

Fear Not: You are Remembered

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[0 : 00] The birth of John the Baptist foretold.

In the time of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife, Elizabeth, was also a descendant of Aaron.

Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well along in years.

Once, when Zechariah's division was on duty, and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshippers were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

[1 : 18] When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard.

Your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and a delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.

He is never to take wine or any other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord, their God, and he will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous and make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Zechariah asked the angel, How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years.

The angel answered, I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

[2 : 46] And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them, but remained unable to speak.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant, and for five months remained in seclusion.

The Lord has done this for me, she said. In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people. This is the word of God.

Father God, we just pray for Laura now as he brings your word to us.

[4 : 07] Lord God, we pray for a fresh anointing upon him. And Father, help us to hear your word today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Good morning, church. Again, thank you to the leaders for giving me the opportunity to come and share God's word with the church this morning.

We are going to start a new series titled, Fear Not. And the first subtitle is, or subheading, is You Are Not Forgotten, I believe.

Is that true? You are not forgotten. Yeah. So we have been given two Bible passages. The first one, Genesis 16, from verse 7 to 15, and Luke 1, 5 to 25.

We are going to try to answer a question this morning. Why should I not fear?

[5 : 30] Why should I not fear? Yeah, that's the question. Why should I not fear? The question that you need to ask yourself. Why should I not fear?

Fear comes because something is going on, maybe into your mind. And so often the evil comes and sits in our mind and trying to lead us, to convince us, to lie.

That you are not going to make it. You are going to die. You are not going to get what you want. Fear comes and fear comes in.

Why should I not fear? The first answer is because the God we serve is the God who hears about the situation that I am going through.

The God that we serve at HHBC is the God that we can hear about my situation.

[6 : 47] First slide, please. Yeah. In Genesis 16, we are told the story of Hagar, the Egyptian slave, who was given to Abraham as wife by Sarai.

The means by which Sarai gives her husband a son was commonly used at the time. If you read Genesis 30, for example, from verse 1 to 13.

Having already been in Canaan for 10 years, Abraham and his wife have been there for 10 years. They can't wait.

They can't wait. They can't know it's getting long. And the descendants that God has promised are not coming.

By their impatience, create a situation of conflict between Sarai and her servant, of which each took turn in paying the price.

[8 : 11] Contempt for one, mistreatment for the other. God intervened with Hagar. So that Sarai initiative did not create unjust suffering.

God stepped in. God stepped in. The name of Hagar's child reflects this concern.

Next slide, please. We read it in Genesis 16, verses 11 to 12. The angel of the Lord also said to her, You are now pregnant, and you will give birth to a son.

You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery. I like that one. For the Lord has heard of your misery.

It will be a wild donkey of a man. His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him. And he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.

[9 : 22] The name Ishmael means God hears. The God of the Bible can hear. The descendants of Ishmael will not be the direct hearers of the covenant, but they will share in the sign that attest to it and in God's blessing.

Then Sarai mistreated Hagar so badly that she fled into the desert. Hagar. Poor Hagar.

She did not ask to be given to Abraham as a wife. Sarai did not measure the consequence of her decision.

You don't give your servant to your husband as a second wife and still expect her to submit to you as your servant.

That teaches us something about making decisions, isn't it? Think twice before you make your decision. She has changed the status and will act accordingly.

[10 : 36] But Sarai struggled with that and mistreated her. In verse 11, the angel confirmed that God heard of Hagar's misery.

So God can hear. Really? Is that true? Yes, God can hear of people's miseries, sufferings, pain, sickness, and lack of peace.

This is a wonderful truth, isn't it? The God of the Bible is able to hear. He can hear.

The problem in 1 Kings chapter 18 between Elijah and the 450 prophet of Baal is that Baal is not able to hear.

Baal can't hear. Elijah said, Elijah said, okay, now we are going to pray. I'm going to pray, my God.

[11 : 54] You pray your God. And the God that will answer by fire is the true God. And they tried to call upon the name of their God, Baal.

He couldn't listen. He couldn't hear. He couldn't hear. But when Elijah prayed, God answered.

Because God could hear. Say to your neighbor, God can hear. Tell him again. Tell him again.

God can hear. God can hear. God can hear. God can hear. We have it in 1 John chapter 5, verse 14 to 15. It says, this is the confidence.

God is about approaching God. He says, this is the New Testament. God can hear. God can hear. Okay. God can hear.

[13 : 04] God can hear. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we ask of Him. friend, God can hear.

This is a wonderful truth. And one of the ways that God can hear of your problems is through prayer.

Through prayer. You are able to hear what I'm saying because I'm speaking out.

If I don't speak, you can't hear me. Is that true? If you want God to hear about your problem, you need to speak out through prayer.

Tell him about your problem. Don't go around talking to people about your problem. Turn to God and pray. Tell him what you are going through.

[14 : 08] Ask him questions. Tell him, are you seeing me? I'm talking to you.

Can you answer? I remember many years ago in Africa, I'm sure you know that we had a church in Africa.

I decided to bring people in the bush. So we will pray for three days.

