**Fear – The virus of faith**

***Virus –*** An infectious agent that replicates only inside the living cells of an organism. A virus cannot replicate alone; instead, it must infect cells and use components of the host cell to make copies of itself. If Satan can get you to believe a lie, the infection process begins.

***The vaccine against fear – only believe.***

2 Timothy 1: 1 - 9

For God has not given us the ***spirit of fear***, but of power, love and a sound mind.

***Acts 1: 8***

But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come

* ***Fear*** – timidity or cowardice (it’s the opposite of courage).

***Galatians***

***5: 22 – 23.***

Self-control is a fruit of the spirit.

* ***Power***– Dynamis (miraculous). Compare with Acts 1: 8.
* ***Sound mind –*** discipline or self-control.
* Never be ashamed to tell other about our Lord.

2 Corinthians 4: 13

***2 Peter 1: 1*** to them that have obtained ***like precious faith*** with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

* We have a spirit of faith which speaks – ***no fear here.***
* We believe and therefore we speak (Psalm 91: 1 – 2 principle).

Romans 8: 14 – 17 (Romans 8: 1 – 2)

* For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
* We are not under a law-based covenant today, which brought fear and bondage to Israel. We are under a faith-based covenant of grace which has redeemed us from the curse of the law and sin consciousness.
	+ Hebrews 2: 14 – 15 (and deliver them who through ***fear of death*** were all their lifetime subject to ***bondage*** (*slavery*). The law kept them in fear of death).

***Hebrews 10: 10 – 14***

***(NLT)*** One sacrifice for all men, for all sin, for all time.

* + Hebrews 10: 1 – 3 (NLT). The lived with a sin consciousness. We have been redeemed and made righteous.

The law will keep us in fear and bondage today if we allow it. Faith in Jesus has made us free.

Fear is a spirit

* Spirit of the world (1 Corinthians 2: 12 - 16).
* The god of this world system (2 Corinthians 4: 3 – 4).
* Prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2: 1 - 3).
* Seducing / deceiving spirit (1 Timothy 4: 1 – 5).
* Spirit of error (1 John 4: 6).

The world is constantly using the language of fear.

* 1 John 4: 18 (fear brings torment).

Fear is always based on a lie.

* John 8: 44 (if we don’t know the truth, we can’t discern a lie).
* Satan challenges God’s faith-giving promises with fear, bringing doubt and unbelief. It then becomes a stronghold against the knowledge of God.
* Fear is the substance of things not desired.

***1 John 2: 15***

Love not the world and all that is in the world

-***Lust of the flesh***

***-Lust of the eyes***

***-Pride of life***

Origins of fear

Genesis 3: 1 – 10

***Luke 10:18*** Jesus beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

* Satan is a liar and the father of it (John 8: 44, Isaiah 14: 12 – 17 and Ezekiel 28: 11 - 19 NLT).
* I was ***afraid*** because I was naked (fearful or to dread).
* Man’s spirit was disconnected from the life of God (spiritual death) and replaced with a spirit of fear (Romans 5: 12).
* Satan became their “*father*” and man took on sin nature (death). It didn’t take long for the earth to be filled with wickedness, resulting in the flood.

We are now clothed in righteousness.

* God responds to nakedness by covering. The blood of Jesus covers.

Seed always produces after its own kind. God set in place spiritual and natural law. The seed of Adam would now be forever corrupted with a ***sin nature***.

How does fear operate in the earth?

***Col 3: 1 – 3***

Set your mind on things above.

Oppression

Definition - Unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.

I’m not talking about a healthy appreciation of danger.

***Isaiah 54:14***

For you shall be far from oppression.

* Acts 10: 36 - 38 (***oppressed*** means – to exercise dominion against).
* All fear is demonic (Acts 26: 16 – 18). Satan has ***power*** (Exousia) - meaning delegated influence, authority, right or jurisdiction).
* 1 Peter 5: 8 – 9 (***devour*** – swallow or drown). He has a license to seek.

***Luke 13: 10***

The woman was bound by the devil *(spirit of infirmity).*

Jesus never hid because of fear. He hid because it was not yet his time.

