Daily Devotion #204

**Forever Changed**

**Luke 2:10-11 (NASB)** *“But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’”*

Fear manifests itself in many ways. Sometimes it comes out in the words we use. It comes out in what we do and don’t do, where we go, and where we don’t go. But the one area where fear affects us most is in unbelief. When we don’t believe something or someone, we respond in fear or through fear. It may not look like fear or seem like fear, but it is. For example, those who have jumped out of an airplane say that the instructor says to do what you are told and you will be fine. But mostly the reaction is, “Yeah right!”. The fear of standing in the doorway is overwhelming, not because you don’t want to do it but because there is that doubt that says, “What if this is not safe? What if the instructor is not right?” And fear takes over.

I’m not sure why the angel told the shepherds to not be afraid, except for the fact that suddenly seeing angels in the sky must have been overwhelming. I can only imagine how the sight of something so glorious would bring about a reaction of fear. But that is the point isn’t it? Fear comes out of our hearts when we are in situations or even think about situations that we are unfamiliar with or situations we doubt. Doubt clouds our ability to trust in what is different or unusual. We need time to process what we are seeing or feeling. So, in this case, the angel told them not to be afraid knowing the unusual sight would cause such a reaction.

What amazes me most about this story is how it parallels our normal lives. We listen to the story of the birth of Christ over and over. Each year we hear the story preached or taught in Sunday School or we hear songs about it on the radio, even televisions shows. And we learn so much about life and the joy of life through Christ. But yet, the thought of death is still overwhelming. Why? The answer is, we are afraid. We are afraid of what we don’t understand. But like the angel said to the shepherds not to be afraid, the Lord has told us not to be afraid either. You might say or think that you’re not afraid of anything. If that were true, then why would you or I ever be afraid when death approaches us, when it is near or when we begin to think about the possibility of dying? Having performed many funerals over the years, I can tell you, people are afraid of death because they are afraid of what they don’t understand about it. As much as the angel told the shepherds not to fear what they were seeing, God wants us to have the same lack of fear over everything in this life - especially death.

Did you know that the Bible never uses the word death when talking about a believer in Christ? It always refers to God’s people going to sleep. That’s because death is no more than that. Yes, it is different for the people we leave behind, but it is only like going to sleep for those who have put their trust in Christ. But as many times as people hear that, they still fear death. Or they don’t like the idea of it. That is understandable from a human perspective, but you and I are to look at death from a spiritual perspective, from God’s view. And to Him, our death is not to be feared.

I bet you didn’t think the glorious occasion of Jesus’s birth would end in a discussion about death? The truth is, Jesus came so that we would not fear anything, especially death. He came to rescue us from our fears and especially the fear of death. His whole purpose was to come to give us hope that we will live eternally. So that when death comes, it is like going to sleep. The best sleep you have every had. The difference is you will immediately be in His presence.

Would you be willing to let God take from you all your fears? No matter what they are? Just let go of them and trust Him. Remove the doubt in your heart and believe what He has told you. There’s no reason for a believer in Christ to be afraid of death.