**IN FEAR AND TREMBLING**

***My Worst Nightmare***

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Nightmares are very unsettling experiences. Everybody has them but they’re always dreaded. Once in a while, we can have one that is especially distressing. I’ve heard people say that they can’t look at or think about something creepy without having one. So, what creeps you out? Really, whatever the reasons may be, what is it? I suppose if I’m going to ask such a question, then I’d better go first. Here’s my personal creepiest of the creepy:

Pink. Pink is very bad, and there’s entirely too much of it around. Not the singer, the color. Pink bothers me. A lot. Not all pink all the time, just most pink most of the time. But my oldest granddaughter is very fond of pink, so I manage – when she’s around.

Heights. The thing about heights is they are too high and high is not good. You might fall off. But again, not all heights all the time, just most heights most of the time. I don’t even like to look at a tightrope, but airplanes don’t bother me. Confusing.

Celtic Dancing – no Riverdance for me. Nope. It’s demonic. The upper body is still and the lower body is all over the place. I’m out of anywhere that happens. Where’s the door? Even a window. And yes, all Celtic dancing all the time. You laugh, but see, that means you just don’t get it. I get it. Very bad, that stuff. Stay away.

Haircuts – actually, they don’t creep me out anymore. They did when I was a kid, but I’m old now. But I still don’t like them. Lots of little snippy-snips way too close to my face. And barbers wear those weird shirts that remind me of Nazis. But I survived; my face is still there. Sort of.

So, my *worst* nightmare? Put it all together and: Celtic-dancing barbers on a pink tightrope. [Shudder] Yep, lame but true. Fortunately for me, that dream hasn’t happened yet. If it ever does, I probably won’t make it back to consciousness.

One of the odd things about being human is, everyone has such a list whether they admit it or not. Or so say the psychologists. If my evidence is credible, the shrinks are correct. Yet, this isn’t as big a deal as our fears try to convince us it is. Our dreams, whatever they may be, aren’t real and they end before the dawn of each new day.

The Bible has a very real list of true horrors, and God’s list demands very serious consideration. That’s the list of sins we find in scripture. Sin is the result of giving in to temptation (James 1:13-16). Temptations are the lies Satan tells us to make us believe there is no danger in committing sins. The truth is the dangers of sin are real and far worse than any dream you’ll ever have. Everyone who has ever lived has sinned. Sins are dark acts that separate us from God. The Holy Spirit warns us because He loves us and wants us to be safe from sin. Consider soberly these words of the Apostle Paul:

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,  idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*                                                                       [Galatians 5:19-21]

A day is coming when Christ will return to bring every single soul who has ever lived into judgment. You won’t find that date in your digital calendar, but it has surely been set. When that day comes, each one of us will learn where we will spend eternity. We will be in one of two places: either in Heaven with God in peace and joy or – away from Him alone in Hell suffering indescribable torment. Either way, we will arrive at our final destination never to leave. John’s vision describes these two places and who will inhabit each one:

*And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."*

*And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

*And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*  Revelation 21:3-8]

If you are reading this, then I assume you have already given serious thought to your salvation and made your commitment to God. If not, you had better read the Bible, understand its list of sins, repent of yours, and believe and obey God’s message of salvation. That is the only way anyone will escape just punishment for sin.

We must give serious rational thought to the torment of Hell. Without doubt, Hell IS your worst nightmare. But it’s not just a nightmare; it’s a potential reality for each one of us. It’s beyond pet peeves and creepiness. WAY beyond my four weird fears. Consignment to Hell won’t end with the dawn. Even if it did, one “day” in Hell would still be too much for the soul to endure. And while it may seem to be a bad dream in this life, it is a very possible reality in eternity. In fact, Jesus plainly said that we have a choice, but most people will make the wrong one and experience the horror of this terrible eternity:

*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.* [Matthew 7:13-14]

You can find that narrow but very good gate Jesus speaks of. It’s real and it’s waiting for you. Read the Bible like it’s your job. It’s the best job you’ll ever have if you want Heaven. Direct every waking moment in this life to avoiding your worst nightmare: the terror and suffering of eternal condemnation. We can’t do much to prevent bad dreams, but God has given us the fail-proof way to find Heaven and avoid Hell. A life of obedience and daily service to Christ will prevent Hell from being our final destination.

I’ll meet you at that wonderful narrow gate where nightmares end forever!