

Fear God & Shun Evil

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and protection in times of trouble, overcoming fear and dread, and living a righteous and holy life.

Duration: 1:05:42

Scripture: Psalm 34:1-4, Psalm 34:7, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Righteous Living", "Christian Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the gospel is not just about following a set of steps for salvation, but about experiencing a transformation as a new creation in Christ. He highlights the importance of righteous behavior, truthfulness, honor, uprightness, kindness, and compassion as the testimony of a true Christian. The preacher also discusses the contrast between the values of the old America and the new America, expressing concern about the changing culture. However, he encourages believers to trust in Jesus, who is on the throne and will protect and guide them through any challenges they may face.

Transcript

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Let's look to the Lord.

The Lord is counseling you this morning to give attention to the Christ child that is born within you. Because he has been born in the manger of your life and you're discounting it. And you're saying it's of none effect and it's not that important.

But it is the future king you hope for. Because he wasn't born as a king that you could acknowledge and recognize. You have said it's of none effect and it's minimal.

But the Lord said it's maximum. It is because the heavens have parted and the king of glory has come into your life. Give attendance to the manger in your life and know that from it shall come the king of glory.

That shall rule the world and rule your being. And shall be a benefit to the earth. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Amen. Amen.

Well Lord, we've been spoken to twice this morning about paying attention to you Lord and laying everything else aside. Oh God, give us ears to hear. Maybe you're speaking to all of us, maybe to one

person.

But whatever it is Lord, just give us ears to hear. So we do not miss the day of our visitation. Oh God, help us Lord.

We get so busy sometimes we don't even see you. Oh God, help us to hear this morning what the Spirit is saying to us. And we will not miss your perfect will in our lives Lord.

Help Lord. And help Lord this morning every household that's having difficulties. Jesus, so many are being tested in these days.

We've had so many die in the last couple of months. Very unusual. We go for years and no one dies.

In the last few months we've had 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 people die. Lord, I know the waters are troubled. I know the spiritual maloo is unsettled.

I know the drums of hell are beating to the attack. I know there's perils as we're constantly told in the newspaper. There's perils.

And Jesus, we look to you Lord. Not that you're not supremely, gloriously victorious. You are.

But that we should in any way be careless at this time. So Lord, help us to redouble our vigilance at every moment. And pay attention to what you're doing Lord.

Hallelujah. In the name of Jesus. And bless Lord those out in the children's church now.

And as we proceed Lord, I pray you'll guide us, guide us, guide me, guide all of us Lord. So that we hear and recognize what you're saying, what we need to know. We carefully praise you in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. We'll turn in our Bibles to Psalm 34.

Preach on this every once in a while. I felt this morning to talk to you about God's protection. Although through the prophecies, maybe I should have continued with Revelation 12.

We've been on Revelation 12 for some time. And I felt to change this morning. What we'll see as we go ahead.

Revelation 12 of course is talking about Christ being formed in us. So we don't want to ignore where the burden is. Alright, we're looking at verses 1 through 4 of Psalm 34.

I will extol the Lord at all times. His praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord.

Let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me. Let us exalt His name together.

I sought the Lord and He answered me. He delivered me from all my fears. That's it.

That's what we'll read for just now. I was thinking as I was meditating on this. I will extol the Lord at all times.

His praise will always be on my lips. It's so difficult to do that when we're facing problems. When there are things that come up that we are afraid.

And we dread. We're upset about. Or maybe we feel are not fair.

And we're trying to get justice. Or whatever. David said I will extol the Lord at all times.

So important. To never let things enter our lives. Regardless of what they are.

That prevent us from praising the Lord. We need to praise the Lord at all times. And of course when the future seems to be solved.

For a season at least. It's easy to praise the Lord. To come to church and praise the Lord.

As simple as falling off a log. But when you're really concerned and upset. Sickness.

Or the threat of sickness. Or the threat of disaster. It's very easy to come down.

Off of our high perch in the Lord. And begin to worry, complain, and fret, and blame. Instead of praising the Lord.

Right or wrong. Amen. Christmas is a minefield.

We've come to that conclusion. You've got to be careful when everybody's mind is on material things. It just gives the demons all kinds of opportunity to do stuff.

We have to be very careful for ourselves and our loved ones. To be praising the Lord. Praise the Lord.

To think about the good that He has done for us in time past. And realize He's brought us safe thus far. He's going to bring us home.

I'll extol the Lord at all times. And according to the note here. David was afraid of Abimelech at that time.

And David says it makes no difference because I'm in peril of my life. His praise will always be on my lips. His praise will always be on my lips.

How many have problems this morning? Huh? You have problems, concerns, fears, dreads. Praise the Lord. Hasn't let you down.

All things are still working together for good. All things are still working together for good. All things.

All things. It doesn't matter. The newspaper is full of terror and dread and all kinds of things.

