

Devotion 2: When Fear Freezes

April 7, 2026

Scripture: *Matthew 28:4*

“And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.”

Devotion

The guards at the tomb were Roman soldiers—tough, trained, disciplined men. They had been stationed at the tomb to make sure nothing happened. They were there on duty, doing a job. And when the angel appeared and the ground shook, these strong soldiers trembled and became like dead men. Think about that: the men guarding a dead man’s tomb ended up looking like dead men themselves! Fear can do that to us. When we encounter something far bigger than ourselves and we have no relationship with it—no love, no trust, no faith—fear is all that’s left. The guards had no connection to Jesus. They were just doing their job. And so the most powerful event in history—the resurrection of the Son of God—left them paralyzed. This is what happens when we try to stand before God on our own strength, our own righteousness, our own sense of duty. We are overwhelmed. But the good news of Easter is that God doesn’t want us frozen in fear. He wants us alive in faith. The same resurrection that terrified the guards brought joy to those who loved Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a time when fear made you feel “frozen”—unable to think, speak, or act?
2. Why do you think the guards reacted so differently from the women at the tomb?
3. What is the difference between being afraid of God and having a healthy respect for God?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we confess that sometimes we come to You out of duty rather than love. Forgive us when we go through the motions. Melt our fear with Your grace and draw us close to You through the risen Jesus. Amen.

Family Action Item: Talk as a family about something each person does out of “duty”—going to church, saying prayers, doing chores. Then talk about how love can change that duty into something joyful.