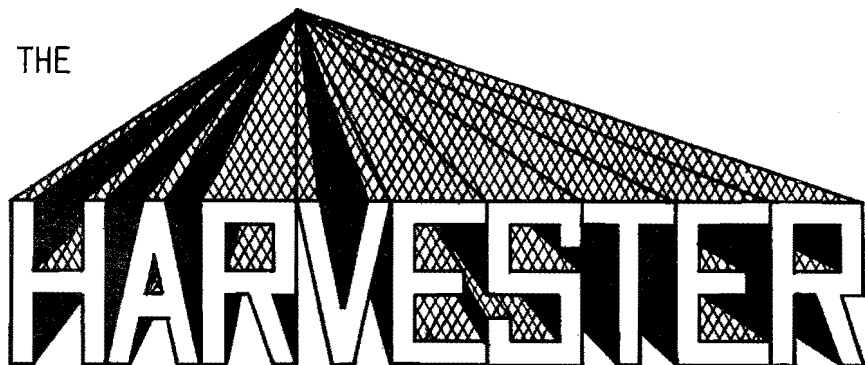


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"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

March 1988

No. 027

"FEAR NOT"

During the early days of the Israelite nation when judges acted as leaders, an angel of God appeared before a young man called Gideon. At first Gideon was skeptical that he would receive such a visit from one of the Lord's messengers. So he asked for some proof, maybe a sign (Judg. 6:17). Later as Gideon presented the flesh and broth of a kid goat and some unleavened cakes, fire came out of a rock and consumed the offerings!(v. 21) It frightened him because now he realized that he had "seen an angel of the Lord face to face". "And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die."(v. 23)

Like Gideon, many of us need to hear words of encouragement from God like "Fear not". We

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live in a world of "fear". We have fears of losing, fears of failure, fears of the unknown, and so forth. Although Christians should not share in these feelings of fear, it does happen often. As humans it is easy for us to get discouraged and disheartened over things in our life. Therefore we need to be constantly uplifted so that we can live in peace, joy, hope and love without being scared of anything. We find that "shot in the arm" only in the Bible.

Sometimes we wonder if further down the road of life we will have what we need. Certainly this was the case with Isaac. In Genesis 26 we find there was a famine in the land. This forced Isaac to pack up everything and leave his homeland. Where would he end up? His father Abraham was no longer alive and so, Isaac was the Patriarch. He was responsible for his kinsmen and all the servants. The future was definitely uncertain at this point. Do we feel like we are in a similar situation? Then notice what God said to Isaac: *"And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake."*(Gen. 26:24) It is true that we do not know what the future holds for each of us, except for death and judgment (Heb. 9:27). But if we live righteously and obey God's commandments, we will surely be blessed and have nothing to fear.

In Zarephath a widow woman had only *"a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse"*. She was getting ready to make one last cake for herself and her son. Then they would probably starve to death. *"And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son."*(1 Ki. 17:13) Sometimes we

worry when our funds are not sufficient. How will we feed the family? But these thoughts of fear should not crowd the head of a Christian. *"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? ... But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*(Matt. 6:25,33) This is a good reason for encouragement!

Another fear we have is one of dangers. We want protection and security, not threats to our lives. So imagine if one morning we woke up and found ourselves surrounded by the enemy. This is exactly what happened to Elisha in 2 Kings 6. His servant saw all the horses and chariots around their city and he was truly scared. But Elisha answered, *"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them"*(v. 16). That is what we need to remember--God will be on the side of those who live faithful. If that is the case, why should a Christian have any fears? *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"*(Rom. 8:31) Note also the example of Paul. He suffered much while preaching the gospel. He was persecuted and in many perils (2 Cor. 11:23-27). Did he ever express any fear at all? No, Paul knew that God was there to help him through every danger.