Seems like all those in leadership and other places, judges and administrators, are moving away from the values of our country. Someone gave us for Christmas a Norman Rockwell calendar. How many know Norman Rockwell, his pictures? I know he's an illustrator, but I think he's the painter of the 20th century.

Probably Thomas Kinkade's fans would object to that. But you have to be old to remember what he was illustrating. Life as it was.

The country doctor and the little girl and he brought her doll to be healed and he's got a stethoscope on the doll. How many have ever seen that? And usually there's a little dog in the picture looking up. I was looking at one in this calendar that showed kids going down a hill on their sleds.

Well, I haven't seen that in a long time. That was a big part of my life once, going downhill on a sled. And it seems like there's two Americas.

There's the old America that I can remember, the America of Norman Rockwell, and then there's a new America, it seems, with altogether different values. They have paintings that you can't even recognize what they're talking about. There's music with no tune and philosophy that's crazy.

I mean, what in the world are we doing? Well, I'm so glad Jesus is on the throne, I'll tell you, and sits as king of the flood because no matter what the wicked do, we're going to praise the Lord. We're not going to fret about it. We're going to praise the Lord.

Hallelujah. How about that, Hal? We're going to praise the Lord no matter what comes up or goes down. We extol the Lord at all times.

There's strength in that. There is strength, spiritual strength, in praising the Lord. When you feel at least like doing it, that's the time to praise the Lord.

Remind yourself that God has never failed you, never will fail you. This psalm is about protection. It's one of my favorites.

My soul will boast in the Lord. Are you boasting in the Lord today? What are you boasting about? Your good looks? What are you boasting about? Boast in the Lord. It's safer.

Because your good looks may vanish. Your ability to play the piano may vanish, or whatever else may vanish. Boast in the Lord and then you're safe because He can be counted on, but the things you trust in can't always be counted on.

Let the afflicted hear. Are you afflicted this morning? Well, if you're not, thank God. So lay this up for the future.

Let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord, David said. Let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

Glorify the Lord with me. Just praise His name. Lord, we praise You.

We glorify as we did in the special Lord. We lift up the name of Jesus. We say He is wonderful, marvelous, spectacular.

Lord, one thing I thank You for, Lord, is that You always come through. The blessing of the Lord makes rich and You add no sorrow with it. How wonderful, Lord, that You always come through.

So many times You've delivered us that we don't even know about it. Dangers that were averted, and I can remember throughout my life as I look back, walking so close to the edge of the cliff. Oh, God, I thank You for Your faithfulness.

I will glorify Your faithfulness. Your name is faithful. You can be counted on.

We bless Your name, Lord, no matter what the future holds. If the terrorists blow up the whole country, You're still there. You're still there watching over all Your people.

Blessed be Your name. We know, Lord, the wicked make a great show. I can remember when Hitler looked like he was going to win the war.

But Your word says he'll flourish like a green bay tree. You look again and he's no more. You can't even find him.

Like Hitler, couldn't even find him. So true. We glorify You this morning, Lord.

We glorify You this morning. We lift up the name of Jesus. We say, You are Lord.

You are Lord of us and of our country. You are lifted up. We will extol Your name because You are faithful, Lord.

And whatever happens, it makes no difference. You're the same. And You sit as king of the flood.

So we bless You, Lord. And we lift up Your name. And we say, Jesus is Lord of all.

Blessed be Your name. I sought the Lord. Now, if you'll notice, there's been... Our generation, particularly of the Pentecostal charismatic moves, is very knowledgeable concerning spiritual gifts and ministries.

I can remember when we never had prophecy in church. We would have messages in tongues and when we did, oh man, that was wonderful. But maybe once in two or three months there'd be a prophecy.

And that's all we talked about going home. It was not as plentiful as it is now. Nothing like what goes in.

You never heard a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom. And then in the late 40s and the 50s, the gifts of healing began to be prominent. And people showed up with all kinds of gifts and things.

One guy came to a church, never studied the piano, sat down and played the piano all the time. The Lord gave him a gift of playing the piano. And it was just wonderful.

Well, now we're so sophisticated with gifts and ministries. Oh, well, of course. Oh, you only had three prophecies this morning? What's the matter? The people backslidden? What's going on there? And when you pray, no one has supernatural knowledge or wisdom? You know, what's coming off there? So it's becoming common.

And the danger in that is we begin to work the moves. That's the danger. We begin to work the moves.

We begin to think, well, now, let me find the cassette that tells me how to get out of this problem. It's important to seek the Lord. Yeah, it's important to seek the Lord when you're in trouble and not try to work the moves.

Just seek the Lord. I sought the Lord. I didn't try to use faith.

I didn't try to exercise anything magical or supernatural. I sought a person. I sought a person.

I went to a person. I didn't go to the great somebody up in the air that knows how to do mystical things. I went to a person, not to a formula, not to a religious formula.