* John 10: 10 (the thief comes ***only*** to steal (first), then kill and destroy).
	+ Context - Jews accused Jesus falsely in John 9 & 10.
	+ The sheep did not ***hear*** them.
	+ Thief refers to false teachers and prophets.
* To remain in fear is to remain in slavery or bondage to the devil.
	+ Ephesians 6: 10 - 12.

Word theft – believing a lie

God is not a man that he should lie.

***2 Cor 1: 18 - 22 (NLT).***

All of God’s promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding ***Yes***.

* The devil’s ultimate goal is to cause people to fear that God’s promises won’t come to pass in their lives (Mark 4: 15 – 20). Satan comes to ***take away*** the word - take it up, remove, make to doubt, cause to cease).
	+ Matthew 7: 24 – 27 (hear and do the word = a strong foundation).

***The just shall live by faith***. Spiritual life is connected to believing and acting on God’s word.

* + Acting on the word is the strongest resistance to fear.
* The worlds media is a vehicle by which fear is propagated. The narrative is - ***fear of man, not God***. Fear comes by hearing the word of the world.
* Fear is developed through meditating and acting on Satan’s lies.
* Fear always demands *compromise*.

***Exodus 17: 8***

God commanded King Saul to destroy Amalek, the first nation to attack Israel during the exodus.

* + Accepting standards that are lower than what is desirable.

 Cares of this world.

* + Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt (Exodus 14: 10 – 14).
	+ King Saul feared the people and disobeyed God (1 Samuel 15: 1 – 3 & 24). As a result, he lost his right to kingship (so did Adam).

***2 Kings 4:23***

Shunammite & Elisha. *It shall be* well = Shalom.

* + When we bow to fear, our spiritual kingship is compromised.
* Fear must be resisted to ensure our stand in faith is not compromised.
* Mark 5: 36 – Jesus response to Jairus, “***be not afraid, only believe***”.
* Pay attention to the word, not the world (Proverbs 4: 20).

Strongholds (Battle ground is the mind)

2 Corinthians 10: 3 – 5 (KJV &NLT). Paul is defending his apostolic authority.

***Examples***:

1). We always pray to Mary and the saints.

2). God wants us to suffer in this world to give him glory.

3). None of us are worthy this side of heaven.

4). My past will always define me.

A stronghold is a ***fortress***. When you tear down a stronghold you can go in and take captives (prisoners). Once you take the stronghold, then you can take the thoughts.

* The spiritual principle is instruction on how to deal with deception.
* The devil will plant suggestions and speak lies contrary to the Word.
* Human reasoning and false arguments must be cast down.
* Casting down ***imaginations*** - means reasoning, mindsets or deceptive paradigms. These things keep us from truly knowing God.
	+ 2 Peter 1: 1 – 4. God’s promises cover all life.
* Don’t seek truth outside the scriptures.
* A lie is anything that contradicts ***the truth***. Once you expose the lie, mindset or thought pattern, then you can recognise and more easily take captive the thoughts. These lies can warp our view of God.
* Don’t reply on your own understanding (Proverbs 3: 5 - 6).

What you believe about God will affect every aspect of life.

* Luke 1: 18 (Zachariah’s human reasoning produced unbelief).

Worry and anxiety

***Mammon*** – treasures, wealth or riches (where it is personified and opposed to God).

The spirit of the world is always looking for servants. Serve that spirit and you will ***‘toil’*** all your life (to labour, to work hard, to feel fatigue or be wearied).

Worry and anxiety attacks your faith like a virus attacks a human body and weakens it. All worry is fear based.

God won’t control our thoughts like the devil tries to. We must. He will allow what we will allow. The gift of choice.

Matthew 6: 24 – 34. ***Take no thought*** *(to be anxious about or have care)*.

If it doesn’t help, don’t do it.

Don’t say you can’t help it.

Worry is a ***choice*** of the heart.

* Verse 24 and 25 are connected with ‘***therefore***” (conjunctive adverb).
* Resisting worry and care requires faith in God’s ability to meet needs.
* This command of the Lord ***must be obeyed*** to have freedom from fear.
* We are ***not*** to worry or be anxious. If it were not possible, the Lord would not have commanded it.
* ***Don’t take the thought saying***. Don’t speak lack, speak provision.
* Seek first the kingdom and don’t be concerned about tomorrow.

