

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #30

“FEAR NOT LITTLE FLOCK”

I. Introduction

A. The Fear Factor

1. In Luke’s version of the Sermon on the Mount, as in Matthew’s version, Jesus teaches us to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and all the things we worry about will be provided for us. But then Luke adds a verse not found in Matthew...

Luke 12:32

Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

2. Someone said there are 365 ‘fear not’ verses in the Bible, one for every day of the year. I’ve never counted them, but there are enough for us to know that everyone of us has to deal with fear.

Matthew Henry

“For the banishing of inordinate cares, it is necessary that fears should be suppressed. When we frighten ourselves with an apprehension of evil to come, we put ourselves upon the stretch of care how to avoid it, when after all perhaps it is but the creature of our own imagination.

3. Notice that Jesus said ‘Fear not—*little flock*’. One of things that makes us afraid is when we feel little or small; we can feel overwhelmed by the size of the forces coming against us. But it has always been this way.

Matthew Henry

“Christ’s flock in this world is a little flock; his sheep are but few and feeble. The church is a vineyard, a garden, a small spot, compared with the wilderness of this world.”

Adam Clarke

“The literal translation is ‘little little flock’. Though this refers solely to the apostles and first believers, of whom it was literally true, yet we may say that the number of genuine believers has been, and is still, small, in comparison of heathens and false Christians.”

4. Today we are being bombarded with political polls; most of them showing that those who stand up for biblical values are losing. So what?

Matthew Henry

“Christ's flock in this world is a little flock; his sheep are but few and feeble.

The church is a vineyard, a garden, a small spot, compared with the wilderness of this world. Though it be a little flock, quite over-numbered, and therefore in danger of being overpowered, by its enemies, yet it is the will of Christ that they should not be afraid: "Fear not, little flock, but see yourselves safe under the protection and conduct of the great and good Shepherd, and lie easy."

Albert Barnes

“His flock was small. Few really followed him, compared with the multitude who professed to love him. But, though small in number, they were not to fear. God was their Friend. He would provide for them. It was his purpose to give them the kingdom, and they had nothing to fear.”

5. So here in Luke 12 Jesus says, “Fear not little flock”. Then in Luke 13, He actually demonstrates how to handle the fear factor, especially when it comes to threats from those in political power. Let’s take a look at some lessons it holds for us today.

II. How to Handle the Fear Factor

A. Herod Versus Jesus

Luke 13:31 NLT

At that time some Pharisees said to him, "Get away from here if you want to live! Herod Antipas wants to kill you!"

1. Who is Herod Antipas?

HEROD ANTIPAS

- **Son of Herod the Great, who slaughtered the Hebrew infants**
 - **A powerful politician in league with the Romans**
 - **Divorced his wife to married his sister-in law**
 - **Murderer of John the Baptist**
 - **A soon participator in the trial of Christ**

2. Herod was the most powerful political person in Israel; he literally had the power of life and death over the people. He had already murdered John the Baptist; now these men tell Jesus, “He’s coming for you!”

a. This is an example of what we call a...

Threat

A statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done

b. All threats have one thing in common; they are designed to make us fearful.

3. We need to stop right here and find ourselves in the story:

a. We, as God’s people, are being threatened by those in political power and many in the media.

b. They shut down our churches once and some are now threatening to do it again.

c. Many Christian pastors are in fear of preaching on politics for fear the government will take away their tax exemption; and many of God’s people feel overwhelmed at how much bad news there is.

d. We feel like a very ‘LITTLE’ flock indeed!

4. What happens next will help us as Jesus shows us what to do and how to think in times like these.

B. Go Tell That Fox

1. The first thing Jesus did was talk back to His enemy; He spoke to the one threatening Him and gave him a name...

Luke 13:32

Jesus replied, “Go tell that fox...

2. Why did he call him a fox?

a. Jesus called the Pharisees a brood of *vipers* (Matthew 3:7)

b. False prophets were *wolves* in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15)

c. The devil is like a roaring *lion* (1 Peter 5:8)

d. But Jesus has a special name for His political enemies.

Adam Clarke

Tell that fox. Herod was a very vicious prince, and lived in public incest with his sister-in-law. Christ, who knew his heart, saw that he covered his desire for the destruction of our Lord, under the pretense of zeal for the law and welfare of the Jewish people.

Adam Clarke

“A fox among the Jews appears to have been the emblem of a wicked ruler, who united cunning with cruelty, and was always plotting how he might aggrandize himself by spoiling the people.”

3. Here is a perfect picture of the political powers of our day; cunning, cruel, always plotting to increase their power by spoiling the people.

