

Matthew 10:26-33
Whom Shall I Fear?

Introduction:

- I. Good morning CHurCh!!!!
- II. What do you think is the most frequently occurring command in the bible?
 - A. don't lie, don't steal. . . what do you think?
 - B. The most frequently occurring command in scripture is: Fear NOT! occurs over 70x's
- III. **When crisis hits. . . when uncertainty creeps in. . . when stock markets fall. . . when life as we know it changes, with the snap of the finger.**
 - A. Fear will creep in. . . panic and anxiety will come to your house and they will knock on the door to your heart. . . and if you open that door, fear will rob you of joy, peace, and trust in our good God.
 1. ANd it is in times like this that our faith is tested. . .
 2. When everything is stripped bare and we begin to see, perhaps for the first time, what it is on which we have built our life.
- IV. **I went to the grocery store last Tuesday evening, to pick up a few basic items for our household:**
 - A. **And I anticipated the more substantial foodstuffs like bread and pasta and rice and beans and flour. . . would be completely empty.**
 1. But what grabbed my attention, what surprised me was the abundance of candy, potatoes chips and alcohol.
 - B. And I thought this was a poignant picture for us all. . . and I've read a couple of other online bloggers, who have made the same observations, jokes, memes..
 - C. **pause**

1. In times of uncertainty, in times of anxiety, when the storms of life bellow and blow. . . we need a substantial, robust, theology and a solid faith on which to stand.
 - a) We need a hearty faith and a theology that will sustain us through these days and push us to rely deeper on Jesus than we did before.
 - (1) A sentimental faith, full of superficial oprah-like quotes, cuddly puppies and rainbows just won't cut it in times like this. . . a theology that feeds you false promises of health and wealth and success simply will not satisfy.
 - (2) Or maybe you don't even have a theology and haven't thought about God at all AND you have spent most of your life gaining, protecting and accumulating your, wealth and worldly success. . . and now you find all that is in question.
 - (a) Without a solid faith and theology, it is equivalent to your body needing a good square meal and you sitting down to a soft drink, potatoes chips and a bag of m&m's. . . its full of promise, it tastes good on the lips, but lacks substance to sustain you for even an hour.
 - i) In times like this. . . We need solid food for our souls. . .

V. So, I appeal to you this morning, humble yourself before our God, come to scripture this morning hungry for substance, hungry for a word from the Lord, a WORD that will satisfy your searching soul. Jesus said:

A. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. . . Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:27, 35 pause

1. NOW, of course Jesus is not speaking literally, but rather he is speaking about the bread and water that are the words of his mouth that will satisfy the deepest longings and thirsts of your soul.
 - a) When Jesus Speaks. . . our soul is fed and satisfied.
 - b) Is your soul hungry? Is your faith parched and thirsty?

- (1) Well come, come now, let us open up G0d's word together and feast on the bread of life and drink deep from the fountains of living water.

VI. Open your bibles, to Matthew 10:26-33.

- A. Jesus often taught his disciples that in this world we will have trouble.

VII. Read Matthew 10:26-33.

- A. 26 "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. **PAUSE**

Introduction (after scripture reading)

- I. Pray

II. So, Jesus is getting real with his disciples here in this passage.

- A. He's not skirting any issues, Jesus is speaking clear and direct words of warning and encouragement.

III. Maybe the events around us at the moment are forcing you to get real too. . . forcing you to ask real questions.

1. In this passage, Jesus is sending the disciples out on a mission and their job is to tell people about Jesus. . . and the kingdom He will bring.
 - a) And he's warning his disciples, that some of them will die. . . some of them will be put in prison. . . some of them will be detained because the message of the gospel is a hard message for this world and people will resist it.

IV. And three times in this passage Jesus says to his disciples 3x “fear not”. . . and then he follows that command with three grounds or reasons we need not fear.

- A. So, we are going to look at these three “fear nots” in more depth today. Keep your bibles open as we study this passage together. . . we will also have the passages on slides as we go along.
- B. Keep in mind, Jesus is addressing common fears that we as Christian will face in this world. . . and he is giving them three reason they need not give in to these fears.

