

Delusional

by Chuck Smith

We can face the uncertainties of the future with confidence and assurance because God is with us and will not forsake us.

Duration: 30:49

Scripture: Psalm 30:2-3, Psalm 30:5, Hebrews 13:5-8

Topics: "Delusion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of holding on to unchanging things in a rapidly changing world. He highlights how moral standards are shifting quickly and how major companies are disappearing. The preacher then focuses on Hebrews chapter 13, specifically verses 5-8, which encourage believers to live without covetousness and to be content with what they have. He emphasizes the promise of God's presence and the assurance that He will never leave or forsake His people. The preacher also warns against the dangers of covetousness and the pursuit of wealth, reminding listeners that true contentment comes from trusting in God.

Transcript

Now let's turn our Bibles to Psalm 30 for our scripture reading this morning. I'll read the first and the unnumbered verses and Pastor Brian will lead you in the reading of the even-numbered verses. Shall we stand to read the Word of God? I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave and thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

For his anger endureth but a moment, and in his favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. And in my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved.

Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong, and thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. I cried to thee, O Lord, and unto the Lord I made supplication. What prophet is there in my blood when I go down into the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me.

Lord, be thou my helper, for thou has turned for me my mourning into dancing, and thou has put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness. To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee and not be silent. O Lord, my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever.

Let's pray. Father, as we've come to the close of the old year and as we begin to look forward this week into the new year, we see a world that is fraught with trouble. We see so many uncertainties of the new year, and we thank you, Lord, that in the midst of the uncertainty we need not fear, for there are certainties that dispel whatever fear might beset us because of what's happening in the world around us.

So we ask, Father, that you would teach us this day. Give us ears to hear what the Spirit would say to the church, to strengthen and encourage us, Lord, as we face the uncertain future. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. In going through the Bible, we've come to Hebrews chapter 13, the end of the book of Hebrews.

We'll be two weeks here because tonight Greg Laurie will be our special guest, and so that means that next Sunday night we will take the 13th chapter and complete the book of Hebrews. But this morning we'd like to draw your attention to the fifth verse through verse eight of the 13th chapter of Hebrews. As we are exhorted, let your manner of living or conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.

For he has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say that the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear for what men might do unto me. Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their manner of living. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Here the writer of Hebrews gives us a couple of suggestions as we are facing the uncertainty of the future. A couple of rules you might say for the new year, and the first is let your manner of living be without covetousness. Don't let your life be governed by the strong desire for material things.

Jesus said, take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses. Covetousness is a bitter root from which much bitter fruit does come.

We are told the love of money is the root of all evil. For while some of them coveted after it, they erred from the faith, and they pierced themselves through with many sorrows. So watch out for covetousness.

One of the ten commandments is thou shalt not covet, and the second sort of goes along with it. Be content with whatever you have. Paul the apostle said he had learned in whatsoever state he was in to be contented.

A great lesson to learn. For godliness with contentment, the Bible tells us, is really great riches. If you are covetous, you will find that you will never be satisfied.

There will always be something more that you desire. You can never be content as long as covetousness sort of rules over you. Alexander the Great, we read, conquered the world of his day, and then sat down and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer.

Covetous, conquering, but he wasn't satisfied. But he met that philosopher Diogenes, and Diogenes was content with just a tub, and just to sit in a tub, and that was all that he needed. And so Alexander the Great came to visit him, and he said to him, what can I give to you? What can I do for you? And Diogenes said, would you please move a bit? You're blocking the sun from hitting me.

Alexander couldn't be content with the world, but Diogenes was content with just his tub. How much money would it take to cause you to be content? The rich man who answered that question said, just a little more. You see, you won't find contentment in the abundance of things that you possess.

Solomon said, I observed a man who was living all alone. He had no family, he had no heirs, and yet there was no end to his striving to get more money, nor was he satisfied with his great wealth. He did not stop to think, for whom am I saving up all of this wealth? Why am I working so hard and depriving myself of necessities of life by seeking to live so frugally? For when I die, who will inherit all of this wealth? And Solomon said, I saw this as a terrible evil.

A fellow has more than he could ever spend, but won't spend it, and yet he has no one to leave it to. Who will it be when he dies? And so Solomon said, that to me is a great evil. Paul wrote to Timothy and he said, warn those who are rich in this world that they not be proud or trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who richly gives to us all things freely to enjoy.

The future that we are facing is very uncertain, and uncertainty often develops fear. I don't know what's going to happen, and that can be a very frightening thing as we look at the future, and we are often afraid of the unknown. What's going to happen? But to dispel the fear, the writer has given us two things.

Number one, the promise of our Lord to always be with us. As he tells us here in verse five, for he said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So no matter what might come, I have that knowledge.

