

Fear Not

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[0:00] Please be seated. Let's go to Matthew and we'll get to chapter 10 shortly.! Just to preface this, this is a little alike to a message that I have preached lately.

! It may sound somewhat familiar because there are some common threads here and some common themes.

But it is a new message and I know that just this recent week just gone. I mentioned this I think already to a degree but bear with me if you've heard this story.

But we had a call through the week and there was a woman who was very fearful, very worried. Her son had had some scary dreams and he thought there was a spirit in the house. Some kind of spirit in the house. And so she was very fearful of this spirit that she thought that her son was seeing.

[1:03] And he described the spirit to her. And so she was quite fearful of this and she made some contact. She tried to reach a church. She got a psychic medium to come over.

A psychic medium came to her home and there was a couple of these men who called themselves psychic mediums. And they came to her house and they prayed in some language she couldn't understand.

I think they had some. They were from another background, another culture. And they left some artifacts in the home that she was to place under her pillow and under the pillow of her son.

And, you know, these incantations and such. And so she continued to be very fearful about what was going on. And she made contact with me and she said she wanted a priest to come.

A priest to come and bless the house. And so I said, oh, I can come and pray for you and bless your house and you. And so I got a couple of other ladies from the church who are present today and asked if they could come with me to accompany me to see this woman.

[2:20] And we went to her home and we had a good chat with her. And before I came, she said, can you bring some holy water? Some holy water.

So now I didn't reach in my pulpit and grab some of this H2O here. But I said, I can bring you something much better. Something much, much better. And are you sure you can help me? I'm very sure we can help you, I said. And so when my two sisters here came, I took something more holy than holy water.

And we gave her a holy Bible. So that's much, much more holy than any kind of holy water. And you can have this as a gift. I gave her the Bible. We gave her a marked New Testament.

And we had a chat with her. And it came to light that she had, as she put it, welcomed Jesus into her life as a young woman in a kind of church school.

[3:18] She had some kind of commitment that she had made. She had caught on the Lord in some fashion or form. And so we were able to assure her that the Lord is much stronger than any kind of spirit imagined or real.

And certainly no psychic mediums. We should not go to them. And we showed her from the scriptures why we shouldn't seek after divinances and soothsayers. You know, people that tell the future or try to give us, you know, graven images to shy away spirits and such.

And we were able to assure her and encourage her, reinforce her already existing faith, help her to come to a recommitment as she prayed publicly with us to trust the Lord.

Whether she'd done that realistically before or not, we certainly underline that to her, that that is her safety and her assurance in this time of fear. And as she's talking about coming, she's not obviously present, but she's talking about coming soon to the church.

Seems very genuine and serious about her faith as much as she's very, got lots of things to work through. But if you can keep her in prayer and trust that she will come to fellowship with us and we

can encourage her further in her sort of little fresh faith, her babyhood faith and help her to grow stronger in her faith.

[4:46] But my message this morning is really on this theme of fear not. Fear not. And as I say, there's some parallels with something I did deliver lately, so bear with me if it sounds somewhat familiar to another message I have done.

Fear not. I was thinking especially of this woman and of the fears that she had. What are you afraid of is a question. And someone has listed the top ten strong human fears.

Ten human fears that are very strong, shared by people everywhere. Losing your freedom. Fear of the unknown. Pain. Disappointment. Misery.

Loneliness. Ridicule. Rejection. Death. Failure. People are afraid of these ten things. Many of these fears are tied together. For example, death and the unknown.

Rejection and ridicule. Pain and misery. Failure and loneliness. These things can eat people up from the inside out. Most fears can be described of these ten as the inner condition of the heart.

[5:57] It's the heart of man. Not fears of specific things. There was a Gallup poll that asked Americans what things they are scared of the most. And the answers in order are snakes.

Public speaking. Heights. Being closed in a small space. Spiders. Have you checked underneath your seat? Needles.

And getting shots. I can identify with that one. I'd rather get sick than have a needle. Well, to a point. Mice.

People are scared of mice. You know, they jump on the chair. They're scared of those mice. You know, I get scared of the mice when they get in a trap and I've got to carefully dispose of them.

Flying on an aeroplane. Some people are scared of that. Dogs. Thunder and lightning. People are scared of that. Going to the doctor. I reckon going to the dentist is worse.

[6:56] Scared of the dark. All of these things. So many things that people can be scared of. It's quite funny in a way, isn't it? But then when it's really, when you think of it personally, some of those things I'm a bit scared of.

I know thanks to somebody who doxed me into beekeeping, I've got this, had some exposure to bees. And I know, I saw this thing flapping on a beehive yesterday.

