

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – April 7, 2020

The Lord be with you.

I remember as a boy on the farm, my dad telling me that animals could smell fear.

I'm not so sure that I believe that at the time, but now now science is proving my dad right that animals really can smell fear in us, but you know, we humans can also smell fear.

I smell fear when I watched the TV news or I smell fear when I go to the supermarket. A browse Facebook and Twitter. There was a lot of fear my fear about the coronavirus, fear about the economy, fear about what's gonna happen and fear is contagious. It is as contagious as any virus and government and health authorities are warning us that the most difficult week is ahead.

And when I'm afraid whenever I'm tempted, even to panic, there is a verse of scripture that I've always turned to.

I feel that the verse was written just for me, as it comes from Paul's second letter to my name's sake, Timothy for you. See, when I was a boy, my parents told me that I was named after Timothy, in the Bible. So I've made a lifetime study of Timothy.

I feel that I know Timothy, I understand him as a man who so loved Jesus who was so faithful but who by disposition by inclination Timothy could be timid and fearful.

I mean that comes out and Paul's letters to him and this verse that I have in mind today it comes from the Apostle Paul, as he is in an underground dungeon in Rome.

It is actually the last letter that we have of Paul. Is it just a matter of days, Paul, he's gonna be marks out into a public square where they will be had him, and Paul is writing to Timothy, who himself is facing a great danger, but this is a verse it brings with confidence and power, in the midst of trouble.

Here is my verse, 2 Timothy 1:7, I memorized it in the King James. So I'm gonna give it to you in the King James. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Now, the New Testament Greek has several words that are translated by or one word fear the writers of the New Testament, they are diagnosticians of fear that they understand fear and in the New Testament, the most common garden variety word for fear is fahbas it's the word from which we get phobia, phobic.

And you know there is actually a good fear, it's good to be fearful of a bear in the woods or fearful of the rattle tank on the trail, but "fahbas as is not the word that Paul uses here in this verse whether when he says, God has not given to us the spirit of fear, he's using the word day loss from which we get our word delirious and day loss comes from a word, meaning, fear to revenge.

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This is actually the word that is used in the Gospels of Matthew, and Mark when Jesus and the disciples, that they sunk by a storm on the Sea of Galilee, there's water pouring it over the sides of the boat and Jesus who has been sleeping peacefully through the storm Jesus questions his disciples. Why are you so daylas, why are you so fear-driven?

Okay, so, Paul says God has not given us the spirit of daylas of being fear-driven. But God has given us power and love, and a sound mind, for this crisis and I just know that any time I am experiencing fear, I know that that fear does not come from God, whether God has given us what we need for a time of trouble, he has given us the spirit of power and love. I think it's so neat that the two words that are most associated with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament are the words power and love in the Book of Acts, it says that the Spirit comes up honest with power, and that the Spirit pours out his love into our hearts. So that means that we're not fear-driven, but we are holy spirit-driven followers of Jesus. I mean, Jesus is in the boat with us, God has given us the spirit of power, I love and a sound mind.

This is an interesting word that is translated sound mind, it's the Greek word Sophronismas, it's actually a compound word it's two words, that are married into one.

Sophronismas and the phronismas most part of the word refers to the frontal lobe to the executive lobe brain where there is reasoning where there was impulse control where purposeful mental action takes place. So put together the words. Sophronismas literally means, get this... A saved in a redeemed mind. It is a mind that is there for calm. Well, balance clear-headed. So rather than giving way to fear to panic the mind that is saved by God, is a mind that is sound that is healthy in Romans Chapter 12, 3. Sophronismas as translated as sober judgment.

I mean, when all around, people are intoxicated by fear and dread we can exercise sober judgement.

God has given us a sound mind, and you know this word, it actually gets me thinking about that poem by Richard Kipling about how, if you can your head when all about you are losing theirs, that's Sophronismas that's what God has given to us, Paul and for Corinthians, Chapter 2, verse 16, he says, We have the mind of Christ, we have what we need for facing the days ahead, I think of Jesus' words, the disciples on that fear driven night as Jesus face rejection suffering humiliation in agony. In John 14-27, Jesus says peace. I leave with you, my peace I give to you, I do not give to you as the world gives, do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

So public authorities as they warn us about the next week we remember as Paul says, that God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind. When I was a pastor, I really enjoyed doing children's sermons and one of my favorites was about a thermometer and a thermostat, and I would stand there with a thermometer in one hand and a thermostat in the other... And I would talk about how God He has created us and made us to be thermostats and not thermometers.

God has redeemed us, and made us new creatures in Christ, so that we could be thermostats that actually set the spiritual and moral temperature of the world around us.

And, you know, a fear is contagious, so is love power and the sound mind, that the Holy Spirit is given to us. And so each day, I keep praying palms down, palms up with palms down, I'm letting go into God strong and faithful hands any fears that I have and each day I'm receiving palms up my

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daily supply of power and love, and a sound mind.

And with the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:7, I close and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

I am Time Smith a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening, until next time.

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