

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

God With Us

PART

5

TITLE

In Our Fear

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25



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On the mountains and in the valleys, in our highs and in our lows, God is with us.

You think about, “What is Christmas and the significance of it?” There’s all kinds of trappings around us. What we know with absolute certainty is that this was the night that Christ Himself, the day that Christ came to be with us. We’ve been looking all month at what it really means for Christ to be with us. Because when you’re with somebody you’re not only tied and attached to their skills and abilities, but you’re also with somebody in some of the most challenging times of life. Times of weakness, times of loneliness, times of trials, when we’re in the dark, when we’re afraid. This is really good news because all of us experience fear from time to time, we all have fears in our life even tonight. You think about what fear is. It’s an emotion that we feel within our heart, and within our mind that sometimes we feel all through our body as different things are happening in our body to cause us to sometimes flee when we are so afraid. But what fear really is, is simply an emotion that we feel when we are facing the threat of harm.

All of us are afraid of different things like the dark, or maybe dying, or spiders, or snakes. There’s some things though that we all tend to be afraid of. We all tend to be afraid of being alone in life. We are afraid of being lonely in life. We are afraid of being unheard, unseen, unrecognized, unnoticed. We’re all afraid of not having what we need. When we get older, we all have a fear of not having what we need to succeed when we are put into a challenge. We all face fears in life, it’s part of being alive. But what’s interesting about fear is that fear can actually be something that’s real or even something that is imagined. We’re all afraid, and yet many of us don’t pause to consider why we are so afraid, when we began feeling afraid. And more importantly, what do we do when we are afraid? And yet that’s exactly what we find in the Bible. You see, it wasn’t always this way. God’s Word says that He created us to be near Him. And when we were near Him, life was free of fear.

It wasn’t until we sinned against God, broke fellowship with Him when He said, “This is the way to live.” And we said, “I believe we can find a better way to live.” That we sinned against Him, that we begin to feel fear. Something happened. It’s so unique, it’s so interesting in the Bible, once humanity sinned against God, our instinct was to do something that we’ve never been taught and that was to hide. Once Adam and Eve, they sinned against God, their first instinct was to find a bush or a tree to hide behind, not together, but even separate. Hiding from one another and hiding from God. So God came and He asked “Adam, why are you hiding?” And Adam said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid.” This is the very first reference to fear in the Bible. This is the origin of human fear. And sadly and tragically, it was directed towards our greatest friend, our greatest hope, our Creator, our maker, our shepherd, the one who cares for us more than anyone else.

And yet when confronted with the reality of His presence, suddenly we could not be near Him. Fear was appropriate in that sense, God is holy and we were now sinful. We had a problem and would we really be separated from our maker? And only when He’s near would we become afraid. So God did something in that moment. In fact, two things happen simultaneously. One was that God in His extreme love for us, even though He was the offended party, He made a promise to send a rescuer, a Savior in order to be with us in our

fears and rescue us from what causes us fear. But not only that, something happened that we read about in the Bible and that is that the collective weight of human sin began to cause the earth to groan and suddenly life became a threatening thing. The earth, the animals suddenly became dangerous. People around us suddenly became selfish, death became inevitable, and fear became common to us all. This is why we are people who routinely battle fear. “Do I have what it requires to succeed? What will happen when I die?”

What will happen when the lights turn out and I’m afraid of the dark?” So in that moment, there was a unique thing that took place that God said, “I’m going rescue. But for a time, you’re going to have to live in this fallen, broken, dark, frightening world.” Fear is an interesting thing, because fear is like the wind in that you can’t see it, but you can see its effects. You can see fear in people’s facial expressions. You can hear it in their voice, tone and inflection. And you can see it in their body. When somebody is really afraid they might run or flee, or they might even shake. When people are really afraid, they can tremble and shake. That’s an interesting image because we find that happening in the Bible. There was a man named Ahaz, who was King over his people, Israel. And there was a day in the life of this King and this nation that actually caused them to shake in fear. It says that, “The heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.”

Such a threat in front of them and they simply didn’t have the resources within themselves not to tremble before it. So God in His grace, and His love, and His mercy, He sent Isaiah, a prophet, to the King and he says, “You don’t need to be afraid because God is going to protect us.” God knew that Ahaz in that moment would need a sign, some proof, something he could rest upon more than simply Isaiah’s mouth, his words and what ... So he says, “Go ahead and tell him to ask Me for a sign, anything to prove to him that I Am going to rescue him and the people.” Well, Ahaz was an ungodly man. He had no regard for God, so he didn’t want to play the game and he goes, “No, I’m not going to ask for a sign.” So God says to him, “I’m going to give you a sign anyway. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Immanuel.”

Now, the significance of this 600 years before Christ was born is truly remarkable, because what God was doing was this, with the absolute certainty ... This is what he’s saying, “With the absolute certainty that I’m going to send My Son to rescue all humanity from their sin. You can take it to the bank that I’m going to rescue you, Ahaz, even though you have no regard for Me from this situation.” This is really important because some of you right now, you’re absolutely plagued by guilt or shame, by something that you’ve done in your life maybe even recently. And the great hope for you is this, the very first set ears that heard the promise of a virgin-born Son who would come to be with us as God landed on one of the most ungodly guilt-ridden man in the entire Bible. You see, there’s hope for you and there’s hope for me. It’s interesting, you fast forward 600 years from Ahaz and you get to another man.

