

5/29/11

**Series Title: "John's Gospel of Jesus: God in Flesh"**

**Today's Title:**

***"It is I: Do Not be Afraid."***

Scripture Reading and Text: John 6:16-21

**Introduction:** (Illustrations from Nelson, pp.668-669, & 739)

Fay Goddard, missionary with OMF in the Philippines, had just returned to the field following her first furlough when she awoke feeling "really rotten." She had almost no strength for the simplest of daily chores. The next day her weakness was joined by a pounding head and a strange burning sensation on her lower spine. On the following day, her whole body throbbed. Her condition became so severe she was airlifted to Manila where the examining doctors told her she had polio.

Fay was stunned. At only 23, she had been vigorous and strong. Just a week before she had been hiking through the mountains; now she was all but helpless, unable even to hold a full glass of water.

Back in Seattle she was fitted for a wheelchair and told that she would be severely handicapped the rest of her life. How did she bounce back?

The first thing that helped her, she later wrote, was remembering that when she had returned to the Buhid tribe following her furlough, she had taken time to kneel down in her little room and reaffirm the Savior's lordship over her life. She told God she was willing to be used by Him however he chose.

Her second help came from God's Word. His promises hadn't changed. The grace was still there for the taking.

Fay's third strength came from visiting a fellow missionary who had previously contracted polio in the Philippines, but who exhibited a determined and uplifting attitude.

Fourth, she realized she could still minister wherever she was. During her 9 months in rehabilitation at the University of Washington Hospital, *"I was aware that God had just changed my mission field. Instead of...barefoot Buhid, He had put me right in the middle of a group of people whose lives had been shattered by accidents, crippling disease...teenage boys paralyzed from the neck down in falls on ski slopes or in twisted auto wrecks...."*

After being released from her extended stay in the hospital, she was invited to join the home staff of OMF at their headquarters in Philadelphia. “We’ll find something for you to do,” they said. That’s when depression hit. The “something to do” turned out to be stuffing envelopes, licking stamps, and trying to find enough to do to fill the day. Her life began to lose its purpose, and the devil attacked her spirit.

But the Lord brought to her mind the thought: “If I want you to stuff envelopes and lick stamps, what is that to you. Just follow me.” Fay replied, “Okay, Lord, I’ll do it.” She made up her mind to obey. Within days she was given the job of producing the mission’s magazine, *East Asia Millions*.

She wrote: “*Now, more than 20 years later, I am still putting the magazine together – editing the material, doing the layout, and seeing that it is properly reading for printing. The joy is still there.*”

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- William Secker

*“Times of trouble have often been times of triumph to a believer. Suffering seasons have generally been sifting seasons in which the Christian has lost his chaff, and the hypocrite his courage.”*

**Premise:** *When the storms of life threaten; Jesus draws near*

**Outline:**

**I. Who Is This One?**

**II. Who Is Not to be Fearful?**

**III. What Could Possibly Make Us Afraid?**

**I. WHO IS THIS ONE?**

**A. King of the Universe**

1. He made it

c/w John 1:3

***“All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”***

- Richard C.H. Lenski

*“The existence of all things is due to the Logos, not, indeed,*

*apart from the other persons of the Godhead but in conjunction with them, as is indicated throughout the creative speaking in Genesis 1. "All things came into being" since the beginning, the Logos through whom they were called into being existed before the beginning, from eternity.... Yet in both the positive and the negative statements concerning the existence of all things and of every single thing the implication stands out that the Logos himself is an absolute exception. He never "became" or "came into existence." No medium is in any sense connected with his being. The Son is from all eternity "the uncreated Word.""*