Albert Barnes

A fox is an emblem of slyness, of cunning, and of artful mischief. The word is also used to denote a dissembler. (One who gives a false or misleading appearance). Herod was a wicked man, but Jesus here alludes not his ‘vices’ but to his ‘cunning’, in endeavoring to remove him out of his territory by stratagem--by sending these people who pretended great friendship for his life.”

4. So true today! There are so many politicians who profess to be Christian while supporting policies that kill the unborn and undermine traditional marriage!

5. We are dealing with ‘foxes’. So what do we say to them?

B. When Threatened by Political Power

Luke 13:32 TLB

Jesus replied, “Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and doing miracles of healing today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete My work.”

1. Paraphrase: “Go tell that fox I fear him not; I will ignore his threats; I will keep on doing what I’m doing no matter what he does!”

Albert Barnes

“Announce to him the fact that I am working miracles in his territory, and that I shall continue to do it. I am not afraid of his art or his enmity. I am engaged in my appropriate work, and shall continue to be as long as is proper, in spite of his arts and his threats.”

- a. Oh, what a message for the Church today!
- b. We have no time to be afraid of your threats. We have Kingdom work to do!

2. This so reminds me of the work of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem; when his enemies came to demand a halt in construction to meet with them.

Nehemiah 6:3

So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

- a. They eventually sent 6 letters to Nehemiah, threatening to report him to the King for treason; but he never quit.

Nehemiah 6:9

For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done."

O God, strengthen my hands.

- b. The devil always tries to stop the work of God with threats, to make us afraid.

3. So it is here in our story Herod (the fox) sent some Pharisees to threaten Jesus and put Him in fear. But...

Luke 13:32 TLB

Jesus replied, “Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and doing miracles of healing today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete My work.”

- a. We must not miss the meaning of the underlined phrase; it is a Hebrew idiom or motto referring to completion of life.

b. "Today and tomorrow" refers to the present and the immediate future; the 'third day' refers to life's end. It means, "I will do my work today, and tomorrow, and until my work is complete on the 3rd day..."

Other Translations

On the third day I shall be perfected. NKJV
Reach my goal NASB
Accomplish my purpose NLT
Complete my work Apologetics Bible
Finish my course GWT

4. The message is a model for all of us: we will fear no threats; we will keep on working today, and tomorrow, and until our work on earth is complete; until then, nothing can hurt us! The great Puritan paraphrases what Jesus was saying:

Matthew Henry

"I know that neither he nor anyone else can kill me till I have done my work. Go, and tell him that I value not his impotent rage. I will cast out devils, and do cures, to-day and to-morrow," that is, "now and for some little space of time yet to come, in spite of him and all his threats. I must walk, I must go on in my intended journey, and it is not in his power to hinder me. I must go about, as I do, preaching and healing, to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following."

a. Then he proceeds to apply this to each of us:

Matthew Henry

"It is good for us to look upon the time we have before us as but a little, two or three days perhaps may be the utmost, that we may thereby be quickened to do the work of the day in its day. And it is a comfort to us, in reference to the power and malice of our enemies that they can have no power to take us out as long as God has any work for us to do."

5. My testimony as a Pastor; people survive terrible things if they still have kingdom work to do! Jesus nails it down in the next verse...

Luke 12:33

Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

a. Jesus knew He had an appointment with death; He would be tried as a prophet and crucified; but that could only happen at Jerusalem because that was the home of the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews, the place where prophets were put on trial.

b. Paraphrase: “Go tell that fox I fear him not because my time has not yet come; my work is not completed; I cannot die here; I can only die in Jerusalem!” Until then...

C. I *Must* Journey

1. What a major message there is in a little 4 letter word!

‘Must’

An expression of obligation or necessity.

2. Jesus did not say “I will journey”; He did not say I should journey; He Said, “I must journey”. He was under Divine obligation to journey to Jerusalem.

3. “Must” refers to something you have to do as a physical or moral necessity.

a. Physical ‘musts’:

- I must eat for nourishment
- I must sleep for refreshment
- I must show my ID to get on the plane

b. Moral ‘musts’:

- 2 Timothy 3: A bishop must be blameless, sober minded, able to teach
- I must forgive offenses

4. “I must” marks the life journey of Jesus:

a. When He was 12 years old, His parents lost track of Him; they found Him in the temple:

Luke 2:49

Why do you seek me? Did you not know I must be about my Father's business?

b. When He cast out demons in a certain city, the people didn't want Him to leave...

Luke 4:43-44

...but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

c. When He healed the blind man...