Worry is a ‘faith weakening’ spiritual virus

Uncontrolled worry can place us in ‘***spiritual intensive care’***

Our faith can be so weak that we need others to help us function.

Mark 4: 35 – 41 (the disciples feared for their lives).

“***Don’t you care that we perish***”?

Jesus always cares for his children.

* ***Master*** (instructor or teacher). Don’t you care / or concerned)?
* Cares and worry had placed them on ‘*spiritual life support’*.
* Their faith was ‘choked’ (Mark 4: 19).
* “How is it that you have ***no faith***”.

***Psalm 55: 22***

Cast your burdens upon the Lord and he shall sustain you. He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Philippians 4: 6 – 8 (NLT).

* Don’t mediate the problem, but meditate and speak the answer.
* Cast the care on the Lord, for he cares for us (1 Peter 5: 5 – 7).

What reveals strong faith?

* Strong faith is being fully persuaded (Romans 4: 19 – 21).
* Abraham believed that God would do what he said.
* You can’t worry and be in faith at the same time.

***Afraid***

means timid of fearful.

* John 14: 1 & 27 – let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
	+ ***Troubled*** - stir or agitate / to render anxious or distressed.
	+ Proverbs 4: 24 – Guard your heart with all diligence.
* Worry is contagious and spreads through uncontrolled thoughts and words. *Don’t take the thought ‘saying’*.
* You can plan for tomorrow, but ***don’t worry*** about tomorrow. Stay in the ***present*** and in ***his presence*** and rest (Proverbs 16: 2 - 3 & Psalm 37: 23).

***Labour***

means toil.

***Heavy laden*** – To load up or over burden.

How to stop the *virus* of worry?

1. ***Go to the doctor*** (look to Jesus the great physician).
	1. Matthew 11: 28 – 30 & John 15: 5 (come to him first).

Keep the face plate down and the sword of the spirit up.

This is our ‘***spiritual PPE’***. We must have it at the ready at all times. There is no need to take God’s armour off –***EVER***.

* 1. Hebrews 12: 1 – 3 (consider Jesus and keep your eyes on him).
1. ***Practice spiritual distancing*** (don’t become infected by others).

***Evil***

Worthless, depraved or harmful.

***Communication***

companionship

***Corrupt***

To shrivel, wither, spoil or destroy.

* 1. 1 Corinthians 15: 33 (evil communication corrupts).
	2. 2 John 5 - 10 (NLT), Galatians 3: 1 – 7 (NLT) & 2 Peter 2: 1 – 3.
1. ***Take your medicine*** (strengthen your spiritual immune system).
	1. Meditating on the word and renewing the mind.
	2. Joshua 1: 8, Proverbs 4: 20 – 23 & Romans 12: 1 - 3.
2. ***Wear your spiritual PPE*** (take the shield of faith to stop fiery darts).
	1. Ephesians 6: 16 – 17 (shield, helmet and sword).

It is an act of the will to “*fear not*”

**Joshua 24: 15**

But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Psalm 118: 1 - 9 (Psalm 23: 4).

**Romans 8: 31**

If God be for us, who can be against us.

* The Lord is on my side, ***I will not fear***: What can man do unto me.
* We must choose life (Deuteronomy 30: 19). The Word is life.
* Bowing to fear is a choice. We can choose to live by faith or be captive to fear (the just shall live by faith).

Proverbs 29: 25

* Fear of man brings a ***snare*** (bait or lure - hook in the nose).
* Fear is a trap set by the devil to snare us into believing his lies. Don’t take the bait.

Even in troubled times, David declared blessing of God.

Psalm 3: 1 – 8 (compare with Proverbs 3: 21 – 26).

David defeated Goliath by trusting God

* David fled from Absalom when he penned this Psalm
* Ephesians 1: 3 “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who* ***has*** *blessed us with* ***all*** *spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”*

Psalms 27: 1 – 3 & 13

* The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear.
* Are you believing to see the goodness of the Lord?

Psalm 91: 5 – 7

* Our declaration of faith activates God’s protective covering.
* It ***shall not*** come near you.

