do? He said, leap for joy. That's what He said. In Old Testament days, when Israel was going to war, here's some of the things they did as a preparation for the army.

They called the army together and had a priest deliver a rousing message about fear. Don't fear the enemy. Fear God.

He's great and He's terrible and He's with us. They've got more horses and chariots. Don't fear them.

Fear God. I'd like to hear one of those sermons, but there isn't any rest. Maybe they'll have reruns in heaven.

Anyway, after the priest was finished, they broke the army up into small groups, and the captains talked to the small groups. And I don't know exactly how it went, except we're given the broad details, the broad outlines there. Here's what it says.

First of all, the captain would say to the small group, Is there anybody here that's built a house but you haven't had time to dedicate it? Well, hands will go up. Okay, you guys go home because you might die in the battle and someone else might have to dedicate your house. Is there anybody here that's planted a vineyard and you've never had a chance to eat the first fruits of the vineyard? Hands will go up.

Okay, you fellows go home because you might die in the battle and someone else might have to eat the first fruits of your vineyard. Is there anybody here that's engaged to be married? You've got a girl, you're engaged, you're not married? Yes, hands will go up. You fellows go home.

You might die in the battle and somebody else will take your girl. You know what the fourth thing was? Anybody afraid? Okay, you guys take a house and go home. We don't want you in the army because you might start running and persuade others to follow your bad example and lose the battle.

We don't want you here. In Judges 7, Gideon applied that rule. He had a tiny army of 32,000.

He was about 100,000 men short to be man-to-man with the enemy. And God said, you've got too many. And so he said, if anybody's fearful and fainthearted, go home.

And 22,000 took off for a home. Man, it sounds like the evangelical church today, doesn't it? And God said, you still have too many. And God did the job with 300, didn't he? Yes, he did.

Have you ever wondered at the power of communism? I have. And I've read numbers of books on the subject, trying to find out. And I read a book called The Molding of the Communist by a man who was for 30 years an organizer and a molder of communist minds.

And it suddenly dawned on me what the secret of their power was. By the way, as an aside, I think that India is going to go communist. I've been there a couple of times now.

The most Christian state in India, Kerala State in the south, and 35% of that state claim to be Christian, Catholic, Protestant, and everything. The average for the nation as a whole is only 3%. Hindus are 75.

Kerala State now has a communist government. And West Bengal, with one of the largest populations of any state in India, 75 or 80 million, they now have a communist government. And they're keeping a very low anti-religious profile to try and persuade the rest of India to come on in.

The war is fine. What is the secret of their amazing power and success? It's right here. In the early days of the revolution in Russia, there were two opposing philosophies, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

And the Mensheviks said, let's go out all through Russia and get scores of millions of people in as members of the communist party. And the Bolsheviks said, no, we don't want anybody in the party that will run when the gun goes off. They knew the danger of the fear of man, and they've applied it consistently in their work.

We don't know that. We think the bigger the thing gets, the more numbers we have on the roll, the better we are. And all of history bears witness against us, and contemporary history.

I'm thinking now, if communism certainly bears witness against us, they're wiser than we are. We've got a power they don't know anything about, but somehow we've neglected it. And the fear of man is a major factor in the weakness and impotence of the Church of God today, therefore, of ordinary Christians like you and I. When they called leaders, what did they say to the leaders? Well, when they called Joshua, Moses said, Joshua, don't be afraid.

Quincey Coleman, don't be afraid, don't be afraid. The people and nation said to Joshua, Joshua, don't be afraid. And God said to Joshua, Joshua, don't be afraid.

Why this threefold emphasis? Because he was an ordinary human being like you and I, subject to fears and liable to fail because of the fear of man. How did they handle it when they called prophets? When God called the prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah chapter 1, among other things he said, now don't be afraid, because if you're afraid, I'll confound you in front of the nation, that means I'll make a fool of you in front of the whole nation. When God called Ezekiel, what did he say? He said, Ezekiel, they're a bunch of rebels, and they won't listen, but don't be afraid of them, don't be afraid of their faces, don't be afraid of their words.

Remember me. And thank God he did. He did fear God.

