



When I Am Afraid

“In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?” (Psalm 56:4 NASB)

What can man do to me? Well, I can think of a few things, can't you? Most of them are very unsavory to say the least.

What if we could say with David that *“man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. My foes have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me....All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life”* (Psalm 56:1b-2&5-6). Wouldn't you be afraid if this was how your life was going? David had been fighting and running for his life since he was a young man with threats and dangers and fears at every turn.

Yet David could say to the Lord, *“When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You”* (Psalm 56:3). David knew that FEAR is a form of faith because it is “to expect or worry about something bad or unpleasant” - Merriam Webster Dictionary (Note: not the reverence and awe that is used to describe a Believer's attitude towards God). Fear is trust or confidence in something bad—the assurance and expectation of harm. It is opposite Biblical faith, which is *“the assurance of things hoped for”* (Hebrews 11:1a) for good to us from God.

Fear is a powerful motivator in the world. It is the #1 ingredient responsible for causing “good people” to go along with very “bad things,” and it works something like this: if I want someone to do something, I need to give them an incentive. If I'm feeling charitable, I might offer them a financial incentive. If I for-

got my wallet at home, I might try to intimidate or threaten them or their families—a bankable alternative. Fear has been used since the Fall to control people's actions, and the world feeds us with stories of how terrible it can be if we don't obey its wishes.

David had more reason than most to fear man, even his own children and friends—yet he says, *“what can mere man do to me?”* not because he was more intelligent, powerful, or cunning than these men, but because he was looking into eternity, and he knew that whatever happened to him here, God had justified Him there: *“You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; **This I know, that God is for me.** In God, whose word I praise, In the LORD, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? Your vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. For You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living”* (Psalm 56:8-13). David knew that he should not fear the fury of the world, for *“yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity”* (Psalm 37:10-11) under the rule of Jesus Christ. We should look ahead with David to the *“inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you”* (1 Peter 1:4), received by FAITH in God, not FEAR of man, *“for you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'"* (Romans 8:15) Amen.