I went to a person. I sought the Lord. Well, if you can work the moves, work them.

But we get so often that our moves don't work anymore. And then it's time to seek the Lord. When you're really up against it, seek the Lord.

Don't trust in your gifts. Seek the Lord. And he answered me, and he always does.

And he's not a god of far off. Thank God. You know, I really think where James says the judge stands at the door, we think of that in terms of calendar time.

But in the spirit realm, even Einstein said time goes backwards and forwards and all over the place. We're just locked into something we don't understand at this time. But actually everything's done over here and everything that was done, someday we'll be able to go backward and forward in time.

Anyway, when you speed up and get in the spaceship and it's going with the speed of light, time stands still. So, time is not the constant that we think it is. It's subject to other forces.

So God is not bound by time at all. So, I don't think when he says the judge stands at the door he's talking about calendar time at all. I'm just talking about proximity.

I think the Lord is drawing near to the church. It just seems like he's drawing near to the church. And the judge is standing at the door of our hearts.

And if you'll slow down your life enough, you can hear it. That's why people are doing journaling now. They sit down and they believe God's right there and God is right there and the first thing you know, they're hearing from Jesus.

So, try it sometime. Maybe he's speaking all around you and you don't believe it's the Lord or you can't hear him or you're too busy or whatever. But try it sometime.

You'll be amazed if you keep Jesus present in your mind, you may find that he's talking to you. Now, we get so full of vinegar that we don't hear the checks of the Lord. We run right through them.

We go to do something and we're in high gear and just a little something, a little nuance of thought as soon as something's wrong. And instead of sitting down and praying, which we usually can do in many instances, and say, well, Lord, what are you saying to me? We just charge right on through. We don't listen.

Americans are not a meditative people. We're a people of action. We're not like the Indian people who assign great value to the philosopher and the person who fasts for 30 days.

We're not that kind of people. We're doers and we honor doers and achievement and things. And that's good.

That's why we advance so much as we are while India in certain respects is so backward because they don't put the stress on that kind of accomplishment that we do. But the problem is we can't hear God. We just can't hear God.

We're too busy to hear God. We're planning and scheming and using the scientific method instead of listening to God. I sought the Lord and He heard me.

When you seek the Lord, He will hear you and then listen. And calm down enough that you can hear. And when you feel a little check... How many know what I mean when I say a check? You know what I'm talking about? A little... Some of you don't raise your hand.

I don't think you've ever experienced that. But if you'll slow down enough, you'll feel sometimes a little nudge. Honor that.

That's the Spirit of God. Just slow down. And say, Lord, are you talking to me? Am I about to do something that's not your will or that's going to hurt me or hurt someone else? Direct me, Lord.

And He will. He might explain everything, but if you ask Him, He'll direct you. In all your ways, acknowledge Him.

He will direct your paths or as the NIV says, make your paths straight. But we've got to slow down, people. If perilous times come... Now, people have got all in an uproar about the computer glitches when the millennium turns over.

Well, how sound this is, I don't know. And you just have to ask the Lord for yourself. Oh, I've asked the Lord probably 20 times.

Lord, am I supposed to do something? What am I supposed to do? And I'm not hearing anything from the Lord. But we have to be ready. You know, the Lord at some time might say, move, you know, or just get out of your house.

Aunt Vera over there in the... What's that place called? How many know about Aunt Vera in Sunshine Acres? Well, just recently, at night she has a custom of sitting in her living room for a while and meditating and then going to bed. Well, the living room is all enclosed in glass. A lot of glass there.

So, one night recently, she felt, I'm going to go to bed early. She went in her bedroom and wham! One of these sudden wind bursts. There's a phenomenon called a wind burst that just hits in a small area and leaves everything around it intact.

It's like a mini tornado. And it zapped that property and blew the glass out of the front room where she ordinarily sits. And blew down how many telephone poles? A large number of telephone poles and did a tremendous amount of damage just there in Sunshine Acres.

Well, they've got such a good reputation that pretty soon there's a whole colony of people came in with earth-moving machines and everything to get them back in business. But, it's just like that. Something, and if you're listening to the Lord, it might, in the days to come, save your life.

I sought the Lord. And He heard me. So, listen and don't get too wrapped up in what you're doing.

Listen to the Lord. Because nothing in life is as important as God and His will. Nothing.

And then it says, He delivered me from all my fears. Now, that's more important than it looks. Because a large part of our problem is fear.

A large part of it is fear. And what I've been doing is, when something comes up that seems really dramatically wrong and something to really, you know, cause a lot of dread and terror and apprehension, first of all, I pray, Lord, until I feel from the Lord, He's got it handled. There's no problem.

But then there's another prayer you have to pray. Which is, Lord, get the fear and dread out of our house. Because it's just like running over a skunk, you know.

For five miles down the road, you can still smell the skunk. It's like that after you pray and get the victory in prayer, you've still got a house full of dread and fear. So it requires a separate prayer to get rid of the fear.

