

# THE WRITE OF A KING

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## GOD KNOWS; I AM AFRAID

*"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee," (Psalm 56:3).*

I am afraid. I also have the courage to admit that I am. I am afraid that I will be murdered. I am afraid that a member of my immediate family will be murdered. I am afraid that a close friend will be murdered. I am afraid that the uncivil conduct of fellow Jamaicans at all levels of the society will one day explode into a civil war. I am afraid that I may meet in an accident, become paralyzed and will have to wear diapers. I am afraid that I will grow old and will be fed through tubes inserted into my nostrils. I am afraid that I will retire and will not have enough money to live on. I am afraid that I will be afflicted with the disease of forgetfulness and will not be able to recognize my children and grandchildren. I am afraid that my children, through carelessness, immature thinking, and missed opportunities, will become as poor as I am. I am afraid that I will die, and despite my belief in God, go to hell. God knows it; I am afraid.

Perhaps you are afraid. If you are not, then share the secret of your fearlessness with the rest of us who are. If you are, then you must find the courage to own it. No matter the strength of our religious conviction, no matter the power of our faith, no matter how secure the financial foundation is, it is still my belief that we are all afraid of something, or someone. Soldiers are mightily afraid. Police officers are terribly afraid. Security guards are dreadfully afraid. Priests and parishioners are hellishly afraid. Teachers and students are cognitively afraid. We are afraid and we know it. Fear is one of the common properties of human beings everywhere. We fear the past that it might come to haunt us. We fear the future that it might devour us. We fear the present for what it is doing to us. We fear others and we fear ourselves. We fear what we know and what we do not know. We fear the police, the criminal, the rapacious businessperson, the greedy public official, and the charismatic religious leader who holds the keys for heaven and hell. God knows it; we are afraid.

These fears are ghostly and ghoulish. They warp our personalities, distort our realities, and then cripple our energies. They put wrinkles in our faces and uncertainty in our paces. They breed suspicion and abort trust. They convolute the straight, maximize the minimum, make the simple difficult, and the clear obscure. If we are to be happy and whole, we must not be dominated by our fears; we must overcome them. We begin to overcome our fears when we acknowledge their existence. It is hard for some people to do this. They think it is an admission of cowardice. All of us must remember that courage is neither the denial nor absence of fear; it is the mastery. We cannot overcome what we deny. Own your fears so you can defeat them.

The fears that we experience are telling us something about the time in which we live. The sad truth is that many do not hear the salient message that is borne by this universal fear. Our fears tell us that we are living in the end of time. More than twenty centuries ago Jesus painted a grim picture of the time that we now occupy. He describes this slot of existence as a time when *"Men's heart [are] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"* (Luke 21:26). This fear is extraordinary because it is a causative factor in cardiac problems. Imagine that! Jesus also indicated that the solution to the fear that holds the world hostage is the coming of the *"Son of man"* (vs. 27). This cosmic event will inaugurate a new and permanent age – the *Age of Fearlessness*. Until that time comes, it is important that we own our fears, that we overcome them, and that we adopt an attitude of unshakeable trust in God. The psalmist declared, *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."* Let us do the same.