

Relax-He is Still the Same!

December 31, 2017

Mal 3:6, "For I the Lord do not change.."

Intro: It seems that each of us carry personal fears - a deadline, a pink slip, a visa bill, a doctor's appointment. We all have something - some fear that gets us in the gut.

These are fearful times, but then - they always have been. You would think, if ever there were a time and people who would be fearless it would be the disciples, walking and living in the very presence of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, Light of the World, 2000 years ago. But as Mark tells it, they could panic right along with the best of us. In television advertising we are led to believe that the greatest catastrophe that could befall us is "ring around the collar," or bad breath. Undue emphasis upon the importance of the body and the temporal quality of life has created a mind-set which is often more concerned with the accommodations of life's journey than its destination. Modern fear and anxiety are not directed toward the real, valid, justified fears such as facing God. This is one thing truly worthy of fearful consideration. Nevertheless, many people today are more afraid of living than dying. Much of what we fear, much of what makes us anxious, is unnecessary fear.

Now God has never promised to remove all the troubles and problems from our lives. The truly committed Christian is often in conflict with the society around him. To say to a boss that you can't work on Sunday because you desire to worship often creates problems. To say no to a date that wants to do what God says should be restricted to marriage goes against the prevailing trend of our society. But God has promised even in the midst of trouble and conflict a genuine peace, a sense of assurance and security that the worldly person never knows. To help us cope with fear and anxiety God has promised us new strength through the indwelling of his Holy Spirit ... God, not just alive, but alive in you and in me.

However, many Christians continue to harbor fears and anxieties. To cope with these we must seek out God. Fear and anxiety are often the by-products of solo performances through life. Even some Christians have not learned that life is a partnership between God and man. A daily welcoming of the Spirit of God into our hearts casts out fear and enhances our partnership. With God in us, life's burdens are more easily borne, and anxiety and fear begin to dissolve like mist before the rising sun at the start of a beautiful day.

G. K. Chesterton once said that it is often supposed that when people stop believing in God, they believe in nothing. Actually, it is worse than that. When they stop believing in God, they believe in anything.

As we grow older there is a danger that we become cynical, depressed, or even fearful because of the past experiences. It is necessary that we evaluate the present and the past if we are going to approach the future with any measure of confidence and anticipation. A proper evaluation of the past will enable us to recognize the hand of God and as the Psalmist we can praise God for working in our lives in the past year. The Psalmist declared, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and **forget not all his benefits**" (Ps. 103:1, 2).

1. We Are Blessed

2. We Are Chosen

3. We Are Predestined

In Winnie the Pooh, Pooh and Piglet take an evening walk. For a long time they walk in silence. Silence like only best friends can share.

Finally Piglet breaks the silence and asks, "When you wake up in the morning, Pooh, what's the first thing you say to yourself?"

"What's for breakfast?" answers Pooh and then asks. "And what do you say, Piglet?"

Piglet says, "I say, I wonder what exciting thing is going to happen today?"

T.S. Never forget that the God of yesterday is also the God of tomorrow.

God is never out of date

God is never obsolete

God is never antique

God does not change models every year. The God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the unchanging One who is always able to handle our present needs and the stresses that come from a changing world.

I. The God of Yesterday

A. God came to Isaac as the God of his father Abraham (Gen 26:3). Gen 26:3

3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

1. As the Lord approached Isaac He did so on the basis of His previous Revelation to Isaac's father Abraham
2. The Lord was encouraging Isaac to face the future with faith in the God of yesterday.

B. God came to Jacob as the God of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 28:13). Gen 28:13

13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac;

1. The eternal God was seeking to carry on His redemptive plan and Jacob was to be a part of that plan.
2. God revealed Himself to Jacob the young man as the God upon whom his father and grandfather had depended.

C. God came to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 3:4).Ex 3:6

Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

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1. Moses was assured that the God who approached him on the backside of the desert was the same God who had been with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob on their journey.
2. As the God of the past was faithful to them He would be to Moses.

D. God came to Joshua as the God of Moses (Josh 1:2-5).Josh 1:5

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

1. God spoke with Joshua and made this statement to him, “You are not alone.”
2. While Moses is dead, you are not alone; I will be with you for the task that lies ahead.
3. As Joshua faced a difficult future, he was challenged to place his faith in the God of yesterday to get him through tomorrow.

II. The God of Yesterday Has Revealed Himself in Jesus Christ

A. God is personal.

1. He is something more than the force behind the universe.
2. God is more than simply power
3. God is a person named Jesus, who walked on this earth and left us, the evidence of his being. John 20:31

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

B. God is gracious.

1. He is the giver of the moral law.
2. His universe operates according to specific laws that maintain the universe in proper balance and sustains life.

3. He provides food, light, and rain for the entire world.
4. The blessings of God fall on the just as well as the unjust.

C. God is purposeful.

1. His command came to Joshua saying, “Arise, go over Jordan, you and this entire people, into the land which I am giving to them, to the people of Israel” (Josh 1:2).
2. God had a purpose for Joshua.
3. God has a purpose for us.

D. God is dependable. (Hebrews 13:8).

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

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1. As we face the uncertainties of the future with all the changes that are bound to come and the circumstances in which we are now, it is very encouraging that our God is dependable.
2. The fact that He never changes should be comforting.
 - a. We can depend upon the fact that His love for us never changes.
 - b. We can depend upon the fact that His promises never change.
 - c. We can depend upon the fact that His power is unlimited.
 - d. We can depend upon the fact that He will never leave us or forsake us.

III. The God of Yesterday will be available to us for all our tomorrows.

- A. The faith that pleased the Lord in the past generations will please Him today (Heb 11:7; Rom 4:20; 10:17).
- B. The God of Tomorrow will deserve our love and obedience.

1. We will be able to join with the apostle in saying, “We love him because he first loved us,” (I John 4:19).

2. His great love for us should motivate us and encourage us in the days ahead.

C. The God of tomorrow will honor faithfulness on our part (I Cor 4:2).

1. God is looking for men and women that He can equip for His service in the days to come.

2. God will not force you to serve Him, but if you desire to do so He will equip you for service and open the doors to do so.

D. The God of tomorrow will be with us always (Matt 28:20).

1. We do not need to worry about whether or not the Lord will be there for us.

2. He has proven Himself faithful in the past and will be faithful in the future.

Conclusion: The God of yesterday is the same kind of God today. As He was yesterday and as He is today, He will be tomorrow. We can face the New Year knowing that there is nothing beyond His control. He promised Joshua that he would be with him. The promise from God was very simple; “observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success, "Joshua 1:8.