God doesn't want us living in our homes in dread and fear and all bowed down. He doesn't want that kind of a household. He wants your household to be happy and confident in Him.

And He's the only one that can do it. If you have a lot of trouble happening, He's the only one that can do it. So it says here, He delivered me from all my fears.

Not only the basis of the fear, but the fear itself. Because when we're faith and fear, it cannot dwell in your heart at the same time. And when we're fearful, we lose our spiritual poise.

We're not poised spiritually when we're afraid. And God doesn't want us living in fear. We make wrong moves when we're afraid.

We make unwise decisions when we are afraid. And so it's the first class of people in the lake of fire are the fearful, which always seem to me to be kind of backwards, but that's what it says. But God doesn't want us to be afraid of anything.

Get it out of our homes, Lord. Get all fear out of our homes. Those who look to Him are radiant.

We used to say Christians have a glow on their face. And they do. You know, so much of our religion, Christianity is a religion.

And Judaism is a religion. And throughout the centuries, both Judaism and Christianity have borne a false witness of God because we pay more attention to our religion than we do to righteousness. The world today, to a certain extent, rejects Christ because His people are bearing a false witness of God by their unrighteous behavior.

And this has been true for 2,000 years. I know the Chinese have had a bad problem when they used to... China used to be open to the gospel, but the way the young people and others that went to college there and so on, Christians, testifying about Christ the way they live, the Chinese said, No, we do not want that. It's a corrupt, decadent society, America is.

And that's true. And we do not want it in China. We don't want it in Singapore.

We don't want it in these other places. But that's not Jesus. Because the way Jesus is, He does the things that all those people honor, even the communists.

Honor, hard work, honesty, truthfulness. The Muslims honor this. The Buddhists honor it.

I don't know if there's a religion in the world that does not honor Christian values. And Jewish values. I mean the values of the Old Testament.

Honesty and business. A just balance and a just weight. But because throughout the centuries, the Jews have given more attention to their religion and the practices and the beliefs of their religion, rather than the behavior.

And we Christians have done the same thing for 2,000 years. We've put more of an emphasis on our belief system and on our religious practices and the mysteries of our religion than we have on letting our light shine. And that's why the church today, the church throughout the centuries has borne a false witness of God.

And it's still going on in the United States. I tell you it's a fright. They interviewed I think five candidates for the Republican nomination.

And every one of them, every one of them, professed to be a Christian. And one of them who is notorious as a one-eyser, makes no bones about it. One of the candidates says Jesus is my Savior.

It's the truth. I don't want to tell you his name. I'm not trying to run down people.

But just think of the one who does the most womanizing of the Republican candidates. I mean the guy has got about as much prayer of being a Republican candidate as a snowball in East Congress, Texas. Says Jesus is my Savior.

And they all go to church. Most of them to Baptist church. I don't doubt that Bush Jr. is a sincere Christian.

He sounds like one. But to testimony, I mean what must people think of the Lord Jesus Christ? Where is the time for a reformation of Christian thinking? I'm telling you we put great stress just do the four steps of salvation and you escape hell and go to heaven. That isn't the gospel.

Lord, the gospel is a new creation. There's no new creation. You don't have anything.

If you're in Christ, there's a new creation. And that new creation of righteous behavior, truthfulness, honor, uprightness, kindness, compassion. That's the testimony.

Not the four steps of salvation. Anyway, that's one of my favorite sayings. Well, I say all that to say this.

I'm talking about their faces are radiant. You can tell a Christian by looking at them and listening to them. Someone can say hallelujah and I can tell you right away whether they're a Christian or not.

There's something about it. It's not a belief system. It's something you either got or you don't.

And you can't fool people that know the Lord. You can't fool them. It's either there or it isn't.

And you can believe your doctrine can be perfect, but it doesn't bring radiance. It doesn't bring eternal life. Well, you can fool a lot of church people because they'll accept you and love you as long as you say the right things and make the right notions and everything.

But when you serve the Lord for a number of years and have suffered under the hands of God and have really had to seek Him, then I don't know whether you call it discernment. I don't think it's a gift of discernment or anything. But when people don't got it, they don't got it.

And you can tell them all you have to do is just pray and wait because I found if you're patient enough with people, even the most unlikely candidates will finally begin to show signs of life like God has done with me. So, you've got to be patient with people. But you can't fool a true Christian with a lot of religious words.

Either your face is radiant or it isn't. You can't put it on with Elizabeth Taylor cosmetics. It comes from within.

It's the beauty of Jesus. It's all over your face and you love Him. Have you ever noticed that with people? It's the truth.

It says their faces are never covered with shame. We used to say there's no disappointment in Jesus. And there is no disappointment in Jesus.

Sometimes we go through situations and it seems like it's all over. There's just no use even pushing on because all is lost. All is gone.