God promised Moses in Exodus 33: 14-15 that his presence would go with them. Moses said if you don’t go with us, don’t carry us up.

Isaiah 41: 10 (Fear not, for I am with you).

* The Lord will never leave us nor forsake us.
	+ Matthew 28: 20
	+ Hebrews 13: 5 – 6

Psalm 112: 6 – 8

***James 1: 5 - 7***

An established heart is “single-minded”. A single-minded man is ***stable*** in all of his ways.

* He shall not be ***afraid*** of evil tidings (bad news): his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord. His heart is established.
* An established heart is fully persuaded that what God has promised he is able to perform (Romans 4: 16 - 22).
* An established heart does not ***waver*** under circumstances.
* John 11: 6 (Jesus remained two days when he heard Lazarus was sick).

John 14: 27

***2 Cor 6: 14-18***

***(NLT).*** There can be no harmony between Christ and the devil. The word cautions against wrong partnerships.

* Let not your heart be troubled (agitated), ***neither let it be afraid (timid)***. Why, because Jesus has given us his ***peace*** (prosperity, rest, quietness).

Peace is a fruit of the spirit. True peace comes from God only.

* Compare with Luke 12: 51 – 53 (Jesus did not give peace to the world but ***division*** (only used once in Bible – means disunion of opinion & conduct).
* Clash of two kingdoms. The world’s peace is a counterfeit. It tolerates evil for the sake of ‘harmony’. It declares evil good and good evil.
* Luke 2: 14 – Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Fear contaminates faith

***Contaminated*** means:

Having been made impure by exposure to or addition of a poisonous or polluting substance.

***Isaiah 55: 11***

So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it.

Mark 4: 35 – 41 (Disciples in the storm)

Jesus was at rest. Faith always rests.

He said “***let us*** pass over unto the other side.

* Jesus word had gone out and it would not return void.
* If you are not in rest, you are not in faith.
	+ Hebrews 3: 17 – 19.
	+ Could not enter into his rest because of unbelief.
* The ship was full of water – to fill entirely. What about the little ships?
* Don’t you ***care*** that we perish? Compare with John 10: 11 – “The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep”.
* Love always cares (1 Peter 5: 7.) Love always gives. Love never fails.

***Fearful***

Timid or dread.

Fearful = faithless

* Why are you so ***fearful***? how is it you have ***no faith (in my words)***?
* Jesus ***rebuked*** the winds and said to the sea and it went from a great tempest to a great calm.He spoke the end result.
* Feared exceedingly – That’s where the root word ‘phobia’ comes from.
* God’s ***blessing*** gives us the authority to speak to natural circumstances and they will obey.

Mark 5: 22 & 35 - 43 (Jairus)

* Jairus made a demand on Jesus with faith filled words. Nothing more was spoken.
* Jesus was in no hurry (v.33). The seed of faith had been sown.
* Fear tries to leverage off an evil report. They knew Jairus had gone to Jesus seeking a miracle – “*Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Master any further”*. Death never troubled Jesus.

***Stop the fear, only believe***

* An evil report must be overcome with faith filled words.
* ***Be not afraid, only believe***. Jesus immediately responded to that evil report.
* Only believe what you have already declared. Don’t move from your confession of faith (Hebrews 11: 1). Faith is evidence.
* Natural circumstances were screaming at Jairus, but he kept his mouth shut. Fear tolerated is faith contaminated.
* Fear ***must*** be replaced with “***believe only***” (Luke 8: 50).
* Unbelief must be kicked out for faith to operate.

Matthew 14: 25 – 30

* They cried out for fear (Shriek or scream).
* Faith response, be of good cheer (means to have courage).
* Peter walked in the word “come”.
* Fear was the substance of Peter’s undesirable failure. When he ***saw*** the wind, he was ***afraid*** and he ***began to sink***.
* Doubt (waver) and unbelief will always rob us.
* Peter’s miracle began but was never fulfilled due to fear and doubt. He walked by sight and not by faith. Fear had contaminated his faith.
* Jesus is always there to lift us in our hour of trouble or distress. He said he would never leave us nor forsake us. NEVER.
* Remember, submit to God first, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

The destructive nature of fear

***F.E.A.R acronym***

***F***alse ***E***vidence ***A***ppearing ***R***eal.

***FEAR*** *= God can’t*

A heart filled with the word of God has no room for fear. The promises of God become bigger than the circumstances you are facing.