And it was a bit of a sticky tape. And I thought, oh, the bees might land on that and get stuck. So I didn't bother about any protective gear. I just ran over to the hive and all these bees were there and grabbed it and threw it off.

And then I ran like mad out of the way to try to get away from the bees. And I thought, oh, I'm safe. But then I heard this, oh, there's a bee on me. And I was running around the garden. And I thought, there's a bee.

He's on me. I can hear this. And I thought, oh, where is it? And I couldn't see where the bee was. And so then I ran over to Julie. And she couldn't see a bee on me. But I went back into the house.

[7:57] And I could hear the bee again. So I ran out of the house. And I got some water from my hose and sort of doused this water all over me, hoping the water would get the bee off. And I thought, oh, I'm safe now.

But then I went into the house. And I could still hear, it's still on me somehow. So it must be on my clothes or something. And then, thankfully, I was able to see it was on the fly screen.

And I let it out. I thought, whew. Not that I'm afraid of bees or anything. But, you know, sometimes we can be afraid of things, can't we? Worried about things. Someone might say, I'm worried about my future.

I'm worried about my finances, my job, my health. Well, so many fears. People have what they call phobias. You know, common phobias. And you might want to think about these very technological words here.

These technical words, arachnophobia, fear of spiders. Social phobia, which is a fear of being misjudged or misunderstood in social situations.

[8:58] Claustrophobia, the fear of being enclosed in small spaces.

Aerophobia, the fear of flying. Some people can't jump on a plane.

They're just too afraid to even try it.

Agorophobia is the fear of leaving home, being in a public space where they may not be able to escape. Agorophobia. Some people are prisoners in their own homes. These are real for people. And then there's some maybe less common ones. Brontophobia, the fear of thunderstorms. Necrophobia, the fear of death. Mysophobia, the fear of germs.

Now, some people are so paranoid. Oh, did you touch that? You might have put germs on that. Oh, there might be germs on that. I've got to wash it before I touch it. Or, ophidophobia, the fear of snakes.

You know, I've seen the brown snake in the garden. You think, oh, don't want to get too close to that fella. Could be a bit risky. Hydrophobia is the fear of water.

[9:57] Oh, that's scary stuff, isn't it? Necrophobia is the fear of darkness. Acrophobia is the fear of high places. You know, I've had occasion, like next door, it's got quite a high ceiling.

I've been climbing the ladder. When you get to the top of the ladder, you automatically think, I'm going to fall. But then if you're in the same place on solid ground, you wouldn't think of that. It's not like you're really going to fall. It's just the imagined fear, isn't it, that it might happen.

Taxophobia is the fear of being buried alive. Xenophobia is a fear of strangers.

Hemophobia is a fear of blood. Now, you might not have heard of this one. I've got to carefully pronounce this one. Trischaidacophobia, the fear of the number 13. You might have the Trischaidacophobia.

Algophobia is the fear of pain. Now, if you suffer from phobophobia, fear of fears, I'm sorry, you must be terrified by now. Phobophobia. So, no, seriously, there are fears, but mostly they are not needful.

[11:05] It's not needful for us to have fear. Some people have really strange fears. The fear of the colour yellow. Now, don't go too close to Brother Emmanuel.

He's got a lot of yellow on him today. Fear of cheese. The fear of falling asleep. The fear of clowns. The fear of the belly button. Goodness.

Fear of being without the mobile phone coverage. Wow, that really troubles some people. Oh, no reception. They start quaking. Fear of rain.

The fear of the Pope. It's amazing, isn't it? So many things. But there's a newspaper counsellor called Anne Landers, and she receives an average of 10,000 letters every month the time this was written.

You know, the ones that you write into the paper. Dear Anne, help me with my problem. All of these people came to her burden with so many problems, and she was asked one day, what predominates, what's the predominant thing, what's the main thing that you get problems raised with you about?

[12:07] And she said, above all others, the main one problem seems to be fear. People are afraid. Afraid of losing their health, their wealth, their loved ones.

Afraid of life itself. Now, some people are too afraid to come into a church like this. It's scary stuff. You people are scary people. You know? You know, every time I have to, you know, when I come up the front here, it says, be not afraid of their faces.

Not that your faces are scary, really, but it's a sense where we can all get fearful of things that there's no need for us to fear. In Matthew 10, verse 28, we read, Our Lord says, And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Our Lord says, Fear not. The fear of man is a real blockage for us sometimes, isn't it? As believers, let's be honest.

Fear can paralyze people. The fear of man can stop many of us from standing up for the Lord. When the chips are down and we've actually got to say something, often we say nothing because we're scared.