John 9:4

I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.

5. Oh that each one of us might be able to say the same!

The Biblical Illustrator

Sooner or later we all of us have to learn to say those words, "I must"; and our whole character, good or evil, saved or lost, will depend upon the way in which we learn to say, "I must."

a. To know what we must be doing and do it without fear; to be unmoved as He about their threats! A little flock unafraid.

6. Testimony: I know what I must do and I am doing it without fear. Can you say the same?

III. Close: A Timely Word for the Church

A. The Political Threats Have Arrived

1. When Pastor John MacArthur refused to obey Los Angeles' shutdown of church services the socialistic city government tried to evict them from using a large parking lot needed for services.

John MacArthur

"The Democrat's message to Americans is clear—if you don't bow to every whim of tyranny the government will come after you. The Church has held

this lease for 45 years and the only reason the county is attempting eviction is because we stood up to their unconstitutional power grab.”

2. Democrat political leaders are also at work in the State of Virginia:

State of Virginia

Three Christian schools and a Christian network of pregnancy centers are suing Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring to prevent the state from implementing 2 pro-LGBT laws that ‘force people of faith to adopt the government ideology under threat of punishment. Christian ministries could be fined up to \$100,000 if the refuse to comply with the law.

a. Also in Virginia...

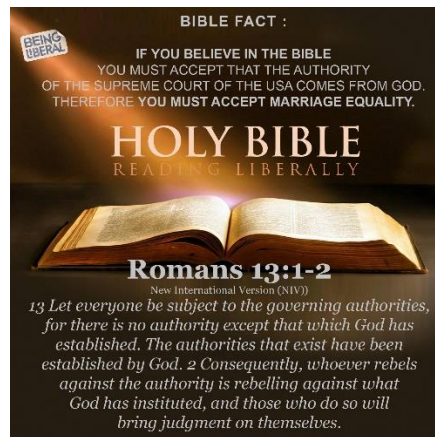
Democrat Governor Ralph Northam

This Governor signed the “Virginia Values Act” into law on Easter Weekend. The law compels churches, religious schools and Christian ministries to hire employees who do not share their stated beliefs on marriage, sexuality, and gender identity.

A companion law requires ministries include payment for transgender surgeries in employee health care plans...or face fines.

b. Some socialists are even twisting Bible verses to cram homosexual marriage down our throats.

Post on the Internet



3. Democrat politicians are using facemasks as trial balloons for more serious threats to freedom.

Gavin Newsom, CA Governor

“Going out to eat with members of your household this weekend? Don’t forget to keep your mask on between bites. Do your part to keep those around you healthy.”

NY Governor Andrew Cuomo

“Government leaders should be mandating mask wearing and enforcing it. There should be a penalty. Think about it. If you don’t wear a mask you could literally kill someone.”

Nashville City Council Woman

Maybe there should be legislation that if you choose not to wear a mask you could be charged with attempted murder.

4. They threaten all this knowing face masks are hardly effective!

A new study on the effectiveness of mask was just completed by the CDC with studies conducted by 11 medical institutions. It analyzed those who tested positive for the virus. It found 71% of those infected wore always wore a mask during the 14 days before the test and 14% wore a mask ‘often’. In other words, 85% of those who got the virus in July were wearing a mask.
These surgical masks only work on large droplets.

5. Many of our brothers and sisters have fallen into fear due to the threat of a socialist takeover in the coming election. No matter which way it goes, Jesus is saying to us...

B. Fear not little flock!

1. Nothing can take you out if you have work left to do.

2. But you must find that work and do it; you must keep doing it; today and tomorrow; until your ‘3rd day’, when you arrive at your Jerusalem...

Other Translations

On the third day I shall be perfected. NKJV

Reach my goal NASB

Accomplish my purpose NLT

Complete my work Apologetics Bible

Finish my course GWT

3. Go tell the 'foxes' of this world we have no time for fear of their threats; we have Kingdom work to do!

4. There is no place for fear in God's little flock. His enemies are the ones that should be afraid. Let me remind you of Herod's end.

Acts 12:21-24

21 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. **22** And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" **23** Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. **24** But the word of God grew and multiplied.

5. If we do what we must do, God will put the fear of us on His enemies, as in the Book of Deuteronomy. Take this as a prophecy!

Deuteronomy 2:24-25

"Rise, take your journey, and cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess it, and engage him in battle. This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.

Deuteronomy 11:22-23

"For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do — to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him — **23 then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.**

Deuteronomy 11:24-25

Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand against you; the Lord your God will put the dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.

CLOSING PRAYER