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△	MOFFAT ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST	△
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△	SUNDAY 10:00 am & 6:00 pm	△

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THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

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There is also fear among people when they see themselves as being weak. The nation of Israel was considered weak when Isaiah prophesied: *"Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."* (Isa. 41:10) Israel was told not to have fear because God would compensate for their weakness. In fact, the Lord uses our weaknesses to make us stronger. He did this with Paul the apostle. After asking for the removal of his infirmity, Paul was given this answer: *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."* (2 Cor. 12:9-10) If we have any fears of weakness, then it is greatly balanced in spiritual strength.

Also in the book of Isaiah we read how Israel felt alone in the world. Again the comforting words are prophesied: *"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; ...Fear not: for I am with thee: ..."* (Isa. 43:1-5) Perhaps this

is one of our biggest fears--the fear of loneliness. The truth is that no matter where we go, the Lord is still with us. We are never really alone in this world. Elijah once thought he was the last of the faithful on earth but later found out there were 7000 others (1 Ki. 19). Our Lord is a faithful companion, always ready to help us. While others may forsake us, we can count on God to be there.

Finally, our greatest fears probably concern life beyond the grave. Where will we spend eternity? Will it be heaven or hell? But with this Jesus has the same words of encouragement. *"Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."*(Rev. 1:17-18) The answers lie in Christ. If we are obedient believers, faithful to the end, then we should have no fears at the time of our physical death. *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."*(Rev. 22:14) It is the unbeliever that should be worrying right now. They are in the most dangerous position of all. *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."*(Rev. 21:8) Note in particular the first class of people mentioned -- the fearful!!

The society that exists today in our country can give us all reasons to fear. But we have seen where the Scriptures state, *"Fear not!"* Just as the women were fearful to find an empty tomb on that Sunday morning, later they were encouraged by finding the risen Christ. *"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus,*

which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead: and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." (Matt. 28:5-7) That is our exhortation for today: FEAR NOT and go tell others that Christ is risen!!

RAY McMANUS

FROM THE SCRIPTURES ...

ABOUT CHRIST'S PRE-EMINENCE

He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. (John 3:31)

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:36)

For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. (Rom. 14:9)

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. (Col. 1:18)

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (Heb. 1:4)

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. (Heb. 3:3)

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Rev. 1:8)

GOD'S HALL OF FAME

Your name may not appear inscribed
 In this world's hall of fame;
 In fact, you may be so unknown
 That no one knows your name;
 The Oscars and the praise of men
 May never come your way,
 But don't forget God has rewards
 That He'll dispense someday.

Man's hall of fame is only good
 As long as time shall be;
 But keep in mind, God's Hall of Fame
 Is for eternity.
 To have your name inscribed by Him
 Is greater, greater far
 Than all the fame and all the praise
 Of every man-made star.

This crown on earth, they soon forget
 When you're not at the top
 They'll cheer and cheer until you fall,
 And then their praise will stop.
 Not God--He never will forget,
 And in His Hall of Fame,
 By doing all His will on earth,
 You'll win a lasting name.

I'll tell you, Friend, I wouldn't trade
 My name, however small,
 Once it is written on the walls
 Of that celestial Hall,
 For all the famous names on earth,
 Or glory that they share;
 I'd rather be an unknown here
 If my name's written there.

--Selected.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
March 11-13 (F-Su)	Pleasant Grove Church near Alex City, AL 7:00 pm [Fr & Sa]	Bruce Kessler (Jonesboro, GA)
March 28-30 (M-W)	Moffat Road Church Mobile, AL 7:30 each evening	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Mar. 31- Apr. 3 (Th-Su)	Brushy Creek Church Lucedale, MS 7:00 pm	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 3-8	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL	Sonny Riggins (Sylacauga, AL)
April 4-8	Freefield Church State Line, MS	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 22-24	Poplar Grove Church near Burkesville, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

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CLOCK OF LIFE

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad indeed.
To lose one's health is more.
To lose one's soul is such a loss
That no man can restore.

Thirty-nine people died while you read this short poem. Every hour 5,417 go to meet their Maker. What are YOU doing to help reach them with the Gospel before they are cast into Hell?