**Snared or Safe**

Pr 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Each half of the verse is true by itself; and, put together, the whole is powerful and full of teaching. He who fears man is in great danger from that very fact; he who trusts in the Lord is in no danger of any sort; trusting in the Lord is the great answer against the fear of man.

1. **The fear of man is weakness**
   1. **a very common evil.**

"The fear of man bringeth a snare:"

* 1. It is thought to be good; but in the best example dreadful.
  2. It leads men into great sins, snaring them, and holding them like a bird taken by a fowler.

Ps 91:3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

* + 1. Aaron yielded to crowd and made the calf.

Ex 32:4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

* + 1. Saul cared more to be honored among the people than to please the Lord.

1Sa 15:9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

1Sa 15:30 Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God.

* + 1. David feared that he would die by the hand of saul

1Sa 27:1 ¶ And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

* + 1. Pilate feared that a tumult might be made and possibly a charge would reach Caesar, and so he violated his conscience.

Mt 27:24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

* + 1. Peter denied his Master for fear of a silly maid.

Mt 26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. Mr 14:69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.

Lu 22:56 But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

* 1. Fear keeps many from conversion: companions would ridicule, friends would be annoyed, they might be persecuted, and so they are numbered with the "fearful, and unbelieving."

Re 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

* 1. Fear prevents others avowing their faith. They try to go to heaven through a back door. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation'' (Rom. 10:10).
  2. Fear lowers the dignity of good men.
     1. David was crazy before Achish 1Sa 21:13
     2. Abraham denied his wife. Ge 12:13,19
  3. Fear hampers the usefulness of very many: they dare not speak, or lead the way, though their efforts are greatly needed.

Mt 21:3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

Mr 11:3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

Lu 19:31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

Lu 19:34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

Ro 16:2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

* 1. Fear hinders many in duties which require courage.
     1. Jonah will not go to Nineveh because he may be thought a false prophet if God forgives that city.

Jon 4:2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Jonah had so little government of himself as to be displeased and very angry; he had no rule over his own spirit, and therefore, as a city broken down, lay exposed to temptations and snares.

The servant that said, I knew thee to be a hard man, said that which was false, and yet, had it been true, it was not the proper matter of a complaint; but Jonah, though he says what is true, yet, speaking it by way of reproach, speaks very absurdly. Those have a spirit of contention and contradiction

Mt 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

Ga 1:6 ¶ I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

* 1. Fear is the cause of weakness in the Church. It is cowardly, shameful, dishonorable to Jesus, idolatrous, selfish, foolish. It should not be allowed by any man in his own case.

1. **Trusting God is the only safeguard.**
   1. "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

Not slavish fear of man, but childlike trust in the Lord will be the protection of the believer.

1. To trust God is to be safe from fear of man.
   1. God is with us, therefore we are strong, and need not fear.
   2. We are determined, and will not fear.
   3. We pray, and lose our fear.
   4. We prepare for the worst, and fear vanishes.
2. To trust God is to be safe from the result of men's anger.
   1. It often never comes. God restrains the persecutor.
   2. The loss which it inflicts if it does come is less than that which would be caused by cowardice.
   3. When we trust in God any such loss is joyfully borne.
   4. After all, what is there to fear? What can man do unto us? God being with us, our safety is perfect, continuous, eternal, even though the whole human race should be against us.
3. **Trusting God IS A VERY GLORIOUS DOCTRINE.** We may take in the widest sense the doctrine of the second sentence,— "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe"—

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Eph 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

From the damning and conquering power of sin.

From the overcoming force of temptation.

From the deadening effect of sorrow.

From the destroying force of Satan.

From death, and hell, and every evil

From all injury which men can inflict.

Will you fear a worm, or trust your God?  
Break the snare in which fear has entangled you.  
Enter the palace of safety by the door of trust.

The fire of God puts out another. Nothing so effectually kills the fear of man as abundance of the fear of God. Faith is an armor to the soul, and, clothed with it, men enter the thick of the battle without fear of wounds.

Isa 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

1Th 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

1. The Fear of man
   1. Dulls the conscience
   2. Distracts the mind
   3. Stops the mouth of testimony, and paralyzes the Christian's power. Fear is a cunning snare which some do not perceive, though they are already taken in it.

Mr 9:32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him. Lu 9:45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying. Lu 18:34 And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.