So did Jeremiah. And God used them because they were free from a man-fearing spirit. So I read, it's in Isaiah 51, hearken unto me, God said, hearken unto me, you that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear you not the reproach of men, neither be you afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool, but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

I, even I, am he that comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die? No, the son of man that shall be made as grass. And you forget the Lord your maker, mislaid the foundations of the earth, and stretched forth to heavens, and you fear continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy.

And where is the fury of the oppressor? We've forgotten God. The fear of man's taken over. And some of us won't open our mouth at the job, or in school, or to our neighbors, or to anybody else, because we're so afraid.

Down in Detroit, in meetings, one night a fellow got up at the back and he was crying, and he said, preacher, can I say something? And I said, yes. I was finally composed enough to be understood, and he said, I just want to ask a question. He said, you know, I was saved eight months ago.

He was about 28 or 30. He said, I was saved eight months ago. I used to travel with a gang.

We gambled. We did a lot of things that people shouldn't do. And I got saved.

And ever since I was saved eight months ago, God's been telling me to go back to the gang and tell them about Jesus, and I never did. And he said, one of those fellows in the gang was my buddy. We used to do a lot of things together, a lot of bad things, and some things not so bad, but we did it together.

And God especially laid a burden on my heart to go to my friend and tell him about Jesus in the gospel. He said, preacher, I never went. Then he wept again.

He said, last night he was shot to death at the court gate. He said, is there any way I can communicate with him and tell him I'm sorry I didn't tell him about Jesus? Why didn't he tell him? Because he was afraid. He was afraid.

The fear of man got him, and it gets you and I too. We don't pass out that gospel tract. We don't speak that word.

We don't go to that place, to that home. A fellow in the States one time told me God wakened him up on a Saturday morning early and said, I want you to take this day. I want you to visit every home in your block.

He said, God, I don't want to do that. I don't even know these people. God said, I want you to go, and he never went.

And that Saturday morning in one of those homes, a man blew his brains out. And here was God trying to get this Christian out there, and he couldn't. And we fail God in the same way for exactly the same reason.

We sit there like a frozen frog on a frosty stone. There's neither motion nor movement nor life. There's nothing.

We don't even croak. But we're going to heaven when we die. Wouldn't it be great to take someone with you when you went? What did Paul say in 1 Thessalonians 2, the last verse? What is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and His coming? You are our glory and joy.

Will anybody be glad that you lived? Will anybody in heaven ever say to you, thank you for bringing Christ to me on earth? Will anybody ever do that to you? But basically it's the fear of man because there isn't a Christian in this place that could not win other people to Christ in the next 6 months or 12 months or even less if we put our mind to it. Who catches the most fish? The person that fishes the most. Other things being equal, they're out there.

They can be won. But we've got to deal with the fear of man, dear people. What a trap.

Like I say, the best trap that Satan ever had. When you come to the New Testament, the story is the same. A great man of God, Peter, like a great man of God, Abraham, failed twice.

Twice? Yes. The first time, he denied Christ three times and you know what happened? Christ looked at him and Peter remembered what Christ had been saying before and he went out and wept bitterly and Christ restored him. Then years later, the old fear returned.

Ever notice that? Galatians chapter 2, down at the church in Antioch. You see, Peter was a Jew and he'd become a Christian. And according to Jewish tradition, Jews and Gentiles did not mix.

You did not sit at the same table. You didn't sit on the same bench because Jews looked on Gentiles as being inferior. Now when a Jew became a Christian, you remember what God had to do in Acts chapter 10 to overcome Peter's prejudice about preaching the gospel to a bunch of Gentiles in the house of Cornelius.

And God taught him it was wrong, his attitude was wrong, and why, and all the rest of it. And he sailed along for some while just great. Then down in this big church at Antioch, one day Peter happened to look down, oh, and his heart flipped.

He saw a bunch of these Judaizers, these legalizers from Jerusalem. These were people who taught, yes, you have to believe in Jesus Christ, but you have to keep the law of Moses. You have to be circumcised, you have to keep the law of Moses along with believing in Jesus Christ, or you'll never make it to heaven.

He saw them sitting down in the crowd and he chickened out. You know what he did? He separated himself from the Gentiles and says, I can just see him moving over to one side of the church. And he says, all the Jews got up and they dissembled, they practiced hypocrisy, that's what the word dissembled means, and they stood with Peter.