V. So, the first “fear not” in vss 26-27, we read:

A. “So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.”— Matthew 10:26-27 **pause**

- 1. The first “fear not”. . . is related to the message Jesus has given to the church.
 - a) ANd here Jesus contrasts the hidden truth of the Gospel with the lies dominating our contemporary world.
 - b) What do I mean by this?
 - (1) Jesus is sending his disciples out with a message that runs counter to the dominate view of culture.
 - i) The world tells us true freedom comes from having power, wealth, and success. . . and through excising your independence and autonomy over others you are master of your own destiny.
 - (1) The world says strength and autonomy are the key to success and meaning.
 - (2) Jesus gave the church a message that is very different than this. . .
 - (a) The gospel, that’s our message, contains divine truth. . . but the majority of the world is living by another truth that is opposed to the gospel. . . another set of priorities, another set of values.

(b) And right now, what we are seeing play-out before our eyes is how fragile and empty and unreliable the world's values and priorities are as wealth is depleting, health is threatened and our corporate security and stability is quickly coming undone.

i) Even basic freedoms, we once enjoyed and took for granted are being restricted.

(c) Now the gospel is a message of hope and truth that speaks into this world, in to a world which has turned its back on God.

i) Maybe you have turned your back on God.

c) Now, Jesus knew the greatest obstacle to this great message of hope being proclaimed faithfully by the church, by his disciples, by us, was our **fear** that the the dominate lies of our age would drown out and suffocate the pure message of love and grace and peace with God we find in the gospel. . .and we would not relay the message further.

(1) And so Jesus tells his disciples, us, “do not fear the dominate way this world thinks. . .”

(2) “nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.”

(3) Church we cannot be silent. . . rather let the gospel ring forth. . . to uncover the lies. . . make known the truth. . . enlighten those trapped in darkness.

2. And this is what our mission is as a church and as disciples of Jesus.

a) We exist to proclaim this truth to a world caught up in the lies, which satan has whispered into their hears.

b) What is the message? What is this good news we are to proclaim?

(1) Well, we don't need the corona virus to teach us that the world is in a mess.

(1) pause

- (b) Poverty, famine, corrupt governments, unequal distribution of wealth, healthcare and food. . . this was the case before Corona.
 - i) ANd most every religion of the world understands that the problem is with us. . . each of us. You and me, without exception.
 - (1) Humanity is flawed. . . . on this I think the entire world can agree. . . even secular humanism recognises this.
 - (a) ANd if you don't realise this. . then you must have your head buried in the sand.
- (c) Now, the difference between the religions of the world, or even the secularism of modernity is where we find a solution to the problem.

(1) pause

- (2) Secularism, prevalent here in Germany, tells us the problem is lack of knowledge and education and science is the answer.
 - (a) But you only need to review this past 20 century to recognise that human ingenuity only managed to invent new and deadlier ways to murder one another and fight over oil, coal and other natural resources.. . .
 - (b) Secularism **says** the lack of knowledge is the problem, but functionally behaves as if money is the real solution.
 - (c) Secularism has adopted the inhumane social ethic of survival of the fittest. . . adapting the worldview of nietzsche, Freud and Darwin. .. and therefore Secularism, is large part responsible for the unequal distrubtion of wealth and resources we see around the globe today. . . where the strong Western world sucks the southern hemisphere of its best resources.

(d) So secularism cannot save us.

(3) The other world religions such as Judaism, Islam and Hinduism teach us:

(a) That we must do certain things in order to earn God's favor. . . make ourselves right with God. . . or pay for our past sins.

(b) And so they create elaborate systems of daily prayers, rituals, dietary restrictions, annual festivals. . . and a long list of "do's" and "dont's" in order to earn God's favour.

(c) Even some forms of Christianity fall into this "religious" way of earning a relationship with God.

(d) Obey these rules and you will be accepted. . .

