

# The Fear of Death Removed

By Henry Mahan

**Bible Text:** Hebrews 2:14-15

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I just believe that this message that I am going to preach now on this broadcast will be a special, unusual blessing to all of you particularly, to some of you who are up in years. Now here is the title of the message, “The Fear of Death Removed. The Fear of Death Removed.”

Hebrews chapter two verse 14, the second chapter of Hebrews verse 14. Now listen carefully as I read the Scriptures. “For as much then as the children,” we are speaking here of the children of God, believers.

God calls them, “My little children.”

David said, “My children, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”

“For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood...” We have 1000 reminders each day that we are flesh and blood, don’t we? Our sinful natures. We think and say and do things we regret, things we do not approve of at all.

Paul said, “What I would do I do not. What I would not do, I do. That is my sinful flesh. It is not I, but sin that dwells in me.”

We are aware of our thirst, our hunger, our pain, our weariness. All of these things remind us that we are partakers of flesh and blood, our sicknesses and our diseases and our old age, our tiredness and, finally, death. We are flesh and blood.

Now notice the next line, verse 14. Here is good news. “He also himself likewise took part of the same.” Flesh and blood? He did? Who are you talking about? He.

I am talking about I am. That is who I am talking about. I am talking about he who knew no sin was made sin. I am talking about the one who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took on himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.

“For as much then as the children were partakers of flesh, he also...” Just the same kind of flesh, also.

He said to his disciples, "Touch me. Handle me. A ghost doesn't have flesh and bones as you see me have."

He also himself, himself, not another, himself, he dwelt among us himself, likewise even as we took part of the same.

Do you know what John said? "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh and the Word was with God and he dwelt among us. And the Word was God and we beheld his glory, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Word of God was made flesh. Oh, without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. Do you see that?

For as much then as the children...you see, the children are partakers of flesh and blood and the captain of their salvation had to be a partaker of the same for as much then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same.

Listen to the next line, now. "That through death, his death, through his death he might destroy him that had the power of death, the devil."

What is the power of death? When you talk about Satan, the devil having the power of death, what is the power of death, do you know? Well, the Scripture tells us. The sting of death is sin—S-I-N. That is the force and power of Satan's kingdom. It is sin. That is how he reigns. He introduced sin. And that is the power and force that he has over people, the deceitfulness of sin. And Christ came and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh that he might destroy that force, that power, sin, sting of death. That is what it says. By one man, Adam, sin entered this world. Listen. And death by sin.

Where did death come from? Sin.

How did death start? Sin.

Why did death pass on us? We are sinners.

By one man sin entered this world and death by sin. So death passed upon all men and Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh that through his death he might destroy the force and the power, the sting of sin that causes death. The soul that sinneth shall die. Sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death. The force and power of Satan's kingdom of evil is sin. And when sin's power is broken, when sin is destroyed, he has no more power.

That is the reason I don't understand preachers talking about the devil playing a part in God's children's lives. He has no authority over God's children. He has no power over God's children, not unless God gives him permission.

He said to Peter, "Satan hath desired thee that he may sift thee as wheat. I may let him do that."

Job...Satan couldn't touch Job without God's permission. And Satan has no power over God's children. Christ died and destroyed the power of Satan, sin. He destroyed the sting of death, the power of death, the fear of death. He destroyed it. The believer has no sin. In Christ there is no sin.

How can I be in Christ and be in the devil? I can't be in both. The devil has no power over God's people. He can't touch them because his power has been broken. He has been destroyed. His power is destroyed, totally destroyed.

Now look at this Scripture again. Now listen to it. "For as much as his children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also likewise himself took part of the same that by his death he might destroy him who had the power of death." And that is his force and power of his kingdom is sin.

Now if you are still in sin you are under his dominion. If you are still in sin, you are under his control. If you are still without God and without Christ and... you are without hope. Satan has all control over you. Christ said to those Pharisees. He said, "You are of your father the devil and his works you will do. God is not your Father."

But if God is your Father and you are in Christ and he died for you, he defeated Satan. He destroyed the sting of death.

But wait a minute. There is more. Listen. "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same that through his death he might destroy him that had the power over them, the devil."

Now listen. "And deliver them from the fear of death. And deliver them from the fear of death."

He has removed us from the fear of death and the fear of death from us. The fear of death once held us in bondage, but no more. We don't fear death anymore. We don't fear death because Christ has removed the fear of death. He has delivered them from the fear of death. Don't be afraid to die.

Paul said, "To me to live is Christ, to die is gain. I am not afraid to die."

Paul said, "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better."

Old Simeon when he saw the Lord Jesus he said, "Now, Father, let thy servant depart in peace according to your Word because I have seen your salvation. Let me die."

How did our Lord deliver us from the fear of death? Let me give you five things, five things. Now let these stay with you. He took part of the same flesh and blood that

through his death he might destroy the power, the sting of death, sin, the force, power of Satan's kingdom and deliver you from the fear of death.

