

Casting Out Fear

by Richard E. Bieber

Perfect love, given by God, casts out fear and brings peace, and we must put it into action by loving others, even those we don't like.

Scripture: Psalm 27:1, Luke 16:19, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:18-19

Topics: "Overcoming Fear", "Godly Love"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the transformative power of perfect love that casts out fear, emphasizing the importance of actively loving others as a response to God's love in our hearts. The sermon tells the story of a rich man who struggled with fear despite his wealth and power, illustrating the need to overcome fear through genuine love and compassion towards those in need. It highlights the significance of loving others, especially those we may not naturally gravitate towards, as a way to experience God's love and find true peace and fulfillment.

Transcript

There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear.

...And this perfect love which casts out fear, while it is something God gives, is also something you do. God puts the love into you. But you love, you do something.

Many of us stumble when we get to that doing part.

Take the rich man - the rich man wasn't sleeping well lately. It seemed that all night long in his dreams he was being chased, falling from high places. And his days weren't much better. In spite of the fact that he was clothed in purple and fine linen and feasted like a king, he was apprehensive - he had the feeling that something bad was going to happen.

Crazy. If any man should feel secure it was this fellow - loaded with money - got the royal treatment everywhere he went - acted like he owned the world. But he was scared.

In spite of all his money and all his power and all his influence, he was scared.

The man got upset over the silliest things, like loud noises, or if his coffee was too hot. One of the things that bugged him most was that confounded beggar who insisted on plunking down at his gate.

When the rich man went out in the morning and came back in the afternoon, there was that beggar.

"How about a little help, man!"

"Could you spare me a few crumbs?"

"Is there no way I can get this fellow off my back? Do I have to put up with the sight of him - and the smell of him every day? I have enough problems!"

After a while the rich man took to going out the back door and through the alley to avoid Lazarus. Still Lazarus came and begged.

Finally, the rich man made an appointment with a priest he knew up at the temple. He had to talk to somebody.

"Reverend, I don't know what's come over me lately, but my nerves are real bad. Would you please pray for me and lay your hands on me that I might be delivered from this fear."

So the priest read him the 27th Psalm and prayed and laid his hands on him to deliver him from fear.

"Thank you so much Reverend. I feel better already. I know that prayer is answered. 'The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?'"

The rich man felt so much better that he decided to enter his house by the front gate instead of the back door. And there lay Lazarus.

"How 'bout a little help, man."

"Could you spare me a few crumbs?"

The rich man stopped, looked at Lazarus. A shiver went through his body as he saw those sores and the pitiful expression in the eyes of the beggar.

The rich man reached into his pocket and was about to give the poor beggar enough to buy him decent food for many weeks. Then he stopped himself, "What am I doing? Am I out of my mind? I can't afford to start feeding beggars." He turned and hurried into his house.

"Strange, when I was up at the temple I felt great. God was so real. His love was so real. But now that I'm home I'm right back where I was before."

And the reason is not because he's back home again, but because, on the way home, he blew it when it came to the doing part.

When the rich man stood looking at Lazarus and reaching into his pocket to help him, he was on the verge of receiving the full answer to his own cry for help. The Spirit of God was nudging him and saying,

"Come on, Dives, give to Lazarus and you've won a victory. Love, man! Love and you'll come to life."

Lazarus was the rich man's doorway to heaven but he blew it.

Like the rich man we go up to the temple. We get together with other believers. We feed on the living Word of God. And the burden rolls away - that cloud of fear disappears. Peace!

The love of God that is in Jesus comes down upon us and fills us. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. And man, when that love comes in, fear goes out. Perfect love casts out fear.

Any person here who is still living in torment - if you want help you'll get help now. In the name of Jesus, God is going to make you to know His love for you. He's going to quiet that storm right down. He's going to give you peace. God will touch you and you will know that God touched you. You will know it this hour!

That's the whole point of Jesus dying on that Cross. So that you don't have to live in torment any longer.

He doesn't just put a patch over your guilt, He removes it.

He doesn't put band aids on your fears, He gets rid of them.

There is no condemnation any more. There is no bad conscience any more. Your sins are washed away in the blood, and your life is filled with the burning love of God.

So far so good. Perfect love has cast out fear. You go your way filled with God's peace. And God did it all. You didn't do a thing but open your heart. God did all this for you out of sheer love not because you're worthy, but because he loves you.

Now comes your part - the doing part. You're on your way home and you meet Lazarus - a fellow human being who needs some of this love God put into you. God isn't going to make you love Lazarus - you're going to love him freely of your own will or forget it.

As you stand there looking at Lazarus, all those old fears you knew before come crowding back to tempt you.

"Don't get tangled up with Lazarus!"

"You can't afford to get involved!"

"Use your head!"

This time God won't cast these fears out for you. This time you cast them out in the name of Jesus by doing the thing the Spirit of Jesus is teaching you to do: LOVE.

You practice the love God has put into you. You reach into your pocket and give to Lazarus if it's money he needs. You sit down and listen if he needs someone to listen. You put him in your car and take him where he needs to go. You split your lunch with him. And you don't make a project out of Lazarus ... some kind of showcase specimen of how loving you are. You just love him ... in deed and in truth.

To every Lazarus that comes along your path you do the same. And remember, you don't select your Lazarus, God does.

We see these Christians who try to pick their own Lazarus.

"No, not those people, they're not my cup of tea."

"Oh, but Lord, I'm not equipped to work among those people. My stomach is too weak."

"Yes, I know Lord, somebody has to. But can't you see I'm busy where I am?"

God will make you to know where your Lazarus is. He will make it quite clear what people he wants you to share with. He will cause you to hear their cries even if they're 100 miles away. And no matter how you stop your ears you will hear and you will know what God is telling you to do for them.

God puts his love into you. But God won't do your loving for you. You have to do it. And if you won't love, if you refuse to love Lazarus, the love that God put in you will die. There will be nothing left of

it but the dry shell of lip service and pretense. And those old fears that haunted your life will be back to haunt you again and they'll haunt you even more after you die.

We love because he first loved us. Because he put his love into us (but we love). If anyone says, "I love God" and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen.

And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.

And the test of this love is not how you treat the people you like. It's how you treat Lazarus - the kind your flesh hates.

God doesn't tell you to love Lazarus because he wants to make things hard for you. God tells you to love Lazarus because loving Lazarus is your doorway to Life - it's for your own good - and because ignoring Lazarus is the doorway to what happened to the rich man.

"Father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue."

And this is true not only for the individual - it's true for the Church. The simplest way to determine whether a church is alive is look and see whether it has plenty of Lazaruses. If it's all rich men, baby it ain't no church. And by rich men I don't merely mean millionaires. I mean these people who are settled and comfortable on the surface and scared of their own shadow underneath.

The rich men need Lazarus more than Lazarus needs the rich men.

If it's truly the Body of Christ, the family of God, Jesus will have made the rich man and Lazarus one in his love - they'll be at the table together.

Go out into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind.

Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.

When we have not only received God's love but have really begun to live it, our flock will be the most beautiful hodge-podge of penitent rich men and joyful Lazaruses you ever saw. It will be indeed a foretaste of Heaven.

The love is here. God is giving it to us right now in his Son Jesus.

Receive that love, then live it, do it, and every Lazarus you meet the rest of your life, even the crazy ones, even the ungrateful ones, even the flat-out con men will be a doorway to more of God and to more of his fathomless love.

For God is love and he who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.

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