And Paul says, even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. Barnabas went and stood with them, and here was little Paul all by himself. So what did he do? He called a meeting of the deacons' board, of course, like Moses did.

No, he did exactly what Moses did. Well, maybe he got Peter in a side room and said, hey Peter, we should pray about this, you know, you're not really doing right. But he didn't do that either.

Do you remember that verse? I wonder if Paul was thinking about this when he said this. He said, them that sin, rebuke before all that others also may fear. So Paul said in Galatians chapter 2, I said unto Peter before them all, in front of the whole church, how embarrassing for Peter.

If thou being a Jew, you're teaching the Gentiles not to live like a Jew. Why are you doing what you're doing, Peter? If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. I through the law am dead to the law that I may live unto God.

I am crucified. Hey, wait a minute. Galatians 2.20 was first preached by Paul to Peter in front of the church at Antioch, concerning his fear and his hypocrisy.

Peter, we're dead to the law. But you see, the fear of man got Peter. It says distinctly in that account in Galatians 2, he feared them more than he feared the law of the circumcision.

It got him. The second time it got him. In John 5.44, Christ said, how can you believe? Here were people.

They saw the evidence and miracles. They heard him preach. Never a man spoke like this man.

But Christ said, how can you believe? Who receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that comes from God only? The fear of man. You are not meant to be someone. You and I were meant to house someone.

Christ. Christ liveth in me. That's the testimony of the Word of God.

That was kind of exciting there in Galatians 2. I wonder how Peter felt afterwards. Did Paul do right in doing this in front of the whole church? Wouldn't it have been better to have done it, you know, quietly and behind the scenes? No. And Paul wasn't afraid.

He, like Moses, didn't know if anybody would stand with him. Indeed, they'd already forsaken. There was nobody left but the Gentiles and Paul.

And he just didn't care that much, because he knew he was right. And when you know you're right, be like Paul, by the grace and the power of God. In John chapter 12, we read about certain people among the chief rulers.

Also many believed on him. But because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Sam Jones was a famous southern Methodist evangelist, a contemporary of Dwight O. Moody's. If they happened to be, which due to bad planning occasionally happened, in the same city at the same time, Jones got the larger crowds. But they were good friends.

They used to josh each other about who would get whose overflow. And Sam Jones was the most remarkable person. They said of John Knox, they never feared devil nor man, just God.

And they might have said that of Sam Jones also. He was invited to go for a union crusade in Sacramento, California. Of course, that's many years ago.

And at that time, the underworld ran Sacramento. It was known as America's number one hellhole. And when he got there, the preachers had a meeting with him.

And they said, now Sam, you know, we don't want to throw cold water on you and your ministry, but you can't preach here the way you've been preaching in another place in America, because if you do, we're going to have a riot. People will be killed. The underworld run this town.

Everybody's run by the underworld, and you'll just have to tone it down a little bit. And he never said a word. But the first public meeting they had, all these preachers were on the platform.

And he swung his arms to these preachers on the platform and said to the people, I feel very sad. These men tell me I can't preach the same message here. I've been preaching all over the United States of America.

Then he said, he just thundered. And he said, if you think Sam Jones is scared, you don't know Sam Jones. So he started to preach, as he always did.

Within two weeks, the revival exploded. And prostitutes, and underworld characters, and all kinds of people were finding Christ. So the big shots down below, they figured, we've got to knock this little preacher off.

He's getting too hot. So they hired a bunch of assassins to kill him down at the hotel one night. And somebody tipped the preachers off.

They went thundering down to the hotel, jammed into his hotel room and said, no meeting tonight, Sam. He said, why? And they told him. And he said, gentlemen, stand back.

Get out of the way. And he walked out the door, and down the hall, and down the stairs. And here are these guys waiting in a group at the corner.

And he saw them. And they saw him. And they got ready for their man.

And he walked straight for them. And they split like the Red Sea split for the rod of Moses. And they went right through the center, went down and preached that night.

And he told the people, I would like to see any combination of devils and men that can take my life when God thinks I still have something to do. We are immortal people until our work is done. If God be for us, then who can be against us? And God almost exhausts language in the Bible trying to persuade us, He's always with us.