2. He rules it

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *1,000 Thoughts*, #351

*"The sapphire throne of God, at this moment, is revealed in heaven, where adoring angels cast their crowns before it; and its power is felt on earth, where the works of creation praise the Lord. Even those who acknowledge not the divine government are compelled to feel it, for he doeth as he wills, not only among the angels in heaven, but among the inhabitants of this lower world. Hell feels the terror of that throne. Those chains of fire, those pangs unutterable, are the awful shadow of the throne of Deity; as God looks down upon the lost, the torment that flashes through their souls darts from his holiness, which cannot endure their sins. The influence of that throne, then, is found in every world where spirits dwell, and in the realms of inanimate nature it bears rule. Every leaf that fades in the trackless forest trembles at the Almighty's bidding, and every coral insect that dwelleth in the unfathomable depths of the sea feels and acknowledges the presence of the all-present King."*

c/w Colossians 1:13-20

**B. Prophet of Jehovah**

c/w John 17:13-19

**C. Priest of His people**

*"...do not be afraid."*

Note the priestly character and activities of Jesus, the High Priest of God's people:

1. He is appointed and called by God
2. He is superior to Aaron and the Levitical priests
3. He is consecrated with an oath
4. He has an unchangeable priesthood
5. He is of an unblemished purity
6. He is faithful
7. He needs no sacrifice for himself
8. He offered himself as a sacrifice
9. His sacrifice is superior to all others
10. He was sacrificed only once for all time
11. He made reconciliation
12. He obtained redemption for us
13. He entered into heaven
14. He sympathizes with his redeemed children
15. He intercedes for his own
16. He blesses his own
17. He is on his throne
18. His appointment as priest encourages us to steadfastness

c/w Hebrews 7:23-25

## **II. WHO IS NOT TO BE FEARFUL?**

### **A. Those for whom He died**

c/w Romans 8:31-39

### **B. Those for whom He lives**

v.15b

c/w Matt. 14:22-23 “...He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray....”

- Marcus Dods [Pulpit Commentary, Mat. Vol. II, p.82]

*“The disciples, then, could not fail to be impressed chiefly with Christ’s mindfulness of them. His appearance showed them that no interests of his own, however distracting, could make him oblivious of them and their necessities; it showed them also that nothing could prevent him from bringing them the aid they required. Is it not likely that a great part of his prayer through the night was occupied with them and their*

*individual temptations to deny him and go with the multitude? And it were well if we could attain to the knowledge they now acquired regarding Christ's mindfulness. We seem at times to be so entirely delivered over to unsympathetic and almost un-intelligent agents and influences, that it seems impossible the help of one so spiritual can penetrate to us or can find his way to us through the wildest turmoil."*

**C. Those for whom He is coming back**

c/w John 14:1-7

- John Cennick, *Lo! He Comes!*

*Lo! He comes, with clouds descending,  
Once for favored sinners slain:  
Thousand thousand saints attending,  
Swell the triumph of His train:  
Hallelujah!  
God appears on earth to reign!*

*See the universe in motion,  
Sinking on her funeral pyre –  
Earth dissolving, and the ocean  
Vanishing in final fire:  
Hark the trumpet!  
Loud proclaims the Day of Ire!*

*Graves have yawned in countless numbers,  
From the dust the dead arise;  
Millions out of silent slumbers,  
Wake in overwhelmed surprise;  
Where creation  
Wrecked and torn on ruin lies!*

*See the Judge our nature wearing,  
Pure, ineffable, divine:  
See the great Archangel bearing  
High in heaven the mystic sign:  
Cross of Glory!  
Christ be in that moment mine!*

*Every eye shall now behold Him  
Robed in dreadful majesty;  
Those who set aside and sold Him,  
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,  
Deeply wailing,  
Shall the true Messiah see.*

*All the tokens of His passion  
Still His dazzling body bears;  
Cause of endless exultation  
To His ransomed worshippers;  
With what rapture  
Gaze we on those glorious scars.*

*Lo! the last long separation!  
As the cleaving crowds divide;  
And one dread adjudication  
Sends each soul to either side!  
Lord of mercy!  
How shall I that day abide!*

*O, may Thine own Bride and Spirit  
Then avert a dreadful doom,  
And me summon to inherit  
An eternal blissful home: -  
Ah! come quickly!  
Let Thy second advent come!*