[13:29] We're afraid of people. It can stop Christians from witnessing because they're afraid of people. What will they say? What will they think? They'll be against me. And yet, we are the messenger that needs to impart the message.

Let not fear stop you. Fear not them, fellow human beings, but rather fear God. Fear. It can torment people. Here's a bit of a funny story here, but it gives an illustration of how fear can torment people. There was a man who visited a therapist and he had a fear of monsters living under his bed.

A grown man. He had fears of monsters living under his bed. Maybe he'd grown up through childhood and still worried about those monsters. Maybe the scary stories his mum and dad might have told him or scary movies.

This man had been seeing a doctor for months and months and every time he would come in to see the doctor, he would ask her, the doctor would say to him, have you made any progress? And every time the man would say, no.

[14:37] The man decided to go and see another doctor and when he went back to his doctor and the doctor asked, have you made any progress? The man said, yes, I'm feeling all better now.

The doctor said, what happened? The man said, I went to another doctor and he cured me in one session. The doctor was really curious. What did he tell you? The man said, he just told me to cut the legs off of my bed.

So, the monsters couldn't fit any longer. It's kind of funny really, isn't it? But fear can torment people. They go to doctors and they get antidepressants and they get medication and they just can't seem to get on top of this.

Fear can torment people. Usually people worry about what's often irrational fears. They fear or worry about what actually will never happen.

It's never actually going to happen. Yet it drives them to despair as they worry and worry and fret. And we can waste our lives, can't we? With such fear and worry.

[15:44] And it paralyzes us from doing something. Stepping out into something that, hey, it is scary but I'm going to do it anyway. You know, I had to, you know, it's like when I had to start dealing with bees as much as I hate bee stings.

They're just bees. And they're just, you know, they're just insects. And it's just getting it in perspective, isn't it? And the things that we're scared of, even climbing a high ladder, it's something, we've got to face it.

Face the fear and overcome. It's easy to get discouraged and troubled but the Bible urges us this, fear not, fear not. Let's turn to Luke 12.

We've got the slides here to follow along. Luke 12 from verse 22. Again, our Lord is speaking, he's speaking to his disciples and he says, therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life.

Don't worry, he's saying. Don't fill your thinking with this stuff. Don't worry, he's saying. Take no thought for your life. What you shall eat, neither for the body, what you shall put on.

[17:00] The life is more than meat and the body is more than raiment. It's more than food and clothing. Life is much more than that. He says, consider the ravens, verse 24.

For they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn. And God feedeth them, how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Verse 25. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? And I was telling young David Sunday night, he's a young fella, keep stretching, keep stretching.

That's what I did and I'm a bit taller than my dad. And I sort of get, you know, but really we can't add to our height. It's kind of pre-programmed, isn't it? We might stretch by a bit of effort, but essentially we can't add one cubit, one little bit to our height.

It is what it is. Verse 26. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

[18:12] Then he talks about the flowers. Here he says, consider the lilies. They grow, how they grow, they toil not, they spin not, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Consider the lilies. They don't toil, they don't have to work to make themselves glorious. God does it.

Verse 28. If then God so clothed the grass which is today in the field and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Sorry, I'm getting ahead there. 29. And seek not ye what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after.

And your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. God knows what you have need of. Doesn't he? He knows you. He knows you inside out, upside down, back to front.

[19:26] He knows all about you. He counts the hairs of your head. He knows all about you and your needs. And he will take care of you. He knows what you have need of. Rather than seek those things, our Lord says, but rather seek ye the kingdom of God.

And all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. He says, fear not, little flock.

They were just a little flock. You know, just some 12 disciples and others that were in his charge. And he says, fear not, fear not.

That little band of men, the disciples, male and female, as they extended and increased, God gave them much grace.

Fear not, he says. Our Lord wants us to learn how we can trust him, how we can lean upon his strength, how we can find his resources. He says to you, fear not.

[20:33] Fear not. Don't worry about things. Don't worry about the material things of life, about what you will eat or wear. God will supply, supply what you have need of. We can't change our height by thinking about it, and it's the same with our worries.

God closed the grass and the flowers. He tells us not to be of doubtful mind. Let go of your doubts and worries and fears. You don't have to worry about the monsters under the bed.

You don't have to worry about the darkness, or whatever it be. Trust him. Trust him, that he will do what he says. Just consider the credentials of this one who speaks and says this to you, fear not.

Consider him, consider his credentials. Look at this one. This one who says to you, fear not. He is the most powerful, the almighty.

He is the creator of life. He is the prince of peace. He is the lord of hosts. He is the one who will fight for us. He is the one who was, who is, and is to come.