Everything is gone. And we just hang in there. And then we come out.

And we think, what were we so upset about? There's no disappointment in Jesus. When we trust in Him, we'll come out okay. Hallelujah.

There's no disappointment in Jesus. Their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called and the Lord heard him and saved him out of pretty near all of his troubles.

Ah, wonderful. What a promise. Notice this poor man.

David calls himself a poor man many times. But you notice when they went to build the tabernacle and David donated out of his personal treasury. There was enough gold and silver and bronze and iron to build the thing.

Others chipped in. But, I mean, David was a fabulously wealthy person. I mean, nearly today he'd be a trillionaire.

But he was always before the Lord. He was a poor man. And the Bible says that the rich God sends empty away.

So when you come to the Lord, it's a good idea to come as a poor person. Just say, Lord, I don't have anything going for me. I'm a worm and no man, Lord.

Look at this worm. Well, there's just something about it that's good for us because we really are. Overblown dust is what we are.

It's good to come before the Lord as a poor man. And when you do, the Lord will hear you. And it says He saved him out of all his troubles.

Now, when you're a Christian for a number of years, it seems like you're going to live with trouble forever. That's the way it just seems. In this world we have tribulation.

And that's what the Bible says. But you know, there comes a time when God puts a little bit of faith in our heart that He's going to bless us without adding sorrow. The blessing of the Lord, it makes rich.

And He adds no sorrow with it. Because you get too much pain and it becomes counterproductive. You cease from being in prison to being a prisoner, which did not happen to Joseph.

And it's difficult. Too much frustration, too much pain, too much being beat down becomes counterproductive and the spirit fails before God. It's easy when you're seeking the Lord and really doing His will.

And in so doing, you invite trouble on yourself because the Lord judges those who are closest to Him. And so after a while, it's easy to become pessimistic. It's easy to become pessimistic.

And of course, if you handle your disappointments in the wrong way by blaming people, or worse yet, blaming God, you're not only pessimistic but bitter. And then you can't hear the Lord. And the Lord doesn't want that.

He wants us skipping on the mountains of spices That used to trouble me because I thought how could you skip on a hill of pepper, you know? But someone pointed out to me that it's where spices grow. So that was a big help in my mental... I wasn't so worried about sinking in the pepper. But that's the way the Lord is.

Sure, He knows our sorrows. Sure, He's making intercession before God. But there's a part of His personality that's always skipping on the mountains of spices.

And no matter how we get beat around the head... And listen, we have to be people. We have got so much rebellion and sin and foolishness in us that it is just beyond calculation. And that's why Jeremiah says the heart is deceitful above all things.

Deceitful. And desperately wicked. Desperately wicked, not barely wicked.

Desperately wicked. Who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins even to give every man according to the fruit of his doings. Well, you're starting out in the Lord you can bet your last dollar that you've got a whole bunch of rebellion and foolishness and sin in you and maybe a lot of other stuff thrown in like dishonesty.

And it's in there. And the Lord loves you and He puts a cloak of righteousness on you. That's the way He does things.

You get started off, perfect. And then He begins to go to work. And a lot of that work is painful as it says in 1 Peter 4, 1 and 2. Arm yourself with a mind to suffer because when we suffer in the flesh we stop sinning.

Now, the suffering of itself won't do it. The suffering can make you bitter. And a lot of church people are bitter.

It can make you pessimistic. And a lot of church people are pessimistic. You know, you talk about the mountains of spices and they go, oh yeah, that's somewhere in the Bible.

I mean, life has beat the romance out of them. And if you begin to talk to them about the dens of leopards they figure, you know, where did you get that from? Well, it's in the Bible. And that's the way the Lord is.

This whole Christian life is a love story. It's romantic. Yeah.

The Song of Solomon is hardly a legal tome. And we're never to lose that. Never to let life beat the romance and the optimism out of you.

Because your life, if you stay in Jesus is going to have a happy ending. But it all depends on how we take our troubles. Because if we take them the wrong way they do not produce good fruit.

If we take them the right way they take the pessimism, they take the rebellion and sin and foolishness out of us. And that's what we want. And that's what God wants.

So it's a good thing. So the all important thing is that you respond correctly. And don't blame people.

And don't get a thing against people. Of course God used people. If you remember, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

But when he came out he was not exactly liberated. He was bound head and foot with grave clothes. The man was all wrapped with grave clothes.

And I suppose spices. I looked one time where they put spices on Jesus and it was over a hundred pounds. When was the last time you lifted a hundred pounds? Well for me it was before my back began to bother me.

But a hundred pounds is a fairly substantial amount of weight to be hoisting around. Well they put over a hundred pounds of spice on Jesus. A hundred pounds of spice.

So Lazarus was probably carting all this with him and all bound up with grave clothes. And Jesus could have said, you know, and they'd be gone. But he didn't.

