

## CHRISTMAS DAY

25 December 2008

**Luke 2:10 “Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy.”**

What did the angels say to the shepherds: “Don’t be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy.”

What causes you to be afraid? Swimming with sharks, the stock market crashing, your wife making a list! People rejecting you. What causes a fear response in you?

One of the underlying causes of fear is that we all share a sense of insecurity. Life after all is precarious. Everything can be going well one minute and then in the blink of an eye everything is totally out of control.

You’re driving, enjoying the day, and the next thing, BANG, you’re in an accident. You wake up healthy and by the evening you’re vomiting. One of the underlying causes of fear is our insecurity.

We seek to take the insecurities out of life; making plans, setting goals, building a nest-egg, taking out insurance, building defences.

Here the shepherds are minding their own business, when all of a sudden their world explodes. We’re going to die!

To which the angels responds; ‘Don’t be afraid’.

Don’t be afraid because God has come to do something about our underlying insecurity. The angel comes with the good news that a Saviour has been born in the town of David. The King has been born – Long live the King.

God’s answer to our insecurity and fear isn’t to bless us with unlimited power and authority to defend ourselves. That would only increase my fear – power corrupts, total power corrupts totally.

God’s answer is to be born our King, in Jesus, that we might live secure under his reign, as legal citizens of his kingdom. I’m definitely more comfortable with Jesus having total power and control over my life and it not being in my hands, and not in your hands!

That’s the ‘Good News’ the angels proclaim – the King is Born, long live the King. Easter shows us what sort of King we have. Not one who exploits us but one who loves us with his life. What a wonderful King we have.

But not everyone was that excited about Jesus being born as King. What was Herod’s response? “Herod, when he realized that the scholars had tricked him, flew into a rage. He commanded the murder of every little boy two years old and under who lived in Bethlehem and its surrounding hills.” (Luke 2:16 Msg)

In Herod’s life there was only room for one king – Herod was it. No wonder there was fear generated when Herod heard that there was another king; “When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.” (Luke 2:3) Herod feared losing all he had worked so hard to get, and so he slaughters defenceless children. Others have to die for Herod to stay king.

How many times in world history have people been slaughtered so someone could remain king? How many children have been slaughtered in the schoolyard so someone could remain popular and feel good about themselves? How many people have slaughtered others so that their home, their own private castle, might remain comfortable and secure, locking out the undesirable?

Thank God our King doesn’t slaughter us to remain King, he allows us to slaughter him, that we might live.

I’m glad that Jesus is my King, the one King who brings life.

Born my brother, not remote and aloof. Jesus, my King, born in humble circumstances so that I don’t fear him, but know he loves me and invites me to love him back.

This is 'Good News' the King is born; long live the King. And the King's name is Jesus for he will save his people, not exploit them to live comfortable in the lap of luxury. That's not our King's goal. Our King is not a slave to insecurity; having to live to protect himself from the fear of losing; losing his standard of living, losing his castle, losing his reputation, losing control. Jesus doesn't live from fear; he's not afraid.

Not because he's got the biggest army and can slaughter you at will. That's one place we seek to find security. We have the atomic bomb and we're not afraid to use it – you'd better cringe. I've got the atomic bomb of a caustic tongue, be afraid, very afraid, I'm not afraid to use it. I've got the atomic bomb of total self-interest and I'm willing to sacrifice you to get what I want.

Thank God that's not our King. Jesus wasn't born to intimidate me and threaten me into submission. Jesus rules to free me to be all his love for me has dreamed possible.

Jesus has been born to free me from the fear of me making my life worthwhile. Life is no longer what I make of it. Thank God for that.

Isn't that a horrid fear, that you're not worthwhile.

Thank God Jesus comes to be our King so that life is now what Jesus makes of it. That I'm now what Jesus makes of me! It's not what I make out of Jesus, or what I make out of myself, but I now have the wonderful security of living what Jesus makes of me.

Jesus is the one who makes me who I am, and Jesus is the one who defends and protects me. My life is totally secure in my King's hands, in Jesus' hands.

And the 'Good News' is that Jesus has chosen me to be part of his kingdom. I don't choose Jesus to be my King – this is not a democracy, Jesus has chosen me.

Jesus doesn't exist as King at my whim. Jesus you'd better be a good king or else I'll be look for someone else! That's fear creeping into our lives through the back door. What an horrific way to build relationships – do what pleases me or I'm out of here. Fear simply can never generate love, no matter how right you are. Fear, produces fear. Threat produces threat. Insecurity produces insecurity.

Thank God Jesus has comes to chose us so that we can live within his kingdom, secure under his power and authority. Secure, loved people are able to live from what they have, loving others, using all they have so that others might benefit. I don't have to fear losing out, my King, Jesus, is in total control – he graciously gives me my daily bread, I have no fears.

Don't be afraid, our King reigns and he has chosen you to be one of his legal assembly of citizens – loving because you are loved and secure in his arms. Don't be afraid, but rejoice as you live trusting Jesus as your King, doing what he says, to his glory, honour and praise.

Let us pray.

Jesus thank you for being born. Thank you for coming as King so that we might live secure under your rule and authority. Thank you for choosing us to be citizens of your kingdom. Thank you for growing us to more and more reflect your loving nature in all we say and do, loving one another as we are loved by you. Jesus, send the Holy Spirit to reveal those fears which leave us living from our insecurities and replace those feelings with a great confidence that we can always be living from the security we have in you. Living to extend your kingdom, not sacrificing others, but by following your example, sacrificing ourselves in daily acts of gracious love that others might benefit, according to their need, giving you a great reputation. Amen.