I'll tell you how he removed us from the fear of death and the fear of death from us, by dying himself. He also took part of the same and died.

When you were children, when you were children attempting some difficult thing did you ever say to a friend or a companion when you were attempting something difficult, did you ever say to a friend, "You go first, you go first"?

You know, like maybe you are walking across the creek on a log. "You go first."

Or maybe at the swimming hole jumping off of that rock just a little higher than where we have been jumping and we all go up there and everybody is afraid to jump. And somebody says, "You go first." And the first fellow jumps and here we all go. It makes it easier after somebody goes first.

Or maybe going in a cave. We used to have a cave up behind our house and I always wanted to go in it. But I was afraid to. And I was up there with a daring friend of mine and I said, "You go first." Down he went. And I came behind him. But we made the mistake of building a fire down there in the cave and we got smoked out. It was by God's grace we are not still in that cave.

But, "You go first," that is what we say. And that makes it easy. The fear is gone. The fear is gone.

Well, I'll tell you this thing about death. He went first. That's right. That is what our Lord has done. He die and he was buried and he is the first begotten from the grave.

I told you last week his footprints go into that tomb, but that is not the end. They come out. And there is no trial and there is no suffering and there is no temptation that you and I are called upon to endure in which he didn't go first. He is the first begotten from the dead. Don't be afraid to die. He died. Our Lord died first.

All right. Secondly, he removed the fear of death when he removed the sting of death. See, I tell the story about a little boy who came in the house just crying and holding his hand and his mother wanted to know what was wrong with him. He said, "An old bee stung me."

And the mother got the tweezers and she found the stinger and she pulled it out and put a little alcohol or turpentine on it or something and she said, "Now, go on out and play."

"Oh," he said, "I am afraid to. I afraid that old bee might still be out there."

She said, "Honey, that old bee can never hurt you again. He has lost his stinger."

And I will tell you this. Sin, the sting of death is sin. And my Lord was made sin for me. And he died and he took all the poison and all the power and all the force that sin could lay upon him and paid for it and I don't have to be afraid.

He took me...is this not true? Three things, listen. Did he take our sins in his body on the tree? Did he? Well, certainly he did. That is what God said. He took our sins in his body on the tree.

Did he die for them? That is what the Scriptures said. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He died. By his stripes we are healed. Is that what it said? Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Is that what it said?

“Yes, sir, preacher, that is what it said.”

To do what? He appeared, he died, he suffered to put away sin.

Well, did he put it away?

The Scripture says that he put it away and God said, “I will remember their sins no more.”

He said, “I will separate their sins from them as far as the East is from the West.”

He said, “I cast them into the depths of the sea.”

I don't understand this but God said, “Their sins I have cast them behind my back, never think of them again.” They are gone. They are gone. My Lord Jesus took the sting out of death which is sin. And if you don't have any sin you don't have any reason to fear death. I didn't say we didn't sin. I didn't say we are not sinners. I said in Christ we have no sin. He paid them all. They are put away. They are paid for. There is nothing on the books against any child of God, nothing, nil, zero, blank, right.

All right, thirdly, how did Christ remove the fear of death?

He removed the fear of death by changing the character of death.

Now please listen to me. People who are not believers have a right to fear death. Now understand. It is appointed unto men once to die and after this...that is what they fear. It is not just death, it is after this. It is appointed unto men once to die and after this. What after this? Judgment. Now that is something to be concerned about.

John said, “I saw the dead stand before God, small and great, rich and poor. I saw them stand before God, stand in their guilt, stand in their sin, stand in their rebellion, stand in their filth.” That is something to fear.

But not the believer, because he changed the character of death when he removed the judgment and removed the sin. It says in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no judgment to the believer."

So it is appointed unto the believer once to die. After this glory, coronation, promotion. If my sin is gone and I have a perfect righteousness there is no cause for judgment. What are they going to judge? You see, Christ has already been judged. He died the just for the unjust to bring us to God. They brought him before judgment. He was led before the judgment. He opened not his mouth.

Who shall declare his generation?

Death for the believer is not a curse. It is a blessing. It is no longer a curse because Christ delivered us, redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Death is not a loss. It is a gain. Death is not a penalty. It is a promotion. Death is not the end. It is the beginning. It is to live.

Somebody...there was an old believer years ago that had reached the end of his life. God was about to call him home and one of his well meaning friends came to see him in his last hours and he put his hand on his shoulder and he said, "My dear brother," he said, "You are about to leave the land of the living, aren't you?"

And that old man was aware enough and alert enough to reply, "No, sir, no, sir, no, sir, I am not leaving the land of the living. I am leaving the land of the dead and dying. I am going to the land of the living. Living is my next step. Death takes me to life, eternal, unending, enjoyable life."

When we have been there 10,000 years bright shining as the sun, we have no less days to sing God's praise than if we had just begun.

