

FROM THE PULPIT

The destructive force of fear is not from God

By Brad Bryant
FOR THE PANTAGRAPH

Economic collapse. Terrorism. Salmonella. Lead in toys. Crime. War. Famine. Natural disasters.

Wow! What a broken world! A common response is "fear" — of the unknown, the unexpected, things beyond our control, and fear of the "different" that will unfold. But fear is a destructive, divisive response.

The Bible's New Testament clearly teaches that "fear" does NOT come from God:

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Timothy 1:7 KJV)

Most people don't even know about this comforting message! For those who do, many stop

reading after the first phrase, which tells us what God does not give us... missing the message of the awesome gifts that God does offer.

God offers us "power" — not in the superhero sense, but in the opportunity to learn, accept and proclaim that we choose to become a child of God, and therefore one who inherits God's blessings! Knowing and walking with God in your life opens you up to a journey of blessing. Just because you begin to build a relationship with God, don't expect everything in your life to get wonderful. But when you choose that relationship, you and God create a covenant — an unbreakable promise. Part of God's commitment is "I will always be with you"... in good times and in bad. God becomes

your life partner, no matter what you face. There is power in that!

But read further — God also gives us love and a sound mind. Love helps us grow in relationship with God, with people around us and with ourselves. Love is the foundation that allows us to grow and serve others in positive ways.

And the "sound mind" allows us to experience, understand and adapt to the situations around us. It allows us to choose to love despite being hurt, and to choose good despite temptations.

These are powerful gifts, and they can be yours from God, if you choose to accept them!

Certainly, you are free to choose to listen to fear. The choices and actions you take when following that voice of fear are often not ones that

build peaceful environments, positive renewed relationships, or a restful, healed spirit. Only God can help you find those blessings!

As we turn away from the destructive voices of fear, we are freed to use that "sound mind" from God, and choose to enter into the loving relationship that we read about in Romans 8:15:

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption; whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Abba "daddy." In that daily relationship with God, we grow into a "daddy" relationship, and not one of fear, hiding or trembling. Do you think of God as "daddy"? If not, you may have some more growing to do in that

relationship!

How do we do that? Here is a snippet of God's perspective of how we're treating our world and each other, and his answer to that question, from a 1972 revelation:

"These are portentous times. The lives of many are being sacrificed unnecessarily to the gods of war, greed and avarice. The land is being desecrated by the thoughtless waste of vital resources. You must obey my commandments and be in the forefront of those who would mediate this needless destruction while there is yet day." — Doctrine and Covenants 150:7

Even 37 years later, God's observations are still true! But so is his counsel in this last sentence: "obey (his) commandments,"

and help lead the way toward ending the various forms of destruction around us. Don't give up, and don't give in to the misleading whispers of fear. Start making repairs in your own life, attitude and family today!

If you don't have a relationship with the living God, please choose to begin that spiritual journey with him. God loves you unconditionally and wants you to find him and hear him. Search until you find a church family that helps you meet the "living, loving God," your spiritual "daddy," and wants to be invited into your everyday life!

Bryant is a missionary, serving the 28 Community of Christ congregations in the Central and Southern Illinois area. Contact him at brad.bryant@hp.com.