

BRIDLING THE HORSE OF FEAR

Part One

Read Isaiah 41 (NLT). Three times in chapter 41 alone, God says, DON'T BE AFRAID. Chapter 41 is God's help for Israel. It is also our help, as born again believers—children of God grafted into our inheritance in Jesus.

Many times when I have been going through a difficult situation I would read Isaiah 41 and I would start with verse 9- *I have called you back from the ends of the earth so you can serve me. For I have chosen you and will not throw you away.* That is not only a promise to Israel, but it is also a promise to all His children. *Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.* Verse 13-*I am holding you by your right hand—I, the Lord your God. And I say to you, 'Do not be afraid. I am here to help you.* Vs. 14- *Despised though you are, O Israel, don't be afraid, for I will help you. I am the LORD, your Redeemer. I am the Holy One of Israel.'*

Verse 15-16-*You will be a new threshing instrument with many sharp teeth. You will tear all your enemies apart, making chaff of mountains. You will toss them in the air, and the wind will blow them all away; a whirlwind will scatter them. And the joy of the LORD will fill you to overflowing. You will glory in the Holy One of Israel.* God goes on to say that He will answer them, He will never forsake them, He will give them fountains of water in the valleys. Church, why do we fear when we have such precious promises from God?

FEAR—it is constantly yapping at our heels, try to grab a hold. Fear's like riding a wild horse and because of all the wild horse emotions we experience—if unbridled—those emotions are going to destroy us. Yet these emotions, if controlled, bridled in the Lord, can launch us to unlimited success.

We often compare human behavior to animal behavior. Men say- *She's stubborn as a mule!* Women say- *He's pig-headed!* We say of each other-*sly as a fox—proud as a peacock* or you hear- *--she let the cat out of the bag—He's barking up the wrong tree—I heard it straight from the horse's mouth—He decided to change horses in midstream* and so forth.

One day a pastor shared this little story. “My son, Matthew had a terrifying experience on a horse that changed his life forever. He went horseback riding—everything was going fine until the horse started bouncing out of control—Matt tried with all of his might to hang on, but he was thrown off. Just when things seemed impossible, they got worst. His foot was caught in the stirrup and his head was bouncing

on the ground. His head bounced harder as the horse went faster—just when we were about to give up hope, the Wal-Mart manager came out and unplugged the horse. Thank God for heroes.

A wife came up to her husband who was enjoying his morning coffee and she slapped him on the back of the head. Startled, he said, *what was that for?*

She replied, *I found a piece of paper in your pants pocket with the name Mary Lou written on it and you had better have a good explanation.*

Calm down honey, that's the name of the horse I bet on last week at the races.

The next morning she came into the kitchen and again slapped the husband on the back of the head. *Now what's that for?* He asked, rubbing his head.

Your HORSE called last night!

Picture with me if you will, a man riding his horse. We see the devil in front position, the flesh in second position; and then the Christian bringing up the rear. All three are riding on the horse, but what's wrong with this picture? The seating arrangement is out of whack; needs an adjustment. I think it was time for the man to throw the devil off and bring the flesh under submission to Christ; take his rightful place in front and to walk (ride) in obedience and allow the Holy Spirit to lead him into new pastures. Those of us who keep falling out of the saddle because of inappropriate seating placement must make some changes. The devil or the flesh keeps knocking us off the back end because we have nothing to hold on to; we are precariously perched and without support. But in Jesus, new mercies awaits. Jesus will help us back into the saddle, but He will put us in the right position and it is our job to work at staying there. We don't have to struggle or fight the battles alone. He is with us always and forever.

Did you know that FEAR is mentioned in the Bible about 600 times—it's no small subject and the devil uses it constantly to torment God's children? Jesus commanded, FEAR NOT! He said that more than any other command in the Word. FEAR NOT! From Genesis to Revelation—FEAR NOT! From Abraham to John on the Isle of Patmos—FEAR NOT! That command was given to Abraham. It was given to Israel, it was given to Moses. It was given to Daniel, it was given to David, and it was given to the disciples on the Sea of Galilee—FEAR NOT!

That command was given to Mary, the mother of Jesus, when she was told by Gabriel that she was expecting the birth of the Christ child—FEAR NOT! It was given to Peter who was about to sink into the swirling water on the Sea of Galilee when he stepped off the boat to go meet Jesus—FEAR NOT! It was given to Paul who was on the ship deck with 275 Roman soldiers on his way to Rome to be tired—the

angel of the Lord stood beside Paul and said—FEAR NOT! How many times have YOU heard Him say, *child, FEAR NOT! I am with you! FEAR NOT!*

Fear will either conquer you or you will conquer fear. Fear is like a wild horse emotion and when you learn to control it in the Lord, it will become a blessing. If you allow fear to control you, you will live a life of terror, of misery and that is never God's plan for you.

Follow along with me in Isaiah 41:10- (a most familiar scripture to most Christians) *Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.* This tells me that I can live my life in confidence that faith in God is greater than any fear of today or tomorrow.