(e) So, secularism and religion both put you on a hard path of blood, sweat and tears as you toil and slave away in order to gain acceptance. . . to be safe and secure.

VI. Now, the gospel, the message Jesus entrusted to His disciples, was different than both religion and secularism.

A. the gospel tells us yes, we are the problem. . . but we are all equally the problem. . . none of us is higher or better. . . no matter our intellect or our ethnicity. . . no matter our gender or our social class or our religion.

1. You see Religions and secularism like to divide humanity up in to good and evil, . . but Christ comes and first and foremost tells us we are all equally sinful:

a) All of us have evil in our hearts. . . the great Russian author and philosopher Alexander solzhenitsyn, writes:

(1) "If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being.

(a) — Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* 1918–1956

Pause

2. Or as Saint Paul writes, “we have **all** sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”.
 - a) None of us can say that we are without sin. . .
 - b) **Illustration**: ANd this Sin, the evil, that resides right here (point to heart). . . has created a **barrier** between Us and between God. . . our sin has separated us from the very source of life.
 - (1) The bread of life that satisfies. . . the water that quenches our thirsty souls as been cut off by our sin.
 - (2) And so we find ourselves wandering through this life, like orphans looking for bread:
 - (a) we put our faith in material comfort for our security but it doesn't satisfy.
 - (b) we look to relationships and sex for meaning. . .but it is empty.
 - (c) we strive for vocational success to give us stability and peace. . . but we only find unrest.
 - (d) then when all else fails, what do we do?
 - i) we turn to fun. . . or alcohol or recreational drugs. . . or video games. . . or tv. . . or sports to distract and numb us from inevitable the void that exists in our souls.
 - ii) ANd we find ourselves on this hamster wheel. . chasing a carrot on a stick. . . always searching, never finding. .. always striving, but never arriving.
 - (1) And then bam (clap hands). . . something like a sudden death of a freind/family. . . an accident. . . a bad health reoprt.

(2) Or a single microbe brings the globe to its knees. . .
and we are left asking what. . . is. . . it . . . all. . .
about?

VII. And **HERE**, into this darkness, this is where the message Jesus gave his church suddenly shines brightly. . . and this is why the church should be proclaiming and shouting from the roof tops. . . uncovering the dark lies of satan. . .

A. God has come to near to us in Jesus Christ! And He tells us:

1. I love you. . . I am chasing you. . . I am pursuing you. . . . “come, to me all who are weary and burdened and you will find rest for your souls.”

a) That is the message. . . and Jesus comes into our hamster wheel existence and tells:

(1) Don't work for food that spoils. . . don't store up treasures here on earth that will decay and rot. . . don't allow the fake lures of wealth, health, success, entertainment and false sense of autonomy. . . distract you from living in relationship with the one who made you, who created you.

B. **Illustration**: ANd so Jesus takes that burden of sin. . . . that barrier separating us from God. . . and places it on his back. . . he carries our sin. . . and dies our death on the cross.

1. You see secularism and religion tell you: do this and you will be excepted.

2. But Jesus comes and says: You are accepted, now do this.

a) The gospel solution is Jesus removed the barrier as our substitute. . . our replacement. **Pause**

3. God could have rightly poured out all his rage and anger against us: murder, war, inequality, lies, gossip, slander, rage and hate that is in this world. . . in our own hearts.

a) God could have said, “I will scrap this whole creation project, because of the evil in this world.”

b) but instead, out of love, God the son, Jesus Christ, absorbed all the wrath upon himself. . . Jesus died, so we could live.

(1) Through His wounds we have been healed.

(a) ANd he gives us that pure, undefiled open passage to our heavenly father again.

i) And so this is the message we shout from the mountain tops, we proclaim today:

(1) “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news (gospel)!” — Jesus (Mark 1:15)

(2) PAUSE

(a) The rest of the NT teaches us that this simple message has divine power to change your life, heal your marriage, give rest to your soul in these uncertain times.

