

## Christmas in 2021

Dear Friends,

If you have been keeping up with my most recent letters, you know that I have been writing a series about the changing of the seasons and the way industries in Ghana are being forced to change and adapt. I have written three parts of that series thus far, and will finish the last part in January. However, this seemed like a good time to pause that topic and talk about Christmas.

The birth of Jesus on the day we call Christmas, and the Resurrection of Jesus on the day we call Easter, are the most celebrated days of the year in the Christian faith. Last year, in 2020, with a global pandemic sweeping the world everything about our "normal" lives had changed, including the ways in which we celebrated these special days. This year, in 2021, each of our celebrations of Christmas may still look or feel slightly different. WE may be attending our Christmas Eve church service online, instead of in person. Or if we attend church in person, we may be wearing masks and feeling uncertain if we should hug our friends. And on Christmas Day, when most of us would spend time with our entire family or all of our close friends, we may now hesitate to attend that gathering or hesitate to invite everyone to our homes.

This new world that we are living in has created such fear in many of us. We fear becoming ill with the virus, we fear our families becoming ill, we fear job loss or inability to care for our dearest loved ones in the face of illness or poverty. Sometimes, now just the small things of day-to-day life, like going to the store for food create a feeling of panic.

Everyone agrees that Covid-19 is very serious. And the entire world is mourning the loss of those precious people, valued loved ones, who we have lost since this pandemic began. It's difficult to even fathom the ongoing effects to our culture, world, and the fabric of our very lives that this pandemic may continue to bring upon us.

And yet, all throughout the Bible, as each of the people therein face the most serious of challenges, even death, one message remains constant.

**The Lord our God reminds us over and over: Do not be afraid.**

The Bible passages most often read at Christmas are contained in the book of Luke. And while we often hear of the night that Jesus was born, we sometimes forget the verses where Mary learned that she was pregnant.

*"Do not be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus."*

*Luke 1:30-31*

Our hope as Christians is in Jesus. He knows every hair on our head and counts all of our tears. Jesus was sent here as a precious baby on Christmas to experience all that we do - pain, fear, joy, friendship. When you lift up your prayers to Him, he *knows* your pain. And yet, repeatedly in the Bible, God tells us not to have fear or anxiety. But to trust fully in Him at all times.

This Christmas I would like to invite you to learn more about the verses in the Bible where God is talking to His people about trusting Him and living without fear. I have included around 100 Bible verses here, in my letter, that are God's teachings about living without fear. I would encourage you to take a verse a week, and study the text, and the text from which it came. God wants us to take refuge in Him, and in His Word at all times, but especially when we feel afraid.

Merry Christmas to each of you, and may the New Year of 2022 bring blessings to you and your family.

With love from myself and my family.      - Pastor Ben

**Isaiah 41:10**

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Deuteronomy 31:6**

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

### Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

### Psalms 27:1

Of David. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

### John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

### Psalms 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

### 2 Timothy 1:7

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

### Psalms 34:4

I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

### Matthew 10:28

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

### Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### 1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

### Isaiah 41:13

For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

### Isaiah 35:4

Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."

### Psalms 118:6

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

### 1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

**Isaiah 43:1**

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.

**Psalms 56:3**

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.

**1 Peter 3:14**

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

**Deuteronomy 31:8**

It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

**Luke 12:32**

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

**Mark 5:36**

But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

**Hebrews 13:6**

So, we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

**Psalms 94:19**

When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.

**1 Chronicles 28:20**

Then David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished.

**Revelation 1:17**

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last,

**Isaiah 12:2**

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

**Exodus 20:20**

Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin."

### Matthew 6:34

"Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

### Proverbs 29:25

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

### Exodus 14:13

And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

### Luke 12:4

"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.

### Joshua 10:25

And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or dismayed; be strong and courageous. For thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight."

### Matthew 10:26

"So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

### Romans 8:38-39

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Mark 6:50

For they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

### Psalms 56:3-4

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

### Jeremiah 1:8

Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord."

### Isaiah 51:7-8

"Listen to me, you who know right from wrong, you who cherish my law in your hearts. Do not be afraid of people's scorn, nor fear their insults. For the moth will devour them as it devours clothing. The worm will eat them as it eats wool. But my righteousness will last forever. My salvation will continue from generation to generation."

### **Numbers 14:9**

Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them."

### **Genesis 15:1**

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great."

### **Psalms 55:22**

Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

### **Deuteronomy 3:22**

You shall not fear them, for it is the Lord your God who fights for you.'

### **1 Peter 5:6-7**

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

### **Romans 8:15**

So, you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's spirit when he adopted you as His own children. Now we call Him, "Abba, Father."

### **Isaiah 54:4**

"Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

### **Matthew 10:31**

Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

### **Isaiah 43:5**

Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you.

### **2 Kings 1:15**

Then the angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king

### **Deuteronomy 20:1**

"When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God is with you, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

### Deuteronomy 1:17

You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'

### John 6:20

But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid."

### Matthew 6:25-34

"Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ...

### Acts 18:9

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent,

### Isaiah 44:2

Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you: Fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

### 1 Samuel 28:13

The king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a god coming up out of the earth."

### 2 Chronicles 20:15

And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.

### 1 Samuel 23:17

And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this."

### 1 Samuel 12:20

And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.

### 1 Samuel 4:20

And about the time of her death the women attending her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer or pay attention.

### Deuteronomy 1:21

See, the Lord your God has set the land before you. Go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not fear or be dismayed.'

### Genesis 50:19

But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?"

### Isaiah 26:3

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

### 2 Samuel 9:7

And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always."

### Genesis 50:21

So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

### Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

### Psalms 56:4

In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

### 1 Kings 17:13

And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son.

### 1 Samuel 22:23

Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you shall be in safekeeping."

### Genesis 35:17

And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for you have another son."

### **Isaiah 41:14**

Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

### **2 Kings 25:24**

And Gedaliah swore to them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid because of the Chaldean officials. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."

### **Genesis 43:23**

He replied, "Peace to you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has put treasure in your sacks for you. I received your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

### **Jeremiah 42:11**

Do not fear the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid. Do not fear him, declares the Lord, for I am with you, to save you and to deliver you from his hand.

### **Psalms 91:1-16**

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, ...

### **Deuteronomy 1:29**

Then I said to you, 'Do not be in dread or afraid of them.

### **Daniel 10:12**

Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.

### **Judges 4:18**

And Jael came out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord; turn aside to me; do not be afraid." So he turned aside to her into the tent, and she covered him with a rug.

### **Haggai 2:5**

According to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not.

**Isaiah 44:8**

Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any."

**Nehemiah 4:14**

And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

**Deuteronomy 7:18**

You shall not be afraid of them but you shall remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt,

**Hebrews 13:5-6**

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

**Matthew 14:27**

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

**Luke 1:30**

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

**Daniel 10:19**

And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

**Ezekiel 3:9**

Like emery harder than flint have I made your forehead. Fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house."

**Luke 5:10**

And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."

**Zephaniah 3:17**

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

**Lamentations 3:57**

You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!'

### 2 Chronicles 20:17

You will not need to fight in this battle. Stand firm, hold your position, and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, and the Lord will be with you."

### Revelation 2:10

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

### Isaiah 51:12

"I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass,

### Isaiah 41:13-14

For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

### 2 Kings 6:16

He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

### Luke 1:13

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

### Proverbs 3:24

If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

### Romans 8:31

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

### Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

### Psalms 29:11

May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!

### Hebrews 2:14-15

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.