WHAT IS FEAR? Why are there 600 references to fear in the Bible? Now, I'm not the smartest person alive, but when 600 examples are given throughout the Old and New Testament, I take heed. I ask myself, what is God saying? Is He trying to enlighten, warn, and reveal the plans of Satan so that we will not fall prey to them? God wants His children informed and made aware of the schemes and plan of the enemy. He wants us to learn the lessons from others so that our lives can be lived without fear taking over—holding us in bondage. God's plans for our lives, if followed and yielded to Him, will produce healthy, happy lives—and Satan hates that for he came to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

FEAR! There is the emotion of fear that is God-given—a Biblical fact. Then there is the spirit of fear that comes from Satan—the spirit of fear is described by psychiatrists as phobias. Did you know that there are 75 kinds of phobias that produce abnormal fear—fear that is irrational—fear that is mind crippling—life destroying fear. In the years of ministry as a pastor and counselor, I have seen people enslaved with many of these phobias.

Phobias are terrifying, as they steal your peace, your sleep, your relationships, and phobias try to pull you deeper and deeper into bondage—try to render you helpless, overwhelm you—turn you aside from your God-given destiny; His plans for your life. But, in Jesus, there is freedom! People do break free from phobias. I did! You can too! We fight the flesh and the devil when we are dealing with phobias in our lives. Phobias can paralyze you! Remember, they ARE NOT from God.

Picture if you will now, another horse and rider. This picture shows the Christian in the front, Jesus in second place and the Holy Spirit in the back. We do a quick “thumbs up” and shout out a big “amen!” Granted we are coming more into balance, but we are not there yet. Here's the difference between God fear and fear from Satan. God gives you the emotion of fear to help you. The problem is not how to get rid of that fear, but how to bridle the fear to help you through situations. How, in Jesus, to help you master your moods/emotions—put them into healthy perspective—His perspective.

Animals are aware of the emotion of fear. Startle a rabbit in a thicket and it will dash out of the thicket. Any deer that cannot leap 10 feet out of an afternoon nap and come down with all four legs pounding the ground will not live through the deer season. Healthy fear can help keep you alive and well.

A man was visiting his friend in Texas. One night as they came home from a church meeting and pulled into the yard, his friend said, *Don't get out of the care yet, grab a flashlight.*

I don't need a flashlight.

Yes, you do, there are rattlesnakes all over the place.

I don't believe that. You're just pulling my leg.

Well, humor me. Before you step out of the car and get bit, hit the side of the car.

Thinking to humor his friend, he hit the side of the car and immediately heard the whirling sound of a rattle. He picked up the flashlight. That kind of fear can keep you alive.

We teach our children not to play with matches and gasoline because all fear is not equal. Why do you pay the IRS? Because you love paying taxes and giving them money? Wrong! You fear living in Leavenworth. Why do you take out fire insurance? Because you love your insurance agent? Wrong! Because you fear that one fire could wipe you out—leave you homeless. Why do you lock your doors at night or put in an alarm system? Because you know that on the other side there are rapist, murders, and thieves. Locking your door or installing an alarm system is taking the proper precautions—being prepared for the danger and that gives you time to protect yourselves. God planted the emotional fear in you to make you uneasy with sin. Reason you can't sleep well at night could be that voice of God trying to reach you. Start listening to His voice.

Proverbs 1:7 – Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Psalm 2L 10-12 – Now then, you kings, act wisely! Be warned, you rulers of the earth! Serve the LORD with reverent fear, and rejoice with trembling. Submit to God's royal son, or he will become angry, and you will be destroyed in the midst of your pursuits—for his anger can flare up in an instant.

Why should I fear the Lord? Pastor John Haggie said, *I'll give it to you I one sentence, because you're going to catch hell if you don't.* God is not sitting in heaven saying, *Oh, I hope they behave.* God is almighty, He is all powerful, He is the judge of all the earth and you are going to answer to Him some day. He has written the Bible for the human heart and for society. And we will be blessed if we live by it and cursed, if we reject Him. It is a given Church, that you are going to answer to God someday. It's not if you bow before God, it is when! There will be a payday someday. It's a given, a fact. God's Word.

Why is it that a woman is raped in America every 48 seconds? Because there is no fear of God. If a rapist knew in his heart for absolutely sure, without a doubt, that he would stand before God, be sentenced to hell and would burn in hell forever and forever for raping a woman, he wouldn't touch her. If people would read the Bible's description of a place called hell, no one would want to go there. We'd clean up our act.

We sing, *When we all get to Heaven*, but people, we are not all going to heaven. Why is our nation filled with rapes, shooting, children murdering parents, others exploiting children for sexual pleasure and gain, and I could go on and on. Violent acts! Why? Because there is no fear of God. Why did the Supreme Court throw out the 10 commandments, saying you can't pray in schools and at various functions? Because there is no fear of God. Why are condoms being given out in the schools and sexual acts being taught to nine year olds in some school systems, why are some congressmen running homosexual dating services out of their home and on and on it goes. I'm not making this up to prove my point, sadly, these are facts. The "News" is keeping us informed and alerted to these facts, these dangers, and these crimes; they are happening every day and everywhere.

WHY? WHY? WHY? ONE REASON—NO FEAR OF GOD!

Join me for PART TWO as I will help you picture the number three horse and rider with God's heart and His truth.

Taken from Katie's sermon in Yreka, CA