

From Pastor's Desk...

The cheerful declaration of a victorious Christian

The epistle to Hebrews must have been written in a context when Christians were going through suffering for the sake of the gospel. Many were beaten, severely persecuted and became martyrs. Jewish Christians who were familiar with Old Testament customs and practices were being tempted to revert to Judaism or to Judaize the gospel (Gal. 2:14). Here, Christ is presented as God's full and final revelation.

It is significant to abide with the rules for Christian living while we confront challenges daily. We live in a world of uncertainty. Anxiety, fears of hurt, sickness, disappointment and criticism make us weak in our life. Hebrews chapter 13 is a reminder for us to be cautious in developing a standard of living for the glory of God. Those who are alert in doing the same become victorious over all adversaries.

- *Confidence in the Lord.* The writer of Hebrews affirms strongly, "the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid, what can man do to me" (13:6). This is a quotation from Ps. 118:6. We need to seek the Lord's face and find the deliverance from all fears (Ps 34:4). There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. We are just passing through the valley of the shadow of death. Psalmist affirms, I will fear no evil. For you are with me (Ps 23:4). The Lord is our Ebenezer, not just to sympathize with us but help is in times of need. When Paul was in a crisis, would be torn into pieces by the religious fanatics the commander intervened to save him. The Lord stood at his side at night and strengthened his vision to preach the gospel in Rome in the future (Acts 23:11).
- *Contentment in the Lord's purpose.* It was a regular custom of Job to offer sacrifices for children early morning thinking they may commit sin and curse God in their hearts. Later in much affliction he admitted "what I feared has come upon me, what I dreaded has happened to me" (Job 3:25). We come across people in worship, prayer and fasting out of fear. This is contrary to the Biblical foundational teachings. Job realized the fact that God's purpose will be fulfilled, He can do all things (Job 42:2).

Let us have confidence in God and contentment in His purpose to make joint declaration over all adversaries.

God bless you.

In His Glorious Ministry,

Rev. K. P. Mathew

(Senior Pastor, IPC Hebron, Los Angeles)

Fearless in God

(Anoop Chandran)

I fear people and hesitate to tell them about the Good News.

I fear my future and try to make it secure with all my earnings.

I fear that I will lose salvation and try to impress God in vain.

I fear that devil - the enemy will take me down and sleep in dread.

I fear that I will lose control of my life and strive to be perfect.

I fear that I will go wrong and keep delaying the good things that God wants to do through me.

The list of my fears goes on. But then I asked myself "Why do I fear?"

When I was a kid I used to fear certain insects and keep away from them. But as a grown up, when I think about them I realized how foolish and ignorant I was to be afraid of them. Many times, we fear because we haven't matured in faith and the wisdom of God's word. Bible tells us that when we start fearing God instead - it brings us wisdom and understanding (Pro 9:10). Hebrews 13:6 says "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

How big are the things that we fear when compared to the God who is on our side? If we look through the eyes of faith we could see that the Red Sea is nothing more than a small puddle on God's way. The wall of Jericho is not stronger than the walls of a sand castle. Goliath – though a giant is like an ant in front of Him. The huge army of the king of Aram is only a swarm of flies running into fire. If the same God who strengthened Moses, Joshua, David and Elisha is with us then what should we be afraid of? Who can touch me when I am in the shelter of the most high (Psalm 91:1)?

I believe one day we will look down to this earth from heaven and realize how insignificant the things that we feared most were. But until then we need the faith to overcome fear that the enemy instills in us to prevent us from being fruitful to God.

We need to remind ourselves that God the Almighty is truly on our side. May God help us to be fearless and not just "fear less".