(b) and we believe it because we have seen it first hand. . . I have seen in my life and I have seen it in the lives of many others in our church.

(c) If this message, grabs your heart. . . if it speaks to the longing in your heart to return to God. . . if you have put your hope in the things of this world and find that they are failing you. . .

(d) If this message, grabs your heart. . . then this is God speaking to you through this invitation.

(3) Then **repent**. . . this means turn from your sin. . . turn from trying to control your own destiny. . . turn from trying to be your own boss. . . turn from worshiping security and stability, wealth and health and fall on your knees and trust the good news message: **Pause**

(a) That God loves you. . . that God is pursuing you. . . that God reaching out to you this morning through Jesus Christ.

(b) Come back to God, come to Jesus! Maybe this is what God is trying to tell you through the uncertainty of our times.

(c) If you feel God speaking to you through this simple message, then I encourage you to talk to a Christian friend about this message. . . to ask more about how Jesus wants to restore your relationship with God.

VIII. And so Jesus tells the church do not fear: this message will shine bright. . this message has power to uncover what is hidden. . . to reveal what is suppressed. . to free prisoners from the powerful captivity of satan.

A. vss. 26-27: Fear not: The Gospel is more powerful than the lies of Satan. . . and in the end will shine brighter.

IX. Let's see what else Jesus tells his disciples as we come to the second Fear Not. . . vss 28:

A. 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. —
Matthew 10:28 Pause

1. Now here Jesus turns to address the voices we are listening to. . . and acting upon in our lives.

a) The Jewish way of speaking about “Fear”. . . is much broader than we tend to think of the concept of fear.

(1) In the ancient Jewish way of thinking. . . fear is about “authority”. . . who has authority over you and who do you obey.

(a) Think of your boss. . . here on earth.

i) You probably have a healthy fear of him/her.

ii) They can be the coolest, nicest, boss around, but you should also have a healthy respect for her. . . maybe even a healthy fear at times.

b) So, what Jesus is saying. . . is that we ought not to fear men, but rather fear God.

- (1) God is the one with ultimate authority over our lives. . . God is the one we need to be obeying and it is on His authority that we act.

2. **SO, Jesus reminds us to have an eternal perspective on this life.**

- a) This life is not the end goal: we have to think eternally. . . one day we will stand before our creator, the God who made each of us.

- (1) And there will be a judgment day. . . this is when the hidden truth of the gospel will shine out and come to light.

- (2) The reason fear has gripped so many people's minds and hearts at the moment is because they have placed all of their eggs in the basket of the "here and now".. . all of their hope and joy and peace and security is based on temporary and transient things.

(a) And these things are being removed before our very eyes.

- (3) The reason people are feeling this deep "angst" in their soul is because they have made **THIS** life everything.

3. When you stand before God in the life to come. . . the question we will have to answer is: on what have you built your life?

- a) If we have lived our lives, completely consumed by self-preservation. . . self-fulfillment. . self-elevation. . .self-advancement. . . then it begs a question:

- (1) Why would you want to spend an eternity with God. . . if you have spent your entire life here on earth pursuing everything except God?

- (2) . . . if we have lived this life obeying and serving ourselves. . . then scripture is very clear that hell is our destiny.

i) **Hell is complete and eternal separation from God without hope of rescue. Pause**

- (1) God has reached out to us in innumerable ways and offers us peace. . . but instead we have rejected Him and chosen to pursue our own path.

(2) In a real sense Hell is an extension or really the end-telos, the end-goal, the destiny, of one who lives **this** life in a self-quarantined existence apart from God. . .

(a) At one point God releases his hand of mercy and allows you to pursue your own destruction as your heart becomes calloused to god's repeated attempts to get your attention.

4. So, I appeal to you, seek God while he can be found.

a) God is gracious to us. I believe God is using this virus to wake us up to the shortness of this life. . . to the transience of this life.

b) Don't live this short life obeying and slavishly serving empty promises which elevate this present life over the life to come.

(1) Jesus wants us to think eternally. . . .

