

Fear

Fear occludes our vision in life. We find ourselves unable to accomplish what we would like to do when we are stricken with fear. This is because fear has physiological means of expressing itself which can compromise our ability to function on a daily basis.

This is because of the warped vision we have allowed ourselves to become ensnared by as we try to live our lives. We have no choice but to keep on living life as we know best, but would still welcome another option to this discouraging dilemma. Existential philosophy speaks to this dilemma. There is seemingly no other way out of this situation and we find ourselves as the absurd man in Jean Paul Sartre's book, "Being and Nothingness"[1] with "No Exit".[2]

There are several manifestations of fear. Some are paralyzing to the point that people who have these phobias, as they are called, cannot live life as would a normal person. These phobias can be psychologically and spiritually treated by professionals who deal with fear. Most other people in society, while not paralyzed with fear, are ill at ease in the very least, and gravely concerned at the worst when they think upon the things which would precipitate an expression of fear.

Out of necessity, because we are alive in this society, we are injected into such scenario, seemingly without a choice or chance to escape being "sucked into the vortex" of mutated and convoluted thinking wherein we fall victim to fear, however it may express itself.

Enter Jesus Christ. Those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are in a different situation. We are told to "fear God and Keep His Commandments[3]", but yet Jesus questions the lack of faith of the disciples when, because of fear and lack of faith, they questioned who Jesus was when He calmed the storm and the angry sea[4]. All the miracles Jesus performed, from feeding the five thousand[5] and again, feeding the four thousand[6] to the many healings and raising people from the dead encouraged people to question who He was. Since, in their minds, this demonstrated a power not held by a normal man. Thus, they were afraid of Him, or at least of the power He seemed to be able to demonstrate while at the same time they were curious about such unanswered questions.

While their concerns were more earthly and concrete, Jesus addressed issues of a more spiritual nature telling His followers not to worry about those more mundane matters, and to put them in the Hands of God[7]. Even the death of a personal friend did not dissuade Jesus from being of comfort to the family as He commented to Martha that He was the Resurrection and the Life, and that life existed only through Him; He then raised Lazarus from the dead to prove His point[8].

I believe when we are told to fear God, it is to be interpreted as to have a reverential sense of awe[9] when we gaze upon everything within the scope of His Creation and the wonders and miracles done by His Son Jesus. For believers in the name of Jesus we have a fear which is interpreted as this sense of awe. For non believers this fear will manifest itself as a foreboding dread of an eternity separated from God[10]. Obviously what matters is our relationship with the Savior. The choice is ours. We can have Him in our hearts to calm the storms of life and weather them relatively fear free, or we can weather the storms of life alone living in fear of everything.

[1] Sartre, Jean Paul, "Being and Nothingness", Washington Square Press 1966, 798 pp

[2] Sartre, Jean Paul, Play "No Exit"

[3] Ecclesiastes 12:13

[4] Mark 4: 35-41

[5] Matthew 14: 13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-13

[6] Matthew 15: 13-22; Mark 8: 1-13

[7] Matthew 6: 25-33

[8] John 11: 1-44

[9] Butch Conrow's Sunday School class 09-07-2008

[10] Shaw, S.B. Dying Testimonies of the Saved and Unsaved, various pages and entries