

Before I launch into my message today, I want to give thanks to our Safety & Security Team here at Central. They do a lot to keep us safe and prepared for an emergency every week. (patrol, lock doors, etc.) A lot goes on behind the scenes in each service and for every big event; and we are thankful for the way y'all look out for our members and guests.

As we continue on in our *Needs Series*, it might seem strange to you to think of "Security" as a need that each of us have, but it probably wouldn't seem that strange if you really stop to think about it. God designed each of us with a Fight or flight response in dangerous or fearful situations. Have you read any research on cortisol's impact on your body? I highly recommend articles from Dr. Carolyn Leaf's research on fight or flight and cortisol's long-term effects on your physical health. We were never designed to live in that heightened state of stress and/or fear.

We all have a desire to be taken care of, to be secure, even us men, who try to act macho and have a tendency to be loners in this area of our lives; deep down inside, if we are honest, we feel more confident in a scary or stressful situation if we know someone has our backs. Why is this? It's God's design: "It's not good for man to be alone." (**Genesis 2:18**)

"Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart." -Ecclesiastes 4:11, 12

Fear is a very real weapon of the enemy. You may have heard someone teach that the opposite of faith is doubt. It's not. The opposite of faith is fear and fear brings doubt. We are called to live a life of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please Him and whatever is not of faith is sin (**Hebrews 11:6/Romans 14:23**). There are so many areas in our lives that the enemy will attempt to sow seeds of fear: Fear of failure, fear of the unknown, fear of lack, fear of rejection, and the list goes on and on and on...

One of the major temptations in the area of Security is that we would attempt to get this need met illegitimately through another means beside God: Security in a relationship, security in a job or career or position, security in having a certain amount of money... God wants to be our source of Security. **Proverbs 18:10:**

[SLIDE] "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe."

The Name(s) of the Lord (example: *Jehovah Jireh*/ we fear lack... He is our provision). God revealed Himself in many different names in the Bible, so that we could learn to trust Him in all these different areas of our lives [Debbie VanEpp and Sunday School with the children]:

"And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You." -Psalm 9:10

Over and over again in the Scriptures, we are not just reminded, we are *commanded* to "fear not" or told "do not be afraid." [**FEAR NOT INSERT in the foyer**] The Bible also details how God will protect us: He's our shield and Defender; our Tower and Refuge; our Armor; our Fortress; and the list goes on and on and on... Again, why it's so

important that you know what the Word of God says! All His promises are 'yes and amen' (**2nd Corinthians 1:20**), but you can't speak the amen if you don't know His promises!

Are you trusting in God's promise to protect you? Or are you trying to protect yourself? Guard yourself? His armor is what you need to protect you! (**Ephesians 6**) As sheep, sometimes our safety is dependent upon our proximity to the Shepherd.

"Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So, they launched out. But as they were sailing along, He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" -Luke 8:22-ff.

The storm was real, the fear was real, but what did Jesus say? Again, why it's so important to know the Word of God and what He has promised you!

Fear/Fear of the Lord/Fear of man

The disclaimer: God doesn't protect everyone from everything (sin, foolishness, other people's choices, the world, demons, martyrdom) We have targets on our backs as believers. Jesus also gave us many warnings in the Bible about trials, temptations and

troubles we would face in this world... BUT... He promised to be with us. But you may still ask, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Partly because we have an enemy and his job is to "Steal, kill and destroy." (John 10:10).

[*Monica's motorcycle accident testimony*]

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."