

Genesis 46

What Are You So Afraid Of?

April 15, 2018 – Rev. Rick Lyon

Intro - A recent study named the top ten fears that people have:

1. *Fear of flying*
2. *Fear of public speaking.*
3. *Fear of heights.*
4. *Fear of the dark.*
5. *Fear of intimacy.*
6. *Fear of death.*
7. *Fear of failure.*
8. *Fear of rejection.*
9. *Fear of spiders.*
10. *Fear of commitment.*

Other real fears that didn't make the top ten list:

- Ablutophobia - the fear of bathing or being clean.
- Ergophobia - the fear of work
- Hypnophobia - the fear of falling asleep.
- Coulrophobia - the fear of clowns.
- Peladophobia - the fear of bald people.
- Sesquipedalophobia - the fear of long words.
- Polys-homilophobia - the fear of long sermons.

1. Jacob was afraid to believe.

Hebrews 4:12 - The word of God is alive and *powerful*. It's sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, *it pierces... it exposes...*

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Romans 1:16 - The *gospel* is the power of God that brings salvation.

C. S. Lewis: My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?... Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God didn't exist--in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless--I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality--namely my idea of justice--was full of sense. Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning."

2. Jacob was afraid he was making a mistake.

3. Jacob was afraid of change.

1 Cor. 9:19-22 - Though I'm free and belong to no one, I've made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law... to win them. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law... to win them. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I've become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

4. Jacob was afraid of Egypt.

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5. Jacob was afraid to die.

Genesis 37:35 - Jacob refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I'll go to my grave, mourning for my son."

Genesis 42:38 - Jacob said, "My son won't go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you're taking, you'll bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow."

Luke 16:22 - Jesus said, "The time came when the beggar (Lazarus) died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side."

When John Todd was six years old (back in 1806) both his parents died. An aunt raised him until he left home to study for the ministry. Later, this aunt became seriously ill, and in distress she wrote Todd a letter. Would death mean the end of everything or could she hope for something beyond? Here, condensed from The Autobiography of John Todd is the letter he sent in reply:

It's now 35 years since I, as a boy of six, was left quite alone in the world. You sent me word you'd give me a home and be a kind mother to me. I've never forgotten the day I made the long journey to your house. I can still recall my disappointment when, instead of coming for me yourself, you sent your servant, Caesar, to fetch me.

I remember my tears and anxiety as, perched high on your horse and clinging tight to Caesar, I rode off to my new home. Night fell before we finished the journey, and I became lonely and afraid. "Do you think she'll go to bed before we get there?" I asked Caesar. "Oh no!" he said, "She'll stay up for you. When we get out of these woods, you'll see her candle shining in the window."

Presently we did ride out into the clearing, and there, sure enough, was your candle. I remember you were waiting at the door, that you put your arms close about me--a tired and bewildered little boy. You had a fire burning on the hearth, a hot supper waiting on the stove. After supper you took me to my new room, heard me say my prayers and then sat beside me till I fell asleep.

Someday soon God will send for you, to take you to a new home. Don't fear the summons, the strange journey, or the messenger of death. God can be trusted to do as

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much for you as you were kind enough to do for me so many years ago. At the end of the road you'll find love and a welcome awaiting, and you'll be safe in God's care.