He said, loose him and let him go. And he wasn't talking to the Holy Spirit. He was talking to those around the situation whose jaw was somewhere down around their feet from seeing old Lazarus come fogging out of the cave.

I don't know how he smelled. Who was it? Martha was concerned or was it Mary? Probably more likely Martha. One of the two was concerned about how he smells.

By this time he stinks. Well, it's hot there and he probably did. And that's the way we are.

We just don't realize it. We're all bound. We don't smell so good.

But Jesus didn't take them off. He didn't say, well now I'm going to finish the job. A lot of people are waiting for the Lord to finish the job.

In other words, you call me from the dead, now deliver me completely. But he doesn't. He turns to those standing around there and says, loose him.

So every time somebody does something that just drives you up the wall, you can just say, thank you for loosing me. Thank you for taking off the grave clothes. I needed that.

Sure. And that way you'll keep the romance. You'll be in the dens of leopards.

You'll be weeping around on that hill of spices. You won't loose the victory. You won't loose the presence of God.

And that's the way. He doesn't want us all bowed down in our religious horrors. How do I get out of that? Oh, he saved him out of all his troubles.

So have faith. God's going to save you out of all your troubles. Say, I can't believe it.

Well, then you've got a problem. So after I'm through here, come up to the altar and pray until you believe it. You have to believe God's word.

Alright? But remember, it was a poor man that got this benefit. So don't come before the Lord and say, really Lord, I'm better than other people and I walk righteously and I don't know what's the matter with the

rest of this people in the church. Alright.

Now, this is one of my very favorite verses. It's verse 7. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him. Watch it.

The condition. You have to watch the conditions. Who fear him.

And he delivers them. Now, how one person can surround another, how one angel can encamp round about, I don't know whether the angels have multiple presence or not, or whether this is an artifact of language, but in any case, you're surrounded if you fear the Lord. Now, you notice how Satan has attacked this in our humanistic culture, changing the word fear to reverence.

And they're not the same thing. Fear and reverence are not the same thing at all. There's things you may revere, like the picture of George Washington, but you certainly don't fear it.

So there's a big difference between fear and reverence. So the Greek word phobos should be translated uniformly fear. We fear the Lord.

If we don't fear the Lord, we're stupid. Because he has the power to punish us in the spirit realm where we can't faint or die. I mean, he can put us in endless torment.

Anybody that doesn't fear that has got to screw loose somewhere. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him. As we walk before the Lord, we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Not that we're afraid God is going to punish us arbitrarily, but because we have respect unto his power and his authority, and we fear to displease him. We want to please God. Don't you want to please God? Well, that's how you show that you fear God because you're trying.

He says, this is my son. Hear him. So we hear him.

We don't want to displease God, face an angry God. And he says, he encamps around those who fear him and delivers them. Now, that means that Satan cannot touch you as long as you are in the Lord.

If you picture around you the angel of the Lord, nobody but nobody in the demon world can penetrate the angel of the Lord. It's impossible. So, because he cannot go past the angel of the Lord, and he certainly cannot, he has to lure you out from where you are behind the angel of the Lord.

That's the only way he can get at you. Now, remember that. Because a lot of God's people today in America are saying, well, we may, you know, let disaster come.

I'm okay. I'm going to be raptured, or the Lord will take care of me, or whatever. But they're not meeting the condition.

They're not living wire-tight for God. And they do not have the promise of the Scripture. And that's how Satan works.

He's worked in America with false doctrine. Telling people, you're okay. It's okay.

Just say the four steps, do this, and everything, and nothing can touch you. You're going to be raptured up before your heart. That way he gets them out.

Then, the result of that false assurance is they live carelessly. They're into their lusts, and into their dishonesty, and their lying, and their bitterness, because they figure, well, you know, I'm not going to hurt you. Nothing here is going to hurt me.

Just let the problems come, and I'm out of here. But they're wide open to Satan. And they don't realize it.

Just saying, I'm a Christian, does not give you the protection of the Lord. You've got to be living it. He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High, which is in Christ, and if you're not walking in Christ, listening to Him, you are subject to the same judgment that will fall on the world.

Satan can get at you, because you're not meeting the conditions of protection. Now, as I said before, and I've said this many times, Balaam tried to curse Israel, and he couldn't do it. He couldn't curse Israel.

He says, how can I curse whom God has blessed? I can't curse Israel. But he wanted his money. So, Satan in Balaam told Balak, the king of Moab, what to do.

He says, tempt the warriors. Get the Moabite girls out there. Tempt the warriors.

They'll come out and they'll sin, and then you can overcome them. God Himself will curse them. And that's exactly what happened.

All these warriors came out when they saw the Moabite dancing girls, and the judgment of God fell on Israel, and they died by the thousands. They didn't have to wait for the Moabites to kill them. God killed them.

So then he has to put a stop to it. But they were getting rolled. Sin causes that.

