

FACING THE NEW YEAR WITHOUT FEAR - HOW?
Isa. 41:10, 13; Psalm 23:4; Hebrews 13:5-6

We naturally fear the unknown and especially the New Year 2008 when our world is threatened by “Radical Jihadism.” In my judgment America and civilization in general never faced a greater and determined enemy than these religious fanatics who feel called by Allah, they believe, to murder us by murdering themselves, believing Allah will reward them with huge sensual pleasures in heaven forever (70 virgins a piece to each man). But God in His Word gives us the answer to our fears over any enemy or circumstances; and that answer is: His Presence with Us.

But how can we be assured of His Presence? Jesus answers this question in John 14:21, “He who has my commandments (Word) and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself (His Presence) to him.” Wow – what an astounding promise! Let us note two overpowering truths in this text:

- I. **The Real Proof of Our Love for Jesus Christ Is Two-fold:**
 - a. “He who has my commandments.” What does it mean to have His commandments (Word)? To have something means to hold, to possess it, own it. In a word, to have His Word means to internalize His Word in our lives. As our Pledge to the Bible goes: To Know the Word in our head by diligent study, To Stow the Word in our hearts by Memorization and Meditation, To Show the Word in our lives by obeying its teachings, and Sow the Word in our world through our witness.
 - b. “And obey them (His Word). This means to do what His Word commands. Illus.: A bumper sticker used to read, “If you love Jesus, honk your horn.” Then someone framed another bumper sticker to answer this stupidity, “If you love Jesus, tithe.” Alas, if the latter is true and it is, what does that say to the 90% of professing Christians who do not tithe.

- II. **The Reward of Doing These Two Things Is Glorious:**
 - a. God the Father will love you in a special way. Now God loves the whole wide world, but He has a special love for those who have and obey His Word (Internalize). God loves those who don’t give, but God especially loves an “hilarious giver or cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).
 - b. God the Son, Jesus, will love you in a very special way. How?
 - c. Jesus will manifest (make real, personal and experiential) His presence in your lives which would include His joy, His voice, His comfort, etc.

III. **What Does It Mean To Have The Conscious Presence of Jesus in Your Life?** Let the

Scriptures answer this question:

1. **Death** - The most memorable Psalm 23:4. David had faced every kind of animal and the most humongous and ferocious man on earth – Goliath who was 9 feet, 6 inches tall, in full armor and defeated them all.
2. **Surgery** - The most memorable assurance as you face major surgery, persecution, rejection, etc – Isaiah 41:10, 13. Every one faces major surgery, but when I have quoted these verses to persons facing critical surgery they have found great peace and comfort which they never forgot.
3. **Unknown** –future: Joshua 1:8-9
4. **Man** - The fear of what man might do to us – Heb. 13:5-6
5. **Economy** - The fear of bad economic conditions – Heb. 13:5
6. **Inevitable Tribulations** - in every life (*thlispis* in Greek) no way out, desperation, hopeless – John 16:33.
7. **Storms** - of life – Matthew 14:26-27 – Illus.: God’s clear voice to me on top of a mountain when my car was flipping around on the ice, “The Lord is with you.”
8. **Persecutions** - 2 Timothy 6:17-18
9. **Persecutions in India** - Acts 5:41- Illus. Doris’ assurance to me.
10. **God’s Promise** - to the least in the kingdom – Matthew 11:11.

Conclusion: What are you afraid of as you face 2008? There is much to fear, known and unknown. Are you prepared to face the New Year without fear? Are you ready to internalize His Word? This is God’s answer, but remember it is not automatic: it is conditional upon your willingness to “Internalize” His Word just one verse at a time until your life is filled with His truth until you are “abiding” or living in His Word and Jesus is present and precious. Will you?

Illus.: I read that a little woman came to her pastor, Dr. Ironside, greatly frightened and said to him, “Pastor, everywhere I go two men follow me. If I go into my apartment, to the store, get on the bus, etc. these two men are at my heels.” Then the pastor asked, “Have you called the police?” “Yes, I have but they won’t do anything about it.” By this time the pastor saw that the woman was mentally confused and said to her, “Dear, don’t you realize these two people are David’s friends?” She then asked, “Who are they?” He replied, “Have you not read Psalm 23:6?” “Goodness and Mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” She exclaimed, “Oh, Pastor, is that who has been following me around town?” The pastor said, “Yes.” Then she joyfully exclaimed, “If that is true, I will never be afraid again and will spend the rest of my life praising the Lord.”

INTERNALIZE THE WORD

“IT’S HARD BY THE YARD, BUT A CINCH BY THE INCH”

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