* Satan Challenges God’s faith giving promises with fear filled doubt.
* Every fear is a fear of the failure of one or more of God’s promises.
* His promises enable us to be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1: 2 - 4).

Acts 27: 13 – 44 (Paul’s shipwreck)

Individuals can make a difference and even be the catalysts for saving lives.

* This was God’s plan for Paul (Acts 23: 11)

***Perceive***

To discern or to see.

***1 Cor 2: 14 - 15***

But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God…..must be spiritually discerned.

* A centurion was assigned to Paul and he treated him well.
* Paul was discerning in spirit. The captain, the owner and the centurion were being led by natural circumstances.
	+ Romans 8: 14 – For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Fear wants us to believe that all hope is gone. ***Faith is the substance of things hoped for.***

(assurance or confidence)

* + John 16: 13 – 15. Spirit leads, guides and shows us things to come.
* Feelings are for information, not navigation. They apply to this natural sense realm. The word and Spirit lead and guide us, not feelings.
* Tempestuous – whirlwind, typhoon, hurricane or cyclone.
* No ability to navigate by natural means (no sun or starts many days).
* The angel encouraged Paul to “***fear not***”. Take courage.

Favour was granted to 276 souls because of Paul.

* God has “***given”*** – to grant forgiveness, to deliver, pardon or rescue. To give graciously or to grant as a favour.
* Paul believed the words spoken to him. Note - Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke 1: 38 – “*Be it unto me according to your word”).*

***Rahab***.

The scarlet rope must hang from the window. All the family members must be here inside the house.

* The only ‘***lifeboat***’ on that ship was Paul, the servant of God.
	+ Your church can be a lifeboat. Don’t be too quick to abandon ship.
	+ ***Rahab*** was a lifeboat for her mother, father, sisters, brothers and all their families. Her faith delivered them from certain death.
	+ ***Esther*** was a lifeboat for Israel, preventing genocide. She went to the king when it was not according to the law and said, “*If I perish, I perish.*” Her boldness of faith resulted in kings favour and victory.
* Now the centurion listened to the wise counsel of Paul.

Fear is dependent on the seen realm. Faith is dependent on the unseen realm.

* The soldier’s counsel was to kill the prisoners, but the centurion’s heart was to save Paul.
* In your darkest hour, take communion and give thanks. Consider Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12: 2).
* If Paul had succumbed to fear, the ship would have sunk with him and all on board.
* Faith in God overcame fear of destruction and death.
* Although we have been given a spirit of power, love and a sound mind, it remains dormant without faith.
* This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith (1 John 5: 5).
* Matt 7: 25 - The rain descended, and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock
	+ A wise man hears and does the words of Jesus (the Rock).

Whose report will you believe

***Time line since the exodus from Egypt***

Approx. 1.5 years

They had left the wilderness of Sinai and journeyed to the wilderness of Paran (Kadesh-Barnea), which bordered the promised land (11-day journey).

Number 13 & 14

* God had already determined what he was going to do. All that was required was for Israel to agree and step out in faith.

Grace is God’s part, faith is our part.

We need both.

***Numbers 14: 24***

Caleb had different spirit with him.

* When the 12 spies reported back to Moses, 10 were not in agreement with what God had said (ten said ***NO,*** two said ***GO***).

The people lost heart – discouraged or melted.

* ***Evil report*** = slander or defamation (a false statement or the action of damaging the good reputation of someone).
* From that moment ***FEAR*** ruled. ***They believed a lie***.

Warning to leaders

***Exodus 18: 21***

***Leaders-***

Capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes

* This is a warning to leaders who are entrusted with God’s word.

***Acts 6: 3***

***Leaders -*** Well respected, full of the Spirit and wisdom.

* The church is spiritually weakened when God’s generals don’t proclaim the truth of his word.
* The leaders discouraged the people with an evil report (fear & doubt).

