
Sermon Notes

December 3, 2017

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

FEAR NOT: God is With You

Isaiah 41:10, 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Genesis 39-40

A Climate of Fear

- ❖ Fear permeates the lives of many Americans
 - discussion and decision making are driven by a broad spectrum of anxieties and fears
 - terrorism, violence, war, natural disasters, personal fears
- ❖ The fear of being alone

God's Prescription for Fear

- ❖ *Fear not... Do not be afraid* (Luke 1:13, 1:30, 2:10)
 - God does not want us to live in fear
 - yet, even those who believe and trust in Jesus, are often overcome and overrun by anxieties and fears
 - we are plagued by all the “what ifs?”

- ❖ If your life is plagued/ruled by fear, God holds something in store for you that you desperately need to connect with
 - Isaiah 41:10
 - God is
 - with you
 - your God
 - God will
 - strengthen you
 - help you
 - uphold you

The Promise of God's Presence

- ❖ The OT repeatedly promises that God is present with His people
 - Tabernacle and Temple are designed as symbols of God's presence
 - the *Shekinah* glory
 - Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25)
- ❖ Jesus comes to earth as a tangible, visible representation that God is with us

❖ *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*
(Matt. 28:20)

❖ Jesus promises that in the midst of trial, temptation, testing of any sort He is with you

A Real Life Illustration

❖ Joseph's thirteen year emotional roller coaster ride
(Genesis 39-40)

■ 1900 years before Jesus comes to earth

■ Joseph is kidnapped and sold into slavery

❖ *The LORD was with Joseph* (a repeated refrain in Joseph's unfolding biography)

■ the Lord gives Joseph success even in the midst of the most challenging circumstances

■ Joseph is abandoned and forgotten by man, but he is not abandoned and forgotten by God

■ when the moment comes, Joseph is ready, willing, and able to give testimony of his faith in and dependence upon God (Genesis 41:16)

❖ God's presence **IN** trouble does not mean He will exempt us **FROM** trouble

■ in the same way God was with Joseph, God is with you

■ Psalm 46

- in the midst of natural disaster, God is with us
- in the midst of war and the threat of war, God is with us
- in the midst of tragedy, God is with us

❖ God is not absent or distant

■ God is a very PRESENT help in trouble

■ it is God and God alone whom we must seek in the midst of all these things

Personal Application

1. Are there particular fears and anxieties that haunt you and plague your life? Do you believe that God does not want you to live with these fears?
2. Read and meditate on Isaiah 41:10. What impact does knowing "God is with you" have on how you manage anxiety and fear?
3. What encouragement do you take from the record of God's presence with Joseph in the midst of serious trouble and difficulty?
4. Read Psalm 46. Moving forward, how will knowing that God is a very present help in trouble help strengthen and encourage you?