Another man who was afraid, who faced a real life situation that caused him to tremble, to feel like he needed to figure out a way to get out of this situation that he was in. They said this man had regard for God, he loved God. It’s interesting that the echo of the same promise that Isaiah gave, He gave to a man named Joseph. This

is what it says in Matthew chapter 1, “Now birth of Christ took place in this way. When His mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph, before they each came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband, Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and they shall call His name Immanuel, which means God with us.’” The Son of God appeared as a baby. I know that we don’t often think about the significance of that, but God could have appeared as a Man. He could have just come down from heaven. And yet He chose, He chose and as sovereign power and will to come as a baby. What do we know about babies? We know in a baby, it’s the most intimate form of life. The most vulnerable, the most humble, the most accessible. You can just pick up a baby, they can’t even tell you, “No.” You can pick up a baby, you can hug a baby, you can kiss the baby, you can with a baby. So God came to us as a baby because He wanted you to know that He wants to be with you and He will be with you. God Almighty ordained that He grow, so this little baby became a toddler who eventually became a teenager, who eventually became a Man.

In His little more than three decades on the earth, the Bible says that He never sinned. In His heart, His mind, His motives, His mouth, He never sinned against God. He never broke the law, and yet He went to a cross and there He paid for my sin and for your sin. He was buried in a grave and then on the third day, the Bible says He rose from the dead. And when He rose from the dead, He says, “If you’ll believe you have a need, if you would admit your need, admit that you have a spiritual need and you cannot be your Savior, that you have a debt before God that you cannot pay. If you would admit that you have fears, that you have absolutely no resource in and of yourself to be able to battle. And then you look at Me, a risen Christ, you look at Me and see somebody who is worthy of your affection and attention. Who’s worthy of your trust, who conquered the grave, who died for your sin, who absorbed the wrath of God that was directed towards you.”

Jesus says, “If you will admit and believe, confess Me as Lord, I will forgive you of all of your sin and I will be with you. I’ll be with you in the wilderness and in the darkness, I’ll be with you when you’re going through trials, I’ll be with you when you’re afraid, I’ll be with you.” And when you and I, when we are connected to Christ and all that He is, and that all He is becomes our resource when we’re afraid ... I know that many of us in the room, we’ve already trusted Christ. And as people who have trusted Christ, I want to encourage you. In a moment, we’re going to pray, but I want to encourage you. I think this is so critically important. I want you to know there’s nothing that you have planned tonight that’s more significant than spending five or ten minutes alone with the Lord and simply praying this prayer and answering it yourself. “God, this is why I am so thankful that You sent Your Son. This is why I’m so thankful.”

To be grateful on this day, to be amazed on this day, to let the wonder of the incarnation that God would take on flesh in order to rescue you and take away your guilt and shame, it should be something that should cause us every year to pause and say, “God, I thank You for sending Your Son.” And for some of you, maybe you’ve never trusted Christ and this may be the night. I simply want to explain how you would go about doing that. God’s Word says you simply confess to Him. So you can pray. You can pray right now, right where you’re sitting. You can pray later tonight, you can pray tomorrow. You pray to Him. It’s the sincerity of your heart, where you would come to Him and you say, “God, I admit that I have sinned against You and I admit that I cannot save myself. But I believe in Jesus, Your Son. I believe that He died on a cross and I believe He rose from the dead.”

I want you to know that if you would pray that prayer sincerely within your heart, leaning upon Him, putting all your trust in Him, this will become a Christmas, a holiday that will be transformative to the rest of your life. Suddenly, everything that you’ve longed for in terms of hope and peace that you thought ... whether it’s a holiday, or whether it’s a gift, or whether it’s a person, or a food, or music that might bring into your life, I want you to know that the answer to all of your longing is ultimately found in Christ. So we commend Him to you, would you trust Him as your Savior? Let me pray for us. Would you bow your head with me? Father, we thank You for coming, and we thank You for sending Your Son who came. We thank You for your mercy, Your meekness, Christ, to come. To be willing to leave the worship and adoration of heaven, and to come and to be so vulnerable and so accessible, to be so humble.

To come as a baby, unable to keep Yourself warm, unable to feed Yourself, needing a mom and a dad to care for Your basic needs. We’re just amazed at what You would do for us, so we thank You for coming. Thank You for forgiving us of our sins. Thank You. Thank You for being with us when we’re afraid. God, I pray for those who are considering right now, whether they should trust Christ, whether they do trust Christ, whether they do believe in Him. I pray that You would incline their hearts to look towards Christ, to see all the flashing arrows of the world as utterly insufficient to satisfy the deepest longings of their soul. And I pray that You would lead them to confess You, to admit their need and to believe upon Christ and be saved. So God, we thank You that you love us. We ask that You would do that work in each of our hearts, no matter what that work is, and we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.



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