More than 500 people came. He went into the bush. And I say to people, everyone should make a space for themselves.

The bush is too big. So make your own space so you can pray to God. Nobody is going to pray for you.

[15 : 05] Make sure you pray to God. Make sure you present your problem to God. God is going to pray for you. So we are supposed to be there for three days.

God is going to pray for you. But at the end of the first day, God spoke to us. God is going to pray for you. God is going to pray for you.

We were praying. And you know when African brothers are praying, they are praying. Amen. When they are praying, they are praying.

The place was shaking. So they are here. And God is in Birmingham. So they need to pray. So God can listen to them.

Amen. Amen. Amen. At the end of the first day, God spoke to us through the word of prophecy and said, What are you doing here?

[16 : 10] I have heard you. Go back home. And I said to people, pack your stuff.

It's over. We went back home. The next week, the following week, we had so many testimonies in the church.

Healing. Promotion. God can hear. I'm telling you the truth. It's up to you.

Now that you know that. You can hear. It's up to you. Open your mouth. And pray.

Ask him. Or you want. So if you want God to hear you. Speak out.

[17 : 13] Whenever you pray, you make God hear your problems. Or someone else's problem. The question is whether you pray or not.

Like, some of you are being mistreated by evil spirits. Last week, I was called in France.

We went with my wife. That wasn't planned. We went. We called. I mean, there's a family there. Their son is troubled by evil spirit.

And they wanted me to go and pray for the guy. It was horrible. I can't go into details. But we went there.

And we prayed. And we saw God help. What I want to tell you is that God can hear. And all you need is to pray.

[18 : 22] Like Hagar, some of you are mistreated by evil spirits. And wonder, when is it going to end? When? When this situation is going to end?

The good news is that God is stepping in now to deliver you from oppression. Oppression. Say amen to that.

People can hear about your suffering and do nothing. But when God hears about your misery, he acts. Is there any Hagar in this room?

I mean, someone who knows that something is not right in their life or within their family. Something is not working. Something is not.

Something needs to be fixed in my life or in the life of our family. Then you need to cry out to God.

[19 : 28] Do you find yourself in any kind of suffering? This morning I'm here to say, fear not. Yes, you are not forgotten. Because God knows you.

God has heard of your problem. God has heard you when you were crying. God has heard you.

And all you need to do now is to believe that he heard me. He heard me. Remember the question we are trying to answer this morning.

Why should I not fear? The second answer is because the God we serve is the God who sees me.

God can not only hear of your misery, but he can also see you as well as your problem.

[20 : 37] Next slide. Next slide. Let's read Genesis chapter 16, verses 11 to 13. So we read the verse 11 and 12.

Now we have added 13. The angel of the Lord also said to her, you are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son.

You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your misery. He will be a wild donkey of a man. His hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him.

And he will live in hostility toward all his brother. Verse 13. She gave, that's Hagar. She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her.

You are the God who sees me. For she said, I have now seen the one who sees me.

[21 : 42] Hagar has finally been justified by God. And this made her describe the God of the Bible as the one who sees.

Hagar, I am amazed by this revelation. You have said it rightly, my sister. In Egypt, where you come from, there are idols that can't hear and see.

But you have the privilege of knowing that there is a God who can hear and see you. The God of Abraham. Isaac and Jacob.

God of Abraham. This morning, I'm talking to someone in this room. I'm talking to someone in this room. I know you have money, but your money can't save you, my brother.

Oh, resolve your problem. Turn to God who sees you. God who sees you. God can see where people can't see.

[22 : 44] You know, God can see where people can't see. Good looking person. But you are struggling in the background.

God sees you. God sees you. He alone has the ability to see your problem and do something about it.

Friends, don't hide behind your good look. Allow God to see you by believing that he is the God who sees.

There is someone in this room. He's saying, I'm getting old and I'm not married. I'm here this morning to tell you that marriage is coming. I wanted someone to say amen to that.

I don't know. I don't know. I'm talking to people. I say, God says marriage is coming. Amen. Listen to what God himself says.

[23 : 55] Exodus chapter 3 verse 7 to 8. The Lord said, The Lord said, I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt.

Hmm? This is not the angel. Listen carefully. This is not the angel. I'm sorry. I just felt that I didn't want to focus on angel because I feel angels have been created by God.

So I want to focus on God because he's the creator. Because he's the one who can make things. Yes, angels have been sent by God.

They have been sent by God to tell people all this news. But God said the one who has the last word. No angel, brothers and sisters. This morning, I want to talk to you about the God who can see you.

Who can hear you. You can hear about your problem. Here, it's not the angel. It's God himself. He said, I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt.

[25 : 11] Huh? He can see. He can see the misery. I have heard them crying out because of the slave drivers.

And I am concerned about their suffering. God is concerned about someone suffering in this room. God is concerned about someone suffering in this room.

Someone. Someone is crying. He's crying. In their bedroom. They are crying. In the kitchen. They are crying.

They are crying. And God is concerned. God has seen the misery. God has seen your struggle.

And he want to do something this morning. Know me? Know the angel? But God.