Sin in our nation is getting bowled. I noticed that one of the, quote, comedians, end quote, said, it's really too raunchy to repeat in church. And he said it publicly, and it was in the paper.

It was too raunchy to tell in church. But it had to do with what these young people in the Columbine massacre, who had done the shooting, should have done with the bodies after they shot them. He said, why didn't they do that? And he was joking.

Ha ha, that would be wonderful. That's what they should have done. Past belief.

And you see this, and I can't remember his name, but there was a prince of Israel went out and got a daughter of royal blood from Moab, and brought her into his tent in the sight of Israel. Here's Moses and all the Israelite elders standing there weeping because of the plague. And here this Israelite noble brings this Moabite woman into his tent.

That's how far they had gotten. See, that spirit of lust and of defiance of God, and it's in our nation. See, he thought he was cool, he was circumcised, he was an Israelite.

No problem, they had the priest, the tabernacle. The next day he offered his bull if he felt like it. That's the over-assurance we've got in America.

And Phinehas just took up a spear, went into the tent, and impaled the both of them. And God says, Phinehas will always have, his seed will stand before me forever because of this action. That's our God.

He hasn't changed. We've got sin in our land. And people are expecting to be protected, but if you will walk in Jesus and stay in Jesus, Satan cannot touch you.

Okay? Just saying you're a Christian won't do it. That's not the condition here. It's fearing the Lord.

And if we fear the Lord, the Bible says the fear of the Lord is to depart from evil. The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil. And when we don't, then we come out from the protection of the angel of the Lord, and Satan doesn't do anything for a long, long while.

He waits until the time is right. Sometimes ten, fifteen years. And we didn't realize it, but we're not living in Christ.

And we thought we were getting away with our stuff. And just at the time when Satan can get the most fruit out of it, he moves in, we get zapped, and we don't know where we are or what we are. And when we go to God, God says, Well, this is My Word.

Why didn't you do it? Well, I was careless, but you didn't do anything. No, because I don't have to send you a telegram every time you move. It's here in the Word.

Why didn't you do it? And there you are. Your testimony shot. Your life wrecked.

When if you had done what God said all the way along the line, the angel of the Lord would have been around you in no power. If Satan took every demon that he has, he cannot go past the angel of the Lord. So you don't have to worry about Satan.

That's why I say so often, our problem is not with Satan. Our problem is with staying in Christ. If we stay in Christ, we're safe from Satan.

You don't have to move out from behind your fortress and start taking on Satan. He'll whip you. He's a master of hatred, a master of fire.

Stay in Jesus and He cannot touch you. Does that sound like good preaching? I agree with you. And He delivers them.

The angel of the Lord, He delivers us. That's the angel of Christ Himself. He delivers us.

And Satan has to flee and disarray. He cannot get past the angel of the Lord. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

It doesn't say only reading is important, but you have to taste. You remember the Scripture says, he that has an ear to hear, let him hear. How many remember that? It doesn't say he that has eyes to read, let him read.

Did you ever notice that? Reading about the overcoming life is one thing, but hearing from the Spirit of God is another. The Bible says, as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. And while I certainly revere the Bible as being God's Word, the sons of God, you have to know Jesus.

That's right. You have to know Jesus. It's not enough just to know the words.

You have to know Jesus. And He will be known of you if you'll take the time to seek Him. Yeah, personally.

He's interested in you personally. Well, I'm just a kid. He's interested in kids.

Oh, yes he is. Alright. Taste.

Taste. Try it. Did your mother ever give you something? Ah, I don't like that.

I don't like that. It's new. I've never tasted that.

Well, try it. Just taste a little. And see if it's good.

Nobody in here, your mother never put anything on your plate and wanted you to taste it and you didn't want to? You know, I see a few heads nodding. Sure. Taste it.

It isn't so bad. Unless it's horseradish or something. Or grape poupon or these other disasters that people put into their mouth.

If you like it, more power to you. Probably drive all the germs out of you. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

I think sometimes we get afraid, especially as young people, I think sometimes we get afraid if we get too serious with God we're going to have a miserable life. I think that happens sometimes. We hear the preaching and we see the things that happen.

Boy, if I get too serious about God it's going to hurt. Let me tell you something. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

You'll find more joy in Christ than you'll ever find proving yourself in the world. Proving to yourself personally that what we said about the world is a beach full of dead man's bones. Then there's a siren call.

But there's people that hear that and they've got to go out and try it for themselves. Well, go out and try it for yourself. And be persuaded that if you live through it you'll be fine, I guess.

But you can save yourself a lot of grief. Just take it from your friends. There's nothing in the world worth looking for.

It isn't there. It just is not there. It's a siren call.

It's a delusive thing. Oh, it would be wonderful to go up in Las Vegas and shack up for a night or do this or that or find out what it's like to be drunk or find out what it's like to be on drugs. You know, church kids will hear preaching all their life about drugs.

