

Freedom from the Dread of Evil



The news is filled with disasters, tragedies, war, and suffering. It seems like everywhere we look, there are opportunities for terror. We are really living in "perilous times." It is easy to look for and expect the worst to happen. It is real! We have an enemy who is lurking in the shadows of darkness, seeking to make us his prey! Do you experience times when the sense of darkness and evil grips your heart with a heavy sense of impending doom? There are times when I feel weighed down with deep sense of an encroaching darkness threatening myself, my family or my job. As I was praying about this, I came to understand that God does not want us to fear evil. He also wants us to live free from the "dread" of evil.¹ How do we live free from this sense of trepidation when we live in a society that is crumbling around us and evil seems to win on a regular basis?

I found the phrase "dread of evil" used several times in the Bible. In each case, the Word proclaims God is victorious over all darkness and evil and we need to know He can be trusted in such times. We are called to make the choice to stand in faith and place our trust in the LORD. The real focus of our battle is to fight is to keep our eyes on the LORD and place our faith in Him. He promises, "But he who listens to Me shall live securely and be free from the dread of evil." Prov. 1:33

Joshua and Caleb were men whose faith was forged out of their relationship with God. Moses sent twelve spies into the Promised Land and when they returned, ten declared that there were giants in the land, too large and fierce for the Israelites. They compared themselves to grasshoppers next to the fierce violent goliaths who occupied the land. Joshua and Caleb were the only ones who did agree with this assessment. They declared that yes, there were giants in the land, but through their God they could surely overcome them. It is not coincidental that those who had faith and did not fear were two men that the Word declares walked closely to their God, they knew Him! Joshua had remained in the tent of

¹¹ See Portions for the Journey, "Lord, Keep Me From the Dread of Evil" (1340) by Tami Skarin

meeting with the LORD during the years he served Moses. It is said that Caleb "followed hard after God all the days of his life."

David was a man who faced his share of giants! When all of Israel, including her king were in fear and dread of the giant Goliath, David, had a different heart. He saw something they did not see. He saw a mere man who dared to challenge the armies of the living God! His confidence was completely in the God who had delivered him from the jaws of the lion and the bear. There was a point in his life, when he was being hunted by King Saul that the Philistines took his wives, children and belongings as well as those of the band of men who were following David. His men blamed David and threatened to kill him. David certainly would have had a strong sense of being surrounded by evil and darkness. His response gives us an example of how to walk in these times. The word says that David strengthened or encouraged himself in the LORD. In this time of prayer and fellowship with the LORD, God gave him directions by which to recover all that had been stolen.

Psalm 23 has brought tremendous comfort to so many believers through the generations. David declared that in God he would not any fear of evil even in the most extreme situation, impending death. He declared, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies..." In fact, he ends with a declaration of certainty that goodness and lovingkindness will be with him all the days of his life. That is what we so desperately need right now! Not just the absence of the dread of evil, but the certain hope that our lives hold goodness and lovingkindness, even in the presence of our enemies.

We are to ignore that sense of darkness when we discern it is lurking near. We are to actively pray and stand firmly in the battle, but our hearts need to be firmly established in quietness and confidence. We need to trust that our God is greater. Psalm 46 declares we can have hearts full of peace in the midst of a disintegrating world, in the midst of war. God is to be our hope, our refuge, a present and well-proven help in time of trouble. God will be with us, as a fortress and a high tower. We are to be still, know and recognize that He is God and He is with us. Jesus said that He would never leave us, or fail us, or forsake us. When we truly know Him, we can put our faith in Him and know that we truly have nothing to fear on this earth.