[26 : 16] I have seen. I have seen the misery of my people. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers.

And I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians. And to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land.

A land flowing with milk and honey. The home of the Canaanite. Hittite. Amorite. Peresite. Hivite.

And Jebusite. God can see. God can see. Today I stand before this congregation and declare that God has heard your prayer.

And seen your desire to have a leader. He will be given to you soon. Say amen to that. Why should I not fear?

[27 : 25] Why should I not fear? Next slide. Because the God we serve is the God who shows favor. The God who shows favor.

Despite being righteous in the sight of God. The priest Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth remain childless.

Really? Righteous before God. And they don't have a child. Can't believe it. Neighbors are talking about them.

Where is their God? Oh, did you go to church? And you still have no child? But you say you are righteous.

And given the age, all hope of descendants seems lost. And yet God chooses this moment to respond to their expectations.

[28 : 29] Sometimes God will wait, wait, wait, wait until you feel like it's too late. And then he will step in. To show that he is God.

It doesn't depend on people. It depends on God. Because he is the one who has the last word. No people.

It's not your boss. It's not your husband. It's not your wife. It's not your dad, your mom who has the last word in your life.

It's God the Father. The one who sees. The one who can hear. The one who shows favor. The one who has the last word in your life.

Interesting, isn't it? The angel came to speak to Zachariah while he was there to offer the incense.

[29 : 37] Wow. Wow. Wow. And that's when he was told that your wife will have a son.

God has heard your prayer. It means that this guy, he was praying. He was in the service. But he's in the holy place.

And people are waiting for him outside. He's supposed to pray for those people outside.

But he said, let me pray for myself as well. Because God is here. I'm here with God. Let me pray about myself. I still need the child.

And suddenly, the angel is there. God has heard your prayer. Sometimes, prayer of intercession is good. It's like the ambulance driver.

[30 : 51] When he's driving, when he's on the road, everyone must do what?

Give way. And when he, because we know that it's not about him. When he goes, we know that it's not about him.

He's got people. He's got someone in the ambulance. And he wants to serve that person. So we need, we must give him the way.

We need to go. When you do the prayer of intercession, you are acting the same way. It's not about you.

It's about somebody else. It's about somebody else. And you have to get there.

[31 : 54] To the place where God is. But when you get there, remember, pray for yourself as well. That's what Zachariah did. When you get there, remember, pray for yourself. Indeed, the angel Gabriel visits Zachariah while he's engaged in the service of the offering.

This service only occurred once or twice a year. God answers Zachariah's prayer beyond his expectations.

Not only will he have a son, but his role will be decisive in God's plan for his people. Zachariah has difficulty believing it.

Doesn't believe. He knows that it's too late. Like Hebram before him, he asks for a sign. If you read Genesis 15, verse 8, this is why the sign you receive is unexpected.

[33 : 10] You will be silent and not able to speak until the fulfillment of the angel's word. Elizabeth, the one who was supposed to remain childless her entire life, is now in the line of women of the old covenant who also obtained descendants through the fervor of God, like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Anne.

So let's read Luke 1, 23 to 24. When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

After this, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. The Lord has done this for me.

Oh, who said that? Elizabeth. The Lord has done this for me, she said. In these days, he has shown his fervor and taken away my disgrace among the people.

Elizabeth knows that she does not deserve what she has received. She knows that God has been so kind to her.

[34 : 36] Therefore, she cannot hold her breath but speak out. Speak out. She recognized the fervor of God in her life.

Listen to what God says. God is promising something in Leviticus 26 and 9. He says, I will look on you with fervor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers and will keep my covenant with you.

You know, fervor takes away the shame. Fervor takes away the shame.

I have known somebody who has been, went to university and, but never worked.

Never worked. He tried to look for a job. No. And because he couldn't get a job, he can't, he can't rent a house.

[35 : 59] He can't get married. Nothing he can do. 46 years old, staying with his parents.

But the day the fervor of God came. Oh, boy.

You, you, you, I don't know whether you, you, you are getting what I'm trying to say here now. When the, the fervor of God came into his life, he was restored.

He was restored. God gave him a wonderful job. He was able not to rent a house, but to buy a house.

He was able to get married and have a family. That's how God restored people. At some point, he couldn't believe it.

[37 : 06] He had no hope because for him it was too late. 46 years old. That's how God restored people.

The fervor of God. This is why I'm saying the God of the Bible shows fervor to those who have lost hope and not able to save themselves from the devil's trap.

The fervor of God takes the shame away and restores lives. who need the fervor of God this morning? Who want to receive what they don't deserve this morning?

Do you believe that God can hear? Do you believe that God can see you and your problem? then please stand where you are for a prayer if you believe that.

If you want God to do something about what is going on into your life. It could be just a touch that you want from God.

[38 : 29] Stand where you are. take your fear away. You are not forgotten. Come to God who hears sees and shows fervor.

You are not forgotten my sister. You are not forgotten my brother. That is why he is calling you this morning so he can spread his fervor on you.

Just stand where you are. Close your arms. Break free Thank you.