[21:39] He is the one who gives strength to the faint. He, in all of our lack and inadequacy, he is our strength. He is the one who holds the few. He is the one who is our great provider.

He is the one who is your defender and fortress. He is your shepherd. He is the author and the finisher of our faith. He is the king of glory, the all-sufficient one.

He is the one who puts a new song in our mouth. He is strong. No one is stronger than him. He guards and he guides. His grace is sufficient.

And he is the one who will keep you from falling. Amen? The theme of fear, of fear not, is often repeated. It's a very common theme in scripture.

We see Isaiah 41, verse 10. It tells us, fear thou not. Of course, it's addressing the people of the time in that occasion.

[22:38] But I believe these scriptures can be taken as claimed by us as God's people too in this time. Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God.

I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. It's very strong here, isn't it?

I will, I will, I will. Notice the one who says, fear not, says that he stands by you, with us.

He says, do not be dismayed. He is your God. You can rest in that truth. In those times when you're feeling weak, he says, I will strengthen you.

In times when we feel like we don't have ability, he says, he will help you. In those times when we feel weighed down by circumstances, we're in those low points, he will lift you up, he will give you hope, he will uphold you.

[23:40] Isaiah 43 is similarly worded from verse 1. But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou

art mine.

That's a blessing, isn't it? You are his. His purchased possession. I'm not my own, I'm bought with a price. And he goes on, when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.

When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. When troubled times come, he is with you.

I know for Julie and I, one day, we, it was the day that we hung these curtains, we bought them and hung them, and we spent much time doing that, and we went home and our home was flooded.

Was flooded. Two inches in places, ankle deep, our floating floors were really floating.

[24:56] They were just, it was just massive. And when you go through the waters, I will be with thee. Amen? You know, what a disaster, and my wife's not been the same since that day, but terrible things can happen to Christians too, can't they?

Terrible things. It happened twice to us, the kitchen sink, bang, bang, twice. Totally flooded. Well, most of our house was flooded and a lot of damage.

God says, fear not, you are mine. You belong to him. You're in his care. He's the creator and he's the sustainer of your life. He says, he has redeemed you, set you free.

He's claimed you. He's made you his own. Surely there will be waters to go through. Surely there will be flames. But the great comfort for our soul is he is with us.

He's with us right through, right through it all. The great comfort of our soul is that he says, I will be with thee. A missionary was teaching a Hindu woman what some call the Lord's prayer, the Our Father which art in heaven.

[26:03] When he got to the end of that first clause, Our Father which art in heaven, she said, stop. If God is our Father, that is enough. There is now nothing, nothing now to fear.

God is my Father, our Father which art in heaven. That's enough, isn't it? We need not fear. This was one whose life was haunted by the dread of countless evil spirits, but the great sweet message of my Father is in heaven.

He's mine and I'm his. This one who says, I will be with thee, he's a loving father. He is our great shepherd, our great friend, our resource, our saviour, our defence, our hope, our song.

He is the one to whom every knee shall bow, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that he is Lord.

Jesus Christ is the Lord. He is the one in whom all things, in all things he has preeminence. And to you he says, fear not. He says that to you.

[27:10] If we give way to our fears and worries, really it's a lack of faith, isn't it? Don't we trust him enough to care, to see us through? We disobey the one who says fear not, when we fear, when we worry, when we fret and fuss.

Fear dishonours God. Fear and worry is really a sin, let's face it, against God. It's a lack of faith, it's a lack of trust in him.

Rather, let's make it our strong decision, I will trust you Lord, I will trust you through this, I will trust in you. Fear is the opposite of faith.

They're very contrary, aren't they? Really, as someone has put it in a sense, fear is faith in the devil. Who do you believe? The devil's lies or God's promises?

In contrast, faith is our shield, we're told. We can look with the eyes of faith and see what God wants, that God is with us.

[28:15] And it depends on what kind of spectacles we're wearing, doesn't it? We take the world's spectacles or the spectacles of doubt and we can see that which is going to be the worst or we can trust God to see us through, even if it is through the worst, that he'll help us make it work.

And it's seeing things from God's point of view. We see that happen in Numbers 13, in the occasion where Joshua and Caleb and the other ten spies went out to the promised land.

They crossed over and they had a bit of spying out what lay ahead over that promised land that lay before them. And Joshua and Caleb, they saw God's blessing, they saw God's power, they knew

God's resources were behind them, the host of God, the angels of God, the power of God, the Holy Spirit of God.

And yet the others went, they saw the same things, they saw the same land, but they only saw the formidable enemy that they had to face.