We're graven on the palms of His hands, He says. Our walls are continually before Him. The hairs of our head are all numbered.

And how can God forget us? God can do anything but forget His people. But we forget Him. God said, My people have forgotten Me days without number.

You know, this awful slavish fear of man, Old Testament, New Testament, today. And your conscience is agreeing with me when I say that we've all lost opportunities for serving God because we were more conscious and aware of people than we were of God. And we failed Him as a consequence.

I went to a home one time with the expressed purpose in mind of leading this young couple to Christ. Well, they were probably in their early thirties. I got there and the fear of man took over.

And you know what I did? I did what we Christians often do when the fear of man takes over. We read the Scripture and pray. Did you ever notice Jesus never said, Go into all the world and read the Scripture and pray in every home? He never said that.

He said, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. You might visit 50,000 homes and never read the Scripture or pray once and still do the will of God if you preach the gospel in every home. Conversely, you might visit 50,000 homes and read the Bible and pray in every home and still not do the will of God.

I read the Bible and I prayed and I felt a little better. And I started for the door. And just as I got the door, the lady said something to me.

I mean, she asked a question about the Bible and even I couldn't miss it. And I had the joy of leading them to Christ. And as I was leaving, she said to me, and I'm glad she did because it humbled me.

She said, If I had not asked you that question about the Bible, you would not have told us how to be saved tonight, would you have? And I shriveled up to less than a half an inch in height. And while I might have, I called another home one time this late while the kids hadn't been in Sunday school for a bit. And so I called her and she was wrong.

And God said, No, share Christ with her. And for some reason I couldn't. She seemed to be so happy.

The devil said, Well, she's a Christian. Look at her. Look how happy she is.

She must be a Christian. If you ask her if she's a Christian, she's going to be insulted. Well, obviously she's a Christian.

When it comes to church, she must be a Christian. The only time you can believe the devil is when he tells you he's lying. Suddenly I said to her, Are you a Christian? And she turned her back to me.

It was by the door. And she put her hand against the opening of the door there, put her head against it and just lay sort of against it, just weeping her heart out. And she said, No, I want to be saved, but I don't know how.

So I led her to Christ, led her husband to Christ, and a month later they were baptized and united with the fellowship. But see, it was the fear of man, the fear of man. I don't know what God might be saying to your heart.

You see, God made full provision for this particular problem. It says in Romans 8, You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. In Hebrews chapter 2, it says, For as much then as the children, that is the children of God, for as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, Christ, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy.

One translation says, render powerless or annulled him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. You've been delivered from that yet? The fear of death? And then in 2 Timothy chapter 1, he says, Stir up the gift of God which is in you. It says, God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, a disciplined, a healthy mind.

That's the spirit that lives in you if you're born again Christian, not a spirit of fear. I quoted that verse in a meeting somewhere, I don't recall now where it was, and God used that simple thought to set a man in that congregation totally free from the fear of man. He said, it just hit me like a ton of bricks.

The Holy Spirit isn't afraid, and he lives in me. So what am I doing monkeying around like this? He saw it, and God set him free, and God wants to set you and I free tonight also. We can never be an effective witness for Jesus Christ until we're free from the fear of man.

So how does it come about? As I close in a few moments, I want to say this before I do. In 2 Timothy chapter 1, verses 6 and on, Paul was talking, writing to another preacher, Timothy, and somewhere along the line, Paul had heard or sensed, or maybe God had communicated this to him directly, we don't really know. He found out that Timothy was getting cold, and fear was beginning to rise up in Timothy's heart.

And so he said, Timothy, stir up the gift of God. Different translations put it somewhat differently, of course. One says, rekindle the fire.

The Spanish Bible says, revive the gift of God which is in you. Now, can I revive the Holy Spirit that's living in me? That's the gift that Paul is talking about there. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Can I revive the Holy Spirit? Do you remember Dr. Orr's hymn, Search Me, O God? There's a line in that hymn that says, O Holy Ghost, revival comes from thee. Send a revival. Start the work in me.

There is not a person here tonight that could not experience a revival in their heart. If you need it and you know it, you can experience a revival in your heart by cooperating and working with the Holy Spirit. The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would.