Then they get out with a bunch of other church kids at a church camp and you know what they say? Should we try it? I know that that's what they say. Yeah, I'm not guessing. After all that teaching after all they've heard church kids at a church camp I think they'll say should we try it? Well, I'll tell you it's a good way to ruin a good brain that God gave you because it is addictive.

Well, try the Lord. There's no depths in drugs and there's no depths in Satan and there's no depths in the occult. It isn't there.

It's a massive lie. The depths of pleasure are in Jesus Christ. No place else.

At least that's been my experience. Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him. Now, I felt impressed this morning to tell you about God's protection.

And the 18th Psalm came to mind and then the 37th and then the 91st and then the 34th. No, the 34th. That's where the hot button is.

The 34th. Now, I don't know what's in the offing. I don't know whether we're going to have a big disaster at the turn of the century.

I don't know what's ahead for us. But I do know this. There is a refuge.

There is a refuge. And it's easy to get sucked out from it, get attracted by the world when things seem to be right and you're healthy and there's no major problem facing you. It's easy to get sucked out from Christ.

I want to tell you something. I want to close. The devil works different ways in different countries.

In some countries, even today, Sudan is one. China is another. Peru has been on the list.

Christians have been persecuted terribly. It's worth your life to be a Christian. You can have your family all taken apart and spread all over the country to be a Christian.

And in Sudan, you can be crucified. You can be raped. You can be taken away and sold into slavery to be a Christian.

So that's one way of keeping half-hearted people from accepting Christ. It's because to do so, in India and some of the places, among some of the cultures in India, you become a Christian, you're signing a death warrant. Your relatives will poison you.

In America, Satan works a different way. He gives us the impression that the nation is our friend. We've got a friendly United States and a friendly government.

Friendly judges. Everything's friendly. We can go out and we can enjoy this and we can enjoy that.

Let me tell you something. It's only a device. It's normal for people, for Christians throughout the centuries to be tortured and killed.

That's normal. That's the average Christian experience throughout the years. But America, we've got Christianity and democracy mixed up, mixed together.

We're going to straighten out our nation so there's no more abortions, no more stuff going on. We don't understand what's behind all this. It's Satan's way of keeping us immature.

So I want you from now on to regard America as just another Gentile nation. And while Satan's claws are hidden, they're there. And if he can't get you with the end of a sword, he gets you by carelessness and by worldliness and by thinking the world is your friend.

In John 17, Jesus said, If they have hated me, they will hate you. And in the first John, he says, If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Arm yourself.

Arm yourself. We are in an enemy's camp. And he's all around us.

And thank God I can preach publicly without being in prison. I appreciate that. But I am under no delusion. When Satan is through with this tactic, he'll use another. Be prepared for persecution. Be prepared to be blamed for the evils that are coming.

Be prepared to be a person that is not accepted. Be prepared to be a witness of Jesus Christ. Because you're not living in a camp that is friendly.

You're living in a camp that is concealing its claws for now in order to lug you into thinking that everything's okay and the world's beautiful and it's all fine and everything's going to work out. Okay? Arm yourself. And stay in the angel of the Lord.

Shall we stand? That's God's Word to us today. Warn the people that God is our protection and He will take care of us. Lord, burn it in the minds and spirits of all of us here that no matter what happens next year or the rest of this year, that You will protect us.

You will do it, Lord, if we stay in You. You are solid and You cannot be in any way pushed aside. You will take care of us.

You will take care of us. Hallelujah! You will take care of us throughout the coming days. You will take care of us.

Hallelujah! You and You alone will take care of us. Our trust is not in the government or in money or the banks or anything else. Our trust is in Jesus Christ who sits as King of the flood, the same Jesus Christ who's taking care of His believers in Sudan and in China and Peru and other places.

The same Jesus Christ will take care of us. Lord, burn it into our spirits. Hallelujah! That we don't look to any other quarter for money, for sustenance, to look to You alone.

Burn it in us against the days to come, Lord. Burn it in us. Hallelujah! That we realize that You and You alone will bring us through the time to come.

And there will be no help from any place else. Hallelujah! Abarakah Hasidia! Call on the name of the Lord, people! Call on His name! We're in perilous times in Jesus' name! Lift up your voice and call on Jesus! He wants to hear it! In Jesus' name! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! We're not bemused or distracted by the seeming safety. Hallelujah! We see the handwriting on the wall.

We hear what's coming over the horizon, Lord. We need Your protection, Lord. We need to know You, the Rock of Ages.

We need to know You, Jesus. Remove the carelessness from us, Lord. In Jesus' name.

God at ease in Zion. Jesus behind the wall of the angel of the Lord. We cannot be moved.

I will not be moved. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! It's like a rock. How does that go? I forgot.

Do you know that, Andrew? I will not be moved. Just like a rock. And do you know that? How does it go? I shall not be moved.

I shall not be moved.

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