

FEAR NOT

Sunday Morning: December 23, 2001

Text: Matthew 24:6-8 "And ye shall **hear of wars** and **rumours of wars**: see that ye **be not troubled**: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7. For **nation** shall rise **against nation**, and **kingdom against kingdom**: and there shall be **famines**, and **pestilences**, and **earthquakes**, in divers places. 8. All these *are* the beginning of sorrows."

We are living in a day when there is fear on every hand.

I think about the man that tried to blow up a plane just yesterday, I believe it was, by putting explosives in his shoe.

Did you know that people were living in fear when the Lord came 2000 years ago? There was fear of the Roman government. The Roman government was very cruel.

This passage in Matthew it seems to me to be talking about world conditions in the last days before the Lord returns.

HEARTS FAILING

Luke 21:25-26 "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26. **Men's hearts failing them for fear**, and for **looking after those things** which are **coming on the earth**: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

When we see signs mentioned in verse 25 we often think they will be natural signs, but that may not be the case at all. The theories of astronomy have been changing because of what the astronomers have been observing with the Hubble Telescope. Men walking and driving around on the moon I believe falls under the category of signs. Nations are distressed and the nations of the earth are perplexed about what to do about the distress of nations. The effects of El Niño on the weather is well known. Storms have been very strong and have caused catastrophes in many parts of the world.

I want to show in the message that many will be afraid in our day and that is not new because many were afraid when the Lord was born.

WHEN CHRIST CAME – FEAR!

Luke 1:74 "That he would grant unto us, that we being **delivered** out of the hand of our **enemies** might **serve him without fear**,"

This passage in Luke 1:74 is talking about the nation of Israel. Israel wanted to be delivered from the dominance of the Romans Empire. Israel wanted to be delivered from their enemies so that they could serve God with fear of their enemies.

ZACHARIAS FEARED

Luke 1:11-16 "And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12. And when Zacharias saw *him*, **he was troubled, and fear fell upon him**. 13. But the angel said unto him, **Fear not**, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God."

There was a high priest doing his duty in the temple by the altar of incense. When an angel of the Lord appeared unto Zacharias it caused him to be troubled and to become afraid. This angel

was announcing the birth of John the Baptist in a very unusual way in the holy place in the temple. Not only did the angel tell him of the birth of John he also said to him *Fear not*. Even in unusual circumstances that come upon us unexpectedly that can cause fear, we are to be encouraged not to be afraid.

FEAR CAME WHEN JOHN WAS NAMED

Luke 1:59-65 "And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. 63. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. 65. **And fear came on all that dwelt round about them:** and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea."

The fear of the Lord came upon all the neighbors of Zacharias and Elisabeth when these unusual things began to happen. People marvelled and were troubled by this miracle and it caused fear and astonishment.

MARY WAS TROUBLED

Luke 1:26-34, 37-38 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art highly favoured [graced]*, the Lord **is with thee**: blessed *art* thou among women. 29. And when she saw *him*, **she was troubled** at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30. And the angel said unto her, **Fear not, Mary**: for thou hast found **favour [grace]** with God. 31. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

The Lord has a message of good news and peace. He does not want to scare us, and he encourages Mary not to be afraid.

"37. For **with God nothing shall be impossible**. 38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; **be it unto me according to thy word**. And the angel departed from her."

When you are not afraid when you can say "Thy will be done." And that is what she did.

JOSEPH WAS TROUBLED

Matthew 1:18-21 "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, **fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife**: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Even Joseph was fearful and troubled about what was happening in his life. It is a comfort to know that the Lord did not want Joseph to be afraid.

SHEPHERDS WERE AFRAID

Luke 2:8-14 "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and **they were sore afraid**. 10. And the angel said unto them, **Fear not**: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14. Glory to God in the highest, and **on earth peace**, good will **to-ward men** [And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased]. "

God did not send peace upon the whole world but He sent peace to men who were pleasing Him.

When these shepherds saw the angel appear to them with the glory of the Lord shining around them, they were very afraid. Again we see that the Lord does not want to scare his people, so the angel said to them, "Fear not." The angel of the Lord had good news about a babe who would be the Christ, the Messiah and he would be lying in a manger.

THEY WERE TROUBLED

Matthew 2:1-3 "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2. Saying, **Where is he that is born King of the Jews?** for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3. When **Herod** the king had heard *these things*, **he was troubled**, and **all Jerusalem with him.**"

In Matthew chapter 2 we find the wise men coming to Jerusalem and that caused more fear. With the announcement that the King of Jews had been born Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem. Herod was jealous of his throne and Jerusalem was not prepared for the Messiah.

In the days when the Lord was sent and was born in Bethlehem there was fear and trouble not only among the nation of Israel but also in the Roman government. Just as there was trouble and fear in the day when Jesus came the first time there will be fear among those in the family of God that are not prepared and fear in the nations.

FEARFUL DO NOT TRUST

Matthew 8:26 "And he saith unto them, Why are ye **fearful**, **O ye of little faith?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a **great calm.**" (Faith will calm our spirit)

Here we have the account where Jesus went into a ship and his disciples followed him. Matthew 8:23 "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him."

There are times when you follow the Lord and you wind up in a storm. His disciples awoke him saying we are about to drown. Jesus ask them "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"

We have been studying about faith in the past weeks. When you are walking by faith, the storms of life may be raging, but you can be at peace and experience a great calm. We need to be reassured that if you are following the Lord you can trust Him.