It is not death to die, to leave this weary road and with my friends on high be at home with God. It is not death to close these eyes long filled with tears and wake in glorious youth to spend eternal years. It is not death to fling aside this sinful dust and rise with eternal wings to live among the just. Jesus Christ our prince of life, thy chosen cannot die, like thee they conquered on the cross and are seated with thee on high.

Yes, sir, he removed the fear of death. How? By dying himself.

Secondly, by taking the sting out of death which is sin. There is no more sting. There is no more sin, no more judgment.

By changing the character of death it is not death it is sleep. Our Lord didn't call it death. He called it sleep. He said, "Lazarus is asleep."

The disciples didn't understand what he was saying. They said, "Well, if he is sleeping, he I doing well."

Christ said, "For your sake he is dead, but he is asleep. He that liveth and believeth on me will never die, never ever. Death hath no dominion over him."

Here is the fourth thing now. He removed the fear of death, now listen, by assuring us that immediately, immediately upon dying here on this earth, sleeping, leaving this body we go into his presence.

Now listen to me. Sometimes, sometimes people are afraid to die because of all this foolish talk and bad preaching that has been going on talking about soul sleep, sleeping for thousands of years, sleeping or purgatory. You have heard people talking about us dying here and going down to a place of punishment until somebody here on earth either pays enough or prays enough to get us out of purgatory and get us on probation or parole or something from purgatory. That is foolishness, not in the Scripture.

Our sins were purged at Calvary once and for all.

And then they talk about Hades, two compartments, you know, and one compartment the unbeliever and another compartment the believer waiting for the Second Coming when Hades will empty all of his people, a waiting place, a half way house. Nonsense. A pack of foolishness.

Listen to the Lord who said to the thief who died with him on a cross, who believed on him. He said, "Today, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." That is the home of God. That is the...when? Today you will be with me.

Where did Christ go? He went back to the Father. Where did the thief go? Back to the Father, the thief who believed. Today, today.

Listen to Paul. "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." That doesn't sound like spending 10,000 years in purgatory, does it? That doesn't sound like going to some kind of halfway house and living in some compartment for all those centuries. That doesn't sound like soul sleep. To be absent from the body is to be present immediately with the Lord.

Paul said this and we know this. He said, "We know that if this earthly tabernacle, if our earthly house, this tent." That is what he called this earthly house, a tent, a tabernacle. It is frail like a tent. It is going to be blown down some day like a tent. It is going to be folded up and put away like a tent. If this house, this tabernacle, this tabernacle of our flesh be dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens wherein we shall be clothed upon awaiting the resurrection of the body.

Yes, sir, yes, sir. So I know that there are sometimes people who are afraid to die because of bad preaching, just plain bad preaching, talking about soul sleep and purgatory and Hades and compartments and waiting places and all these different things. But I will tell you this. The Scripture tells us clearly and plainly that when this Spirit leaves this

body, when God calls the believer home...if it happens...if I am standing here preaching to you and I don't finish this sentence and this body crumbles down when the spirit leaves you know one thing. This believer opens his eyes upon Christ. My last sight was that camera. My next sight will be my Lord's face. That's right.

Now that...he removed the fear of death by assuring us that to know him is life eternal. Nothing can be added. You can't add anything to me in a compartment or in purgatory. Christ is enough. He has made us sufficient, sufficient to inherit that glorious paradise with the saints, complete in him.

All right, last of all. He removed the fear of death by assuring us of the resurrection of our bodies. That's right. Do you know when Abraham was called upon God to sacrifice his Son Isaac he didn't hesitate because he knew this. This is what Scripture says. He knew that if he sacrificed Isaac, that God would raise him from the dead. Those Old Testament saints believed in a resurrection. All of them did. They believed. David said, "Thou will not leave my body in the grave." They believed in the resurrection.

And our Lord Jesus said this. "All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me that of all which he hath given me I will lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day." That's right.

"No man can come to me except my Father which sent me draw him. And I will raise him up at the last day. All that my Father gave me and all that see the Son and believe on him and all that come to me by my Father's grace I will raise them up again at the last day.

I tell you Job gave a beautiful testimony. Job said this. "Oh that my words were written in a book." They were, Job 19 verse 25. "Oh that my words were written in a book. Oh that they were engraven in the rock in my tombstone for ever." Here is the words. "I know my Redeemer liveth, my Redeemer, and that he shall stand in the latter day on this earth. And though worms destroy this body, not my soul, not my spirit, this body. Yet in my flesh I am going to see God and not another. I myself. I am going to see him."

That is the promise. Oh, yeah. He removed the fear of death by dying himself, by destroying the sting of death which is sin, by assuring us that to leave this body is to be in his presence, by changing the character of death and by guaranteeing us that one day even this body shall rise from the tomb.

And he has the power to change our vile bodies and make even them like his glorious body. What a wonderful experience is the death of a believer.

God said, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Why should we be afraid?