

“Don’t Fear or be Dismayed”

Week 2 Streaming Only

3/22/20

Isaiah 41:10-12 “Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed. I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. 11 See, all your angry enemies lie confused and shattered. Anyone opposing you will die. 12 You will look for them in vain—they will all be gone.”

These words were spoken to God’s people Israel, who were suffering in Babylonian captivity.

They’ve lost their homeland, their identity, and their freedom.

They are languishing in a great, national trial, knowing the whole time they brought it on themselves.

Yet God wants them to know that He has not forsaken them, nor has His plan for them been forever destroyed.

So He gives them two commands followed by three great promises.

The good news is we find the very same promises throughout the New Testament for God’s church!

He begins by saying,

I. Fear not

This command from God simply says, "You have nothing to fear."

Why? Because "I am with you."

This is the reason why they should not be afraid—He is with them!

Paul the Apostle wrote, "If God is for us, no one can stand against us. And God is with us" (Ro. 8:31 ERV).

The fact is that, "No ONE and no THING can succeed against us if God is with us."

ILLUS: Max and the storm

Max's position is simple: As long as I'm there during the storm, he has no fear.

And God is with you, and with me, and with Turning Point during this storm!

Ro. 8:38-39 LB "For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, 39 or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us."

Amen!

The 2nd command God gave them was:

II. Be not dismayed

The word 'dismayed' is from a Hebrew word meaning "to see, to look, to gaze upon," OR—"to look about as one does in a state of alarm, or danger."

ILLUS: Ghost story around campfire

The same way the ghost stories caused us to be afraid and on edge, we're daily bombarded with negative news stories that create a panic stricken culture.

But God's people are not to be filled with fear!

“For God has NOT given us a spirit of fear, put of power, love and a sound mind.”—2 Tim. 1:7 NKJV

Why? God says, “Don’t be dismayed, *for I am YOUR God.*”

He’s not just God somewhere out there, He’s YOUR God, OUR God, the God of the Bible, the God that sent Jesus!

So instead of looking around at every negative, fear inducing report, let’s look UP at Jesus Christ, and His perfect love will cast out fear!

“For I cried to (the Lord) and he answered me! He freed me from all my fears. 5 Others too were radiant at what he did for them. Theirs was no downcast look of rejection! 6 This poor man cried to the Lord—and the Lord heard him and saved him out of his troubles” (Ps. 34:4-6 LB).

Then, following God’s commands to not fear or be dismayed, He made 3 promises to His people, and they are also for us!

I. I will strengthen you

God says He will supernaturally empower you to bear all your trials.

One chapter earlier, Isaiah wrote the famous words, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength” (40:31 NKJV).

“Renew” means you had it, then started to lose it, but then God brings it back again—it is re-newed.

The phrase “wait upon the Lord” in the Hebrew language means “to wait expectantly in faith.”

ILLUS: Kite string wrapped around steel cable.

Let’s say together, “I can do all things through Christ who STRENGTHENS me” (Phil 4:13 NKJV).

The second promise is:

II. I will help you

When Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, He called Him “the Haelper.”

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (John 14:16 NKJV).

Jesus was telling His disciples and us, "You're not in this alone. I will not leave you orphans. I will send you my Holy Spirit, Who will help you in all your trials."

I was thinking the other day of when Jesus was carrying His Cross up Golgotha's hill.

The Bible says "Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might BEAR *it* after Jesus" (Lk 23:26 NKJV).

Catch that! Simon was ordered to "bear" Jesus' Cross, because He could no longer carry it himself...

So he "helped" Jesus do what He could no longer do on his own, and carried the Cross directly behind the weakened Savior.

In the same way, God says, "I will help you carry what you can't carry on your own."

Oh, thank God for His help!

He will STRENGTHEN you, He will HELP you...

And third, God promises:

III. I will uphold you

To “uphold” means to “hold you up.”

Remember, these passages were spoken to Israel while they were in Babylonian captivity.

That captivity lasted 70 long years.

The promise to “uphold” them had to do with gracing them to PERSEVERE to the end of the trial.

He’s saying, “I will keep you steady, strong, and stable so that you don’t cave in or give up along the way.”

Notice that He calls His right hand RIGHTEOUS—“I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

The God of the promises in the Bible is a RIGHTEOUS God.

His promises are good because HE is good!

They can be depended on because HE can be depended on!

**His promises are good because His character is good,
righteous, dependable, and faithful.**

**His CHARACTER can be depended on, His PROMISES can be
stood upon, and His LOVE can be counted on!**

In this time of great trial we're comforted by Isaiah's words.

Let's resolve to NOT be fearful nor dismayed.

**Instead, let's fully expect God to STRENGTHEN, HELP, AND
UPHOLD us, and to work all this together for our good and His
glory!**

Let's pray...