

## BE NOT AFRAID

One of the things that is found most endearing about Jesus is his seeming dislike of fear.

At his birth, a group of angels told the shepherds not to be afraid (Luke 2).

Jesus told the disciples when their boat was about to sink and when they thought he was a ghost not to be afraid (Mark 6).

Jesus said that fear is useless and what is needed is trust.

A man claiming to be an apostle who had learned at the feet of Jesus, wrote, "There is no fear in love [dread does not exist], but full-grown (complete, perfect) love turns fear out of doors and expels every trace of terror! For fear brings with it the thought of punishment, and so he who is afraid has not reached the full maturity of love" (1 John 4:18). The verse before shows that he is thinking of loving God.

These verses may only teach that we must not be afraid of God because we can trust him. Feelings and the will are two different things so we can trust God while feeling afraid of him. The Bible is not as consoling then as it looks for its fondness for self-abuse would suggest it wants us to live in terror. The angels did not censure fear and told them not to be afraid of THEM for they were scared the shepherds would make a run for the gate.

Jesus meant when he told the apostles not to fear that they were not to fear him for he was no ghost.

The John text does not tell us to be unafraid of God not to serve God because of fear for that would not be loving God at all. God casts out the fear that prevents love and that is the fear John means.

We are to be afraid of ourselves. James and Jesus both taught that we have no evidence that we will be alive tomorrow or all right tomorrow. That tells us that we cannot be sure if we will remain without sin until five minutes have passed.

Jesus said that sin was so terrible that it is better to be murdered or drowned than to cause it. He allowed us to have feelings so if sin is so bad then we have to be more afraid of it than anything else in the world or universe.

The Bible could tell us not to fear God and still advocate terror for since the will and the emotions don't go together you may have no fear in your will but have complete and utter fear in your emotions.

When the price of sin is eternal torment that means that Christianity is to be a cult basted in fear.