The people of Canaan

* The Canaanites saw it differently (Joshua 2: 9 – 11).
* Their outward appearance did not reveal their true heart. They feared Israel 40 years.
* Israel chose to believe an evil report which stopped the entire nation from entering into the promised land (their inheritance).
* They were not established on God’s delivering power even though they had seen it with their own eyes (Deuteronomy 1: 26 – 32 NLT).

The faith response (Numbers 14: 6 – 9).

***1 John 4: 4***

The greater one lives in us. We are not grasshoppers.

* Only rebel not against the Lord, neither fear the people.
* The Lord is with us; fear them not.
* For we are ***well able*** to ***overcome*** it (prevail, endure or have power).

Joshua 1: 5 - 9 – God showed Joshua how to establish his heart.

* Three times God commanded Joshua to be strong and courageous.
* Joshua had 40 years to think about failure.
* It’s a choice to be strong and take courage.
* ***Fear not, neither be dismayed*** – God is with us wherever we go.

Fear stops you seeing (spiritually)

Negative impacts / consequences of fear

***2 Corinthians 4: 4***

The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that ***believe not.***

This is spiritual blindness.

2 Kings 6: 8 - 17 (NLT)

Natural eyes saw danger.

Spiritual eyes saw protection.

* Elisha’s servant was only seeing with natural eyes.
* Fear stops you seeing the supernatural.
* Elisha prayed that his servant’s “***eyes***” would be open to see into the realm of the spirit (supernatural).
* The hillside was ***full*** of horses and chariots of fire – an angelic wall of protection to keep or guard.

***Hebrews 12: 2***

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

***Psalm 91: 11***

For he shall give his angels charge over you, to ***keep*** you in ***all*** your ways.

* Fear takes our eyes off Jesus and his word (Peter – “*come*”).
* 2 Corinthians 5: 7 – For we walk by faith and not by sight.
* Romans 8: 24 – Hope that is seen is not hope.
* Listening to the voice of the world builds our capacity for fear.
* Listening to the Word of God builds our capacity for faith.
* Satan challenges God’s ***faith filled*** promises with ***fear filled*** lies.
* Fear is not natural to the born-again believer. We have a ***spirit of faith***.
* Walking by faith is in conflict with the five physical senses.

John 20: 19 – 29

* Fear locks you away and stops the supernatural.
* They were glad (cheerful) when they saw the Lord.

Fear will produce a faithless response.

* Thomas wanted to see to believe. In the kingdom, believing is seeing.
* Faith depends entirely on God’s Word – that’s the established heart.
* If faith pleases God, then fear pleases the devil. ***Fear is NOT OK***. It robs us of our faith, causing doubt and unbelief.

That’s the way of faith.

* Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Hebrews 3: 17 – 4: 2

* They could not enter in because of unbelief.
* Faith without corresponding action is dead (James 2:17)
* Likewise, fear without actions is dead.
* Satan cannot do anything to us apart from fear, any more than God can do something for us apart from faith.

***Conform***

To act according to or be obedient to a rule or norm.

Fear demands conformity

John 9: 16 - 22 (Parents of blind man feared the religious leaders).

John 12: 43 – They loved the praises of men more than the praises of God.

They wanted to stop the name being spoken.

Fear cannot remain in a heart filled with faith.

Acts 4: 13 – 20 (For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard).

* Their boldness reflected their faith.
* But we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Romans 12: 1 - 3

* Be ***transformed*** by the ***renewing*** of our mind.
* Renewing means – a renovation or a complete change for the better.
* Proverbs 4: 20 – 23 (stay in the word).

Don’t let fear define you

Paul wrote 2 Timothy from a dark and damp prison cell, just before his death in AD 67 under Emperor Nero’s reign.

Fear of failure, unworthiness, a poor self-image.

2 Timothy 1: 1 – 11

* Paul is encouraging his spiritual son Timothy not to let fear or shame define him. He had been called by God’s purpose and grace.

***Hebrews 2: 15***

Fear of death kept them in bondage.

Romans 8: 14 – 17

* We are heirs of the kingdom of God. Joint-heirs not sub-heirs.
* We are no longer slaves to fear. ***Bondage*** means slavery.
* Our identity is in Christ.

