

March 17, 2020

Devotion: "Fear Not, for I Have Redeemed You"

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
³For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you. (*Isaiah 43:1-3*)

The LORD has made a claim on you – as your maker, and calls you not to fear. Why? Because He redeemed you. There is no avoiding what's happening around us. There is no controlling our world today. Instead, we are reminded of how little we control. The government is shutting things down. We might think it overkill, but failure to comply might be reckless to others. It ain't a fun place to be.

Our healthcare professionals are on the front lines of a new kind of battle. But the Church is close behind. We are forced to wrestle with the seemingly divided callings of obedience to the state and obedience to our piety. Are we fearing the LORD, or fearing the disease? Who can rightly judge based on a decision to stay home or go out? There is so much that is deeper, for each of us. Isaiah's words, the quote of the LORD God, speak to us, His redeemed. Called by Him, claimed by Him, named by Him, we are given unique promises: God's presence (**I will be with you**), Preservation (**they shall not overwhelm you**), and Protection (**they shall not overwhelm you**). It is a word of encouragement and inspiration for such a time as this.

God raised us up, to be in our positions at this very moment in time in this very corner of the world. Right now. We can't avoid the waters. We can't escape the fires. If nothing else, we should expect the water to get pretty deep, and the fires to get pretty hot. It will get uncomfortable. The waters represented chaos and death, overwhelming odds. The fires of our lives can get pretty intense and we can get burned. Even now many are worrying about the water levels or the heat they can't stand. They just can't "get out of the kitchen", because they don't control this COVID19 thing.

You are redeemed. You are the LORD's. You will pass through the waters, but He will be with you. You will walk through fire, but He will keep you. As we look to the days ahead and the kind of decisions we never really thought we might have to make, let us step forward knowing that our LORD will provide the presence, preservation, and protection we indeed need.

God's peace to you in Christ.