(a) To illustrate the value we place on this life compared to the eternity: I'll borrow an illustration from, a popular christian speaker, Francis Chan:

i) **Illustration:** Think of eternity as a very long rope. . . and this little part where the tape is. . . is this present life. . . and eternity is the rest of life.

(1) ANd think of how we live in this life. . .

(a) how consumed we are about the cares and worries here. . . but completely ignore the part that goes on for ever and ever without end.

(2) If we live this short life as if it is more significant than the life to come that is folly. . . that is foolish.

(3) We will either spend eternity with our creator. . . or we will spend eternity suffering, separated from God without hope of rescue.

(2) do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. — Matthew 10:28

- (a) Be honest with yourself this morning. . . who are you obeying. . . for what are you living for?
 - i) Why would you even want to spend an eternity with God. . . if you have spent your short life here on earth pursuing everything except God?

(1) So the second thing Jesus us tells us:

- (a) Do not fear man, do not obey man, do not act on the values of man. . . rather fear God, obey god, act on the values of God. . . and you will live.

X. Lastly this morning, in vss 29-33, we find the last “fear not” in our passage:

A. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 **Fear not, therefore;** you are of more value than many sparrows. 32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.— Matthew 10:29-33 **Pause**

1. The last reason the Christian ought not to fear is because God cares for each one of us. . . and he has provided a saviour.

a) A sparrow was the smallest of birds in Jesus’ day.

b) A penny, the smallest of coins.

c) ANd a hair, the smallest of our visible body parts.

(1) God knows every small detail about our life. . . and he is sovereign above it.

(a) God is control of the events unfolding at the moment:

i) He knew about it from the beginning of time. . .

ii) He knows why its happening today . . .

iii) . . . and he knows for how long it will last.

- (2) God is above these events. . . our governments will fail us. . . our healthcare system can only ward off the inevitable. . our bank accounts can not buy us out of death. . . we all have due date.
 - (a) Each and every one of us will die. . . there is a day when we will stand before our maker and give an account for our life.
- 2. But fear not, God doesn't just know and control these events. . . he cares for us in and through these times.
 - a) If God cares about a sparrow and a penny, then how much more does he care about you!
 - b) And so he has sent a saviour. . . Jesus is God's ultimate provision for us.
 - c) When judgement day comes, we fear not because we have an advocate.
 - d) Jesus has paid the price, he has paid the debt. . . he has taken our place. .. he has removed the barrier.
- (1) So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.
- (2) Jesus is standing by our side. . . when we stand before our creator, our heavenly father, our eternal judge. . . jesus is by your side.
 - (a) The last "fear not" is this: vss.29-33: Fear not the judgment to come because God has provided a saviour; Jesus is our advocate.

XI. Conclusion

- A. We live in a world captivated, really gripped, by fear at the moment.
 - 1. ANd though these are especially uncertain times. . . it is not unlike the world Jesus stepped into 2000 years ago.
 - a) Jesus is the hope of the world. .. and he points us to the larger picture.

(1) Don't let the present circumstances cloud out and block out our eternal perspective.

(2) Jesus comes to us and says:

(a) vss 26-27: Fear not: The Gospel is more powerful than the lies of Satan.

(b) vs. 28: Fear not: The authority of temporal man, because the eternal God is greater still.

(c) vs. 29-33: Fear not: The Judgement to come, because God has provided a saviour.

XII.As we close today.

A. I want to urge you not to waste this moment.

1. What Satan means for evil, God redeems for our good and His glory.

2. God is using this time to get your attention. . . how will you respond.

XIII.As Paula comes and leads us in our closing song. . .

A. Use this time to pray, to sing, to allow the Lord to speak to you.

1. If you sing, sing with intentionality. . . aware of what you are singing.

2. If you listen, let the words remind guide you to Jesus.

XIV.Paula, lead us in our closing song: Whom shall I fear?

Benediction:

Psalm 118:

Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me free. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The Lord is on my side as my helper. . .

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes.

The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!