

1 PETER 3:13-15a

BE NOT AFRAID

¹³ *Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?* ¹⁴ *But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear ; do not be frightened."* ¹⁵ *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.*

As Joshua was about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, God spoke to him on the east side of the Jordan River and exhorted him saying: *"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."* (Joshua 1:7-9).

Likewise, those who obey the Lord have no reason to fear anyone or anything. In verse 12, Peter, quoting Psalm 34, writes, *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.* Those who live holy lives live in the Kingdom – in the presence of God. While those who depend upon the things of the world have much to fear from every corner, citizens of the Kingdom need "fear" only God. In addition, the fear of the world is a type of terror. The fear of God is our source of security.

If we are in right relationship with God, then even if we are persecuted "for doing good" (e.g., obeying God), we can stand firm because God is our only eternal audience. If we have "set apart Christ as Lord" in our hearts, then we will rejoice in doing what Jesus did, for he is not only our Master, but the Suffering Servant.

Lord Jesus, you lived your life in perfect obedience to the Father and suffered in this world so that I might be reconciled to God. Remove my fear of others through the power of your love. Make me strong and courageous for the Kingdom through my Spirit-led obedience to your word. Amen.