And they started quaking in their boots, or in their sandals probably. Numbers 13 from verse 13 we see that Caleb stilled the people before Moses.

[29:32] Caleb gave this good report, he said, let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. Verse 31 we read the evil report of the other spies, but the man that went up with him said, we are not able to go up against the people for they are stronger than we.

They all saw the same things, but Joshua and Caleb looked at things differently. Will we speak with the voice of faith or the voice of fear?

Face your fear. God is true. The creature, the African impala, what would you describe it, like a deer, like a sprightly kind of creature called the impala.

greater than 30 feet. Yet these magnificent creatures are held in enclosures in zoos with a three-foot wall, three-foot.

The animals will not jump if they cannot see where their feet will fall. Sometimes you've just got to jump. Amen? Got to jump.

[31:04] And not be worried about what lies ahead, but trust in God, that He is for you. He will watch over you, even when that which you're faced with seems insurmountable. And look, I'm not discounting there's people here this morning with some big challenges.

It's scary in the natural, isn't it? It's easy to feel overwhelmed and to see all the trouble and testing that lies ahead.

But even in that, like Psalm 46 tells us, we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled.

It goes on, we haven't got those words there, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Though the earth be removed, though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, we will not fear because God is our refuge, God is our strength, God is our very present help in trouble.

The Lord is with you. These are very simple truths, yet very profound, aren't they? Do we stop and think, God is with me?

[32:32] And he doesn't stop and start, he stays, he's there all the time with you. As David cried, I sought the Lord and he heard me, and he now just to wrap up, someone has cited three Ks to happiness, three Ks to happiness.

three Ks to happiness, three Ks to happiness.

It's an interesting kind of little summing up of how to handle life and the challenges ahead. Fret not, he loves you. Don't fret and fast and he loves you.

He knows what's best. Faint not, he holds you. You are secure. You are held fast in his everlasting arms.

And fear not, he will keep you. Just to repeat those three, fret not, he loves you.

[33:56] Now before the feast of the Passover, we know in the Bible, the right hand speaks of God's power and strength.

His mighty, glorious power, he holds you with that hand. You're safe. Faint not, he holds you. And fear not, he keeps you.

As we see here, Psalm 121 verse 5, the Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade, upon thy right hand. In other words, here's our security guard.

I like to think, really, this property and really every believer who is God's property, we've got 24 by 7 by 365 surveillance.

Amen? We are under surveillance. That his eyes roam to and fro, here's our keeper, here's our guards. They made this journey from the one place here to The place to the grandmother's house, it started to get dark.

[36:05] And this young boy was starting to get a bit jumpy. He could hear these noises. There was the frogs croaking. Ribbit, ribbit, ribbit,

ribbit.

And then the crickets chirping. Anyone know how to make a cricket sound? And there was all these funny sounds. It was in the middle of the night. It was really scary for this young boy.

And then the shadows of the tree. There's some funny shapes here. They look like someone's watching me. And he inquired of his father. He felt really scared here.

He was endangered. He said of his father, if there's any danger, something's going to catch us. But the father assured him that he would not be afraid.

Thank you.

[37:23] Thank you.

Fear not. Let us pray. Lord, we bless you. We thank you that you do hold us by your right hand. You keep us safe and sure. You hold us steady and strong.

Lord, we pray for everyone present. We know there's crises of life. There's challenges we face, all of us in different ways. Lord, yet we know that you will hold us by your right hand.

And Lord, we know that your words commands us, Lord. Fear not. Help us, Lord, to have that heart that trusts in you, that will rest in faith rather than surely we can.

Take our thought forward. Lord, we pray for tomorrow when you tell us not to.

[38:54] Lord, help us to find some reassurance here this morning of these truths from your word. Help us, Lord, when we're feeling like getting scared or frightened, when we're feeling fearful.

Help us, Lord, to replace that fear rather with faith, to help it strengthen our faith, deepen our faith, to give us a stronger faith. Lord, we pray.

Pray for us, any here that have yet to trust you for the first time as Lord and Saviour, that even now they might know you are a great Saviour. I'm a great sinner, but you are a great Saviour.

And I put my trust in you. Like was talked about earlier, nothing compares. There's no religious belief or philosophy or teaching or not really that many.

But there's some verses that talk about trusting and not being fearful.

[39:52] You could, of course, there's many, many promises, more than 365, that we can put our trust in him. We can lean on his strength and not be fearful of man or situations of life.

Yeah, it's certainly the scripture for every day, isn't there? There's promises for every day that you can take to heart. Amen. Let's stand and sing, shall we? All praise to him, our great Saviour.