*Yea, Amen! Let all adore Thee  
High on Thine eternal throne!  
Saviour – take the power and glory;  
Make Thy righteous sentence known:  
Jah! Jehovah!  
Claim the kingdom for Thine own.*

### **III. WHAT COULD POSSIBLY MAKE US AFRAID?**

#### **A. Do the elements of nature control our destiny?**

1. physical darkness
2. waters of the sea

3. strong winds

c/w Psalm 107:23-32

**B. Do invisible spirits have authority over us?**

- Hymn [anonymous] #722

*O speed thee, Christian, on thy way,  
And to thy armor cling;  
With girded loins the call obey  
That grace and mercy bring.*

*There is a battle to be fought,  
An upward race to run,  
A crown of glory to be sought,  
A victory to be won.*

*The shield of faith repels the dart  
That Satan's hand may throw;  
His arrow cannot reach thy heart,  
If Christ control the bow.*

*The glowing lamp of prayer will light  
Thee on thy anxious road;  
'T will keep the goal of heaven in sight,  
And guide thee to thy God.*

*O, faint not, Christian, for thy sighs  
Are heard before his throne:  
The race must come before the prize,  
The cross before the crown.*

**C. Does the unknown future threaten us?**

- from a letter written by John Newton to a friend on  
January 11, 1777:

*"Sensible comforts are desirable, and we must be sadly declined when they do not appear to us; but I believe there may be a real exercise of faith and growth in grace when our sensible feelings are faint and low. A soul may be in as thriving a*

*state when thirsting, seeking, and mourning after the Lord, as when actually rejoicing in Him; as much in earnest when fighting in the valley, as when singing upon the mount; nay, dark seasons afford the surest and strongest manifestations of the power of faith. To hold fast the word of promise, to maintain a hatred of sin, to go on steadfastly in the path of duty, in defiance both of the frowns and the smiles of the world, when we have but little comfort, is a more certain evidence of grace, than a thousand things which we may do or forbear when our spirits are warm and lively.” [“Feelings” Chr. Quot’s. p.367]*

**Conclusion:** (Illustrations from Nelson, p.746 and p.767)

Barbara Brown Taylor tells of spending a few days on a barrier island where loggerhead turtles were laying their eggs. One night when the tide was out, she watched a huge female turtle heave herself up on the beach to dig her nest and empty her eggs into the sand. Taylor didn’t want to disturb her, but the next day she returned to try to find the spot where the eggs were hidden. What she found instead were tracks leading in the wrong direction. Instead of heading back out to sea, she had wandered into the dunes, which were already as hot as asphalt in the morning sun.

A little way inland, Taylor found the mother turtle, exhausted and all but baked. Her head and flippers were caked with dried sand. After pouring water on her and covering her with sea oats, Taylor fetched a park ranger, who returned with a jeep to rescue her.

The ranger flipped the turtle over on her back, wrapped tire chains around her front legs, and hooked the chains to the trailer hitch on his jeep. Then he took off, yanking her body forward so fast that her mouth filled with sand and then disappeared underneath her.

The ranger hauled her over the dunes and down onto the beach, and the woman followed the path that the prow of her shell cut in the sand. At ocean’s edge, he unhooked her and turned her right side up again. She lay motionless in the surf as

the water lapped at her body, washing the sand from her eyes and making her skin shine again.

Then a particularly large wave broke over her, and she lifted her head slightly, moving her back legs as she did. Every fresh wave brought her life back to her until one of them made her light enough to find a foothold and push off, back into the water that was her home.

Watching her swim slowly away and remembering her nightmare ride through the dunes, Barbara Brown Taylor noted that it is sometimes hard to tell whether you are being killed or saved by the hands that turn your world upside down.

Sometimes we feel that our world is being turned upside down, but according to Romans 5, when we're in his hands his only design is to develop perseverance, which leads to character, which leads to a hopeful attitude. He makes all things work for our good.

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- G.K. Chesterton

*“When belief in God becomes difficult, the tendency is to turn away from Him, but in heaven’s name to what?”*

**Premise: *When the storms of life threaten; Jesus draws near***