Agree with God against yourself. We'll have an invitation song in a few moments, but I want you to notice something that Paul said to Timothy, okay? He said, Timothy, stir up the gift of God which is in you. He put the responsibility on Timothy.

So often we say, God, revive me. Yes, God wants to, but God's waiting for me to do something about it, too. Revive the gift of God.

How can I revive the gift of God? I have to begin by saying, search me, O God, and show me my sin. Don't assume you know what the problems are. You probably know some of them, but there are other things you probably don't know at all and only God knows.

The Bible says, we're caught in Jeremiah chapter 17, that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart. I try the reins.

God is the one. The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts, and God is just waiting to communicate to us. It says in Job, a beautiful passage in Job 36, then he shows them their work.

I love that. He shows them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded, and he opens their ear to discipline, and he commands that they return from iniquity. And God will do that.

He'll do that for you. He'll do that for me. Stir up the gift of God.

And then Paul said to Tim, they don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me as prisoner. You know, why is it, dear people, that so often when an opportunity presents itself, we're tongue-tied. We're tongue-tied, you see, because our heart is not really right with God.

It's sin that makes our tongue be this way. Vic Alston was pastor of a church in Minneapolis some years ago, and I was to have a union crusade. There were 40 or 50 churches cooperating, and the fellow who had been appointed the chairman of the effort had a heart attack and died, and they asked Vic to take it on.

He phoned me long distance, and he said, I've been asked to take this on, but frankly, Bill, he said, I need a revival. You better start praying for me. And he was the chairman of the crusade.

But it was interesting to watch God work in his heart. One night he told the people, he said, I'm not there yet. I'm listening.

I'm learning. I'm listening, but I'm not there yet. But it's like standing on the sidewalk, looking through the open door of a candy store, all those goodies in the shelves.

I haven't gone through the door yet. And then one Saturday morning, we had a meeting for preachers, and Vic Alston was there, and he went through the door of the candy shop, and he gave his testimony that night. And among other things, he said this.

He said, you know, when I tried to talk about Jesus, the name Jesus stuck in my throat. I could never really get it out. He said, now I can even talk about Jesus on the telephone.

And I was so blessed recently, was talking on ham radio to my daughter, who's with the Wycliffe Bible Translators in the Philippines, and she said, we have a preacher. He's from the States, and his name is Vic Alston. I said, who? She said, Vic Alston.

I said, Vic Alston? He's an old friend of mine. And it was the same Vic Alston, and he's staying with them at that base at a place called, we call it Bagabag, because that's how it's spelled, but that's not the right pronunciation, out from a place called Baguio in the Philippines. And he's going to be there within two years.

But he found out that through Christ, he could be free. Jesus sets me absolutely free. Are you free? Has God spoken to your heart in these sessions? Maybe through Don's word tonight? Maybe in one of the other sessions? Maybe God's been working in your heart for a long time.

Something your pastor said a while ago, and God stuck it in your heart, and you can't get it out. Or maybe tonight. God is speaking to your heart about the fear of man.

Would you deal with it? I read something in Revelation 21.8, and here's what it says. But the fearful and the unbelieving and the abominable and the whoremongers and the murderers and the idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. At the very top of this awful list of gross sinners are the fearful.

See how God regards it? That we should put God down and put men up? God hates it. And God can't use that kind of a person who fears man and doesn't fear God. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro, it says, throughout the whole land, the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.

We sing, give me a perfect heart like this to thee. How is your heart toward God? Is the fear of man condemning you? Do something about it even tonight. Listen, James 4.8 says, draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. That's God's recipe for revival. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Cleanse your hands, purify your hearts, be afflicted and mourn and weep. And God will change your life and put a dynamic in it. The Holy Spirit's already there if you're saved.

If you're not saved, you'll receive Christ. And then, like it says in Galatians 4.6, and because you were sons, God has sent forth the spirit of his Son into your heart. And God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Wake up, Canada. Wake up, America. Things are not going to go on the way they are forever.

I felt my heart beating with dawn tonight when he said what he said about the future in North America. We don't know what's going to happen. We'd better be ready.

Be ready tonight.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18400.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/fear-of-man/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net