DO NOT BE TROUBLED

John 14:1-3 "**Let not your heart be troubled** [present passive]: ye **believe** [present active] in God, believe [present active] also in me. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare

a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."

The Lord trying to encourage his disciples. They had been in the upper room and they had eaten the passover together. He had instituted a new memorial know as communion or breaking of bread.

Here in John 14 the Lord told his disciples to not let your hearts be troubled. The word *troubled* is a present passive imperative. The passive voice in the Greek tells us that the subject, in the case the disciples, are being acted upon. Do not let outside forces stress you all the time. We know that we can become afraid and troubled at times, but we should not let those thing to continue to work on us.

He continues when he says he believe, present active, in God, but this is a command and an affirmation. This verb is imperative. In fact both verbs are imperative. He commands them to believe in God and Him as well.

Jesus is saying believe me. There are prepare places to live in heaven and you can count on me coming again to get you so that you can dwell in those places.

In this passage the Lord is commanding his disciples not to be troubled, trust me.

PEACE

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. **Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**"

We find two more imperatives in this verse. The word *troubled* is also a present passive imperative. He is commanding them to not let the world provide them with peace, because they do not have peace. He is also commanding them not to be afraid. The word afraid is a present active verb which means we need to be active in preventing our hearts from being afraid.

We need the peace of God and not the peace that the world provides. The world spells peace "T R I B U L A T I O N." Jesus said in the world you will have tribulation. John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the **world** ye shall have **tribulation**: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the **world.**" How can that provide us with peace? How long as there been peace in the world? All I have ever heard is wars and roomers of wars in my life time. There may be statistics available that tell us there may have been one hundred years of peace in the last two thousand years, I do not know.

THINK ON THESE THINGS

Philippians 4:6-9 "Be **careful for nothing**; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7. And the **peace** of God, which passeth all understanding, shall **keep your hearts** and **minds** through Christ Jesus. 8. Finally, **brethren**, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, **think on these things**. 9. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and **the God of peace shall be with you.**"

The word *careful* can also be translated *anxious*. We are not to be anxious for anything. You know what causes us to be afraid? It is our thought life. When we start thinking about the things that might or could happen, we lose our prospective on who is in charge of our lives. For us to have peace means that we need to pray. Let God know what is troubling us and He will do the keeping of our hearts and mind.

In the same context is the things that we need to think about that will God to guard our hearts and minds. Those thoughts are listed in verse 8. The command to think on these things goes further than just thought. The word *think* is the Greek word λογίζομαι which is also translated account, reckon, and impute. We get the word *logic* from this word. These are not casual thoughts but deliberate thought working through the meaning of each word and how apply it in our life's circumstance.

Paul reminds that Bible doctrine had been taught and demonstrated in their midst. Paul says you have heard, learned and received the doctrine and I have demonstrated it to you, now practice this and the God of peace will be with you. If the God of peace is with you, you are going to have the peace of God in you.

BONDAGE OF FEAR

Romans 8:15-17 "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. **16.** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: **17.** And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and **joint-heirs with Christ**; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together."

To begin with this verse tells us that if we are afraid we are in bondage. If you are in bondage you are not free to serve the Lord. We need to be assured that the bondage of fear is not the purpose of God for our lives. He wants us to be free. To be delivered from the bondage of fear is to submit to the spirit of being promoted to a position of a son. The word adoption is not a good translation of this Greek word. We are not adopted into the family of God. We are born into the family of God. The word *adoption* has to do with a child of God one day being placed into a position of a son. Until then, we can live in that spirit and be free from the bondage of fear.

Jewish tradition helps us to understand this concept of being placed into a position of a son. A boy of 13 goes through a ceremony where he is recognized as a son. He is no longer considered a child in the family but one who has become of age and is honored as son.

If you are in bondage to fear you are going to find it very difficult to bear the suffering of Christ and become joint-heirs with Him in his coming kingdom.

FEAR NOT

Luke 12:32 "**Fear not**, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to **give you the kingdom.**"

My thoughts are on the coming kingdom of our Lord and not on the kingdoms of this earth that are embroiled in wars and roomers of wars. My thought are on the coming kingdom when the prince of peace bring real peace to the earth when becomes king of kings and Lord of lords.

LIVE LIKE IT!

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

If God has not given us the spirit of fear or of that of being a coward, what spirit has He given us? He has given us an assertive spirit of power which produces confidence in the Lord. Love that constrains us to serve and obey Him. A sound mind that will help us to discern between that which is good and that which is evil.

The power of God is the grace of God in Christ. 2 Corinthians 12:9 "And he said unto me, **My grace** is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore

will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Over and over again in the New Testament it is grace and peace; grace and peace.

He has given us the ability to love one another in a way that fear is removed. Love is also associated with obedience to his commandments. Love also produces the following attributes, as well as others, as found in 1 Corinthians 13:7 "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

When we are afraid we often lose our ability to think clearly. There is only one fear that will allow our thoughts to be secure. Psalms 25:12 "What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose."

May the Lord help us not to be afraid in these last days. Luke encourages us to take heed to ourselves in Luke 21:34-36 "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. 35. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." If we will, we will not be afraid here on the earth nor will we be afraid to stand before him at the judgment seat of Christ.