

“No Fear?”—Luke 21:25-28

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “No Fear?”, is Luke 21:25-28 → Jesus said: *There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*” This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (cf. 1Timothy 1:2). Amen.

Fear factors play a major part of our daily lives. We encounter fear on all levels of life: fear of losing our source of income in the midst of economic crises; fear of personal injury or death in the wake of violence, terrorism and crime; fear of terminal illness or disease when encountering physical ailments (some may even suffer from “white coat syndrome” with anxiety and fear in the presence of any medical

professional); fear in the midst of life changes; fear in the path of “natural disasters;” even fear in relational dynamics from the simple thought of having “offended” someone in a casual conversation to fear of complete rejection. We even go through fear when the desire to help someone arises.

Fear is basic to every area of your life and, depending upon how you manage your fear, it can either disable you or empower you. It is no wonder that the “No Fear!” slogan during the 1990's was so popular. Maybe it made people feel like they could be confident even with so much fear in life. At the same time, fear is necessary in life for protecting oneself and for living in a civilized manner in families, communities and vocational relationships. This type of fear we usually think of in terms of respect for authority.

No fear? It's hard to imagine such a life. It can be a huge challenge when hearing the words “Do not fear!” from the LORD when He works in your life. Out of the blue, angels appeared to Zechariah (cf. Luke 1:11-13), Mary (cf. Luke 1:26-30), Joseph (cf. Matthew 1:20) and some shepherds (cf. Luke 2:9-10) to announce miraculous births, telling each of them not to be afraid. No fear? Really? Seems kind of natural to be afraid at the appearance of the glory of the LORD and angelic beings!

At miraculous appearances and works of Jesus His words to His disciples were the same: *Do not be afraid.* (cf. His walking on the

water—Matthew 14:27; His post-resurrection appearances—Matthew 28:10; the miraculous catch of fish—Luke 5:1-10; raising of the synagogue ruler’s daughter—Mark 34-36;) Throughout His teaching He continually told His disciples to *fear not* at the thought of physical suffering or even loss of life because of persecution (cf. Matthew 10:16-31) as well as in the midst of worry over being cared for physically (cf. Luke 12:32). I haven’t even touched the multiple times Yahweh told people not to be afraid as He worked in their lives in the Old Testament accounts.

As Jesus’ prophesied the destruction of the temple, Jerusalem and the end of the world, He tells us to not be afraid and keep watch with confidence (cf. Luke 21:5-36). In verse 25 of our text He speaks about the Last Day and the end of this present world: *There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves.* The prophet Joel described some of these *signs* as the sun being *turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes* (cf. Joel 2:31). Revelation 6:12-13 speaks about a *great earthquake, and the sun becoming black as sackcloth, the full moon becoming like blood, and the stars of the sky falling to the earth* at the opening of a seal. Jesus says that such an experience will find *people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken* (verse 26).

It is very possible that such *fainting with fear and . . . foreboding of what is coming on the world* is simply being scared in the midst of impending physical agony or even physical death. Since this will take place during “business as usual,” thus coming upon people unexpectedly (cf. Matthew 24:36-44), it is probable that impending judgment to eternal suffering in hell for failure to trust in the atoning work of Jesus, *the Son of Man*, would not even be a thought for many people. This sad fact also moves us Christians to the urgency of needing to point people to faith in the Person & Work of Jesus.

It is interesting how easily we can read Jesus’ teaching about the last days and His return in glory and end up mis-focused on the *signs and wonders* instead of a **proper** relationship with Him. Every human lives in a relationship with the LORD. They have to since His law is written on our hearts (cf. Romans 2:12-16). Jesus came to live perfectly in obedience to God’s Law, to be the perfect sacrifice for the punishment your sins deserve and to rise from the dead to restore your perfect relationship with God. Colossians 1:21-23 speaks about *you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds* in an **improper** relationship with God. *Christ has now reconciled you in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.*

Thus, the focus of Jesus' teaching is not the last days with their *signs* and *wonders* **but the coming of your redemption!** Fear can drive people to focus on trying to "interpret" the signs, subtly leading them into idolatry in a effort to know and control. Jesus says in verse 27 of our text that the focus is on His coming: *then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* This fact should not be the cause of being afraid unless you have heard about the Person & Work of Jesus and refused to repent of your sins and trust in Him. Hebrews 10:26-27 says: *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.* If you continue to live in unrepentance you spurn the *sacrifice for your sins* which Jesus made. This creates a *fearful expectation of judgment* for those who have heard the truth and continue to live is an **improper** relationship **of unbelief** with the LORD.

This is exactly the reason for Jesus' teaching: Calling all people to repent of their sins and trust in His atoning sacrifice for forgiveness. It is in this proper faith relationship with the LORD that the Holy Spirit gives you the ability to do as Jesus says in verse 28 of our text: *Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.* This action is not some kind of prideful action which is ready to meet Jesus on the basis of some kind

of self-made confidence, much as you experience in movies, books and stories of people facing their fears head on to overcome them by their own will. Rather, what Jesus describes in our text is a humble confidence, knowing the certainty of your salvation accomplished for you by Jesus Himself.

This confidence given you by the Holy Spirit responds to the *signs* and *wonders* and Jesus' 2nd Coming with reverence, not shock. You will not be surprised or caught off guard by His Coming. Rather, you will welcome Him, maybe even wondering what took Him so long. But then . . . 2 Peter 3:9 answers that question: *The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* He is providing more time for us, His Church, to continue holding out the Gospel of Jesus to others so that they too can *straighten up and raise their heads*, knowing that their *redemption is drawing near . . . when these things begin to take place.* Amen.

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.

Not as the world gives do I give to you.

Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

(John 14:27)

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.