Peter with Jesus (Luke 5: 1 – 11)

* Fear caused Peter to tell Jesus to depart from him. Fear is often associated with guilt, shame, condemnation, and unworthiness. (Romans 8: 1 – 2). I’m just a grasshopper in your sight.

***Forsake*** means:

To lay aside, to leave, to let go, to put away or to yield up.

The Son (***who is the Truth***) shall make you free.

* Peter was ***astonished*** - amazed / dumbfounded at the catch.
* Depart from me – “I’m not free from sin.”
* Jesus response was grace. When you encounter grace himself, you will ***forsake*** the old and follow the new.

The prodigal son (Luke 15: 17 – 24)

Three characters in this parable (father, the lost son and the self-righteous son).

***Proverbs 20: 21***

An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof ***shall not*** be blessed.

* Jesus was teaching on the Father’s heart to restore the lost.

***Proverbs 28: 22***

He that hastes to be rich has an evil eye, and considers not that poverty ***shall*** come upon him.

* Riotous living means – excess or an abandoned life.
* If you join yourself to the world, you will be corrupted.
* ***Join*** means – to stick like glue or to keep company (1 Corinthians 15:33).

***Fear was speaking to him***

* Through guilt, shame and condemnation, he no longer saw himself as a son. A servant or slave would be good enough.
* By his reasoning, his past dictated his future.
* He felt unworthy and was willing to accept ‘servant status’. It defined him.

***Robe*** was a covering.

***Ring*** was identity & position.

***Shoes*** signified he was not a servant but a son of the father.

There will be no guilt, shame or condemnation in heaven. But we can experience heaven on earth ***now***. Give it to Father God and everything will be alright.

* The greatest decision he ever made – “***he arose and came to his father”.***
* The Father saw him a great way off. He wasn’t looking back, but forward.
* ***He didn’t see death, he saw life. He didn’t see lost, he saw found***.
* This was the Father’s heart speaking and this parable represents sinners being restored to a loving Heavenly Father.
* Let the Word of God define who you are and your authority as a believer in Jesus Christ. Declare – ***I AM A CHILD OF GOD***.

Casting out fear (not just resisting)

***1 John 4:18 (AMPC)***

There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors *and* expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and [so] he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love [is not yet grown into love’s complete perfection].

1 John 4: 16 – 18 (perfect love casts out fear).

* Known and believed (*to have faith in*) the love.

***John 14: 27***

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

* Agape love = God’s love.
* ***Perfect*** means of full age (full-grown), completeness or mature.

***1 Peter 2: 2***

As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may ***grow*** thereby (grow up or increase).

* ***Casts out*** means – to throw outside, throw away or expel.
* ***Torment*** means – penalty, correction or punishment
	+ Hebrews 5: 12 – 14 (full age).
	+ 1 Corinthians 3: 1 – 6 (lacked maturity due to strife).

Romans 5: 1 - 5

* ***Shed abroad*** - pour out, bestow, shed forth or distribute largely.
* Love is like a vaccine which attacks fear with an immune response, enabling us to ***resist & cast out*** fear’s invasive stronghold.
* A love ruled heart will always triumph over fear.

James 4: 7

* ***Submit*** – To subordinate, to obey or to put under. Submitting to God is submitting to his word.
* ***Resist*** - Stand against, oppose or withstand.

1 Peter 5: 8 - 9

* We resist ***steadfast in the faith***. (steadfast means – solid, stable, strong or sure).

1 John 5: 4 - 5

* For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the word, ***even our faith***.
* The shield of faith is the most crucial piece of armour.

Galatians 5: 6 (KJV & AMPC)

* For [if we are] in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.

The command to love must be obeyed

* Matthew 22: 34 – 40 (the law is fulfilled in the commandment of love).
* John 13: 34 – 35 (as I have loved you).
* John 14: 15 – If you love me, keep my commandments.
* 1 John 3: 18 – 24 - love is the inner witness.

Walking is love is so important because God ***is*** Love.

The greatest weapon against fear is ***love***, because love ***never*** fails.

Conclusion (2 Timothy 1: 7)

For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, ***and of love***, and of a sound mind.