I have that assurance. He will never leave me or forsake me. In the book of Isaiah, the Lord spoke to Isaiah chapter 41 and said, fear not, for I am with you.

Be not dismayed, for I am your God, and I will strengthen you, and I will help you, and I will uphold you by the right hand of my righteousness. It is interesting throughout the Bible, whenever God wants to dispel fear from our lives, he always speaks of the knowledge of his presence as that which will dispel the fear. Fear not, I am with you.

Don't be afraid, I am your God. I'm going to take care of you. In Isaiah 43 too, the Lord said, when you pass through the waters, I will be with you.

When you pass through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, and neither shall the flame kindle upon you. David, you remember, said, yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.

And so that consciousness of the presence of God is that which always dispels the fear that we might have in our hearts, the fear of the uncertainty of the future. God will be there with us. No matter what it may bring to us, we have the assurance that God will not forsake us.

When Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau, because Esau had threatened that when dad dies, I'm going to kill that rat. And Jacob was dying, and so, I mean, Esau was, Jacob was dying, and, beg your pardon, Esau, his father was dying, and Jacob realized it's time to flee. And so in one day, he traveled all

the way from Hebron to Bethel, several miles.

And when he got to Bethel, it was evening, he was tired, he was wearied from fleeing, so tired that he just sort of fell on the hard ground and grabbed a rock for a pillow and went into a deep sleep. And while he was in that sleep, he had a dream, a vision of God. And the Lord spoke to him in this vision.

And the Lord said to him, I will be with you, and I will keep you wherever you go. And I will bring you again into this land, for I will not leave you until I have done all of that which I have promised to do. We read that when Moses was dying, he called the nation of Israel together, and Joshua, who had been his servant, he said to Joshua, who was to take over the leadership of the nation, be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to give to their fathers.

And you shall cause them to inherit it, and the Lord will go before you. He will be with you. He will not fail you, neither will he forsake you.

Fear not, neither be dismayed. They were about ready to enter into the land that God had promised. They knew that the land had cities with high walls.

They knew that the people were large in size, and they didn't know how they were going to conquer. There were a lot of uncertainties, but Moses told them, you don't need to fear the uncertainties, you can be certain of this. The Lord will be with you, and he will give you the victory, and you will possess the land that he's promised to the fathers.

After the death of Moses, when Joshua was now ready to take over the leadership to lead the people into this land, the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, Moses, my servant is dead. Now, therefore, arise and go over the Jordan River, you and all of the people, into the land which I have given to them. There shall not any man be able to stand before you all of the days of your life, for as I was with Moses, so will I be with you.

I will not fail you or forsake you. King David, as he was dying, spoke to his son Solomon and saying, be strong and of good courage, and do it. Don't be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, will be with you.

He will not fail you or forsake you until you have finished the work for the service of the house of the Lord. So, the fear that comes through uncertainty is dispelled by the certainty that he will not forsake us, he will not fail us, he will be there to help us no matter what we might be facing. David wrote in Psalm 37, I have been young and now I am old, and I have never seen the righteous forsaken or God's children begging bread.

He said in verse 28, for the Lord loves judgment, he will not forsake his saints. They are preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. Jesus said to his disciples, go ye into all the world and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all of the things that I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

And so, this wonderful promise that he will be with us even to the end of the age should dispel the fear of uncertainty that we might have concerning the future. The underlying theme is always, don't be afraid, I won't forsake you. In the days that we had the tent, and we were meeting in the tent while we were building this sanctuary, we had a young fellow by the name of Bruce Cotton.

And he had written a song and used to sing it quite often, I've got Jesus and that's enough. And you know, if you have Jesus, that should be enough to dispel any fear that you might have concerning the uncertainty of what lies ahead in the future. As we move into 2009, there are many uncertainties, but we will not fear or be dismayed, for we know for certain that Jesus will not leave us or forsake us.

There's another certainty that is mentioned in verse 8 that also should dispel fear, and that is Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We are in a rapidly changing world, and in a rapidly changing world, there needs to be something that we can hold on to, sort of an anchor for our soul, something that is stable, something that doesn't move, and that is Jesus. And he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

In Malachi, the Lord said, I am God, I change not. And in a rapidly changing world, we need those unchanging things to hold on to, for therein we find our strength and our perseverance. The moral standards are changing so rapidly in the world in which we live.

Things that would have shocked us just 25, 30 years ago are now so common they're no longer shock. Major companies are no longer in business. Companies that have been around for half a century or more have disappeared.

Stores that we used to shop in no longer exist. Even now, with the three major auto industries on the verge of bankruptcy, and we don't know what the future will hold for companies that we always had looked upon as so stable and figured they would always be here. There are changes that are being made so rapidly, we don't know if General Motors or Ford or Chrysler are going to survive the economic downturn that they are facing.

And of course, so many people personally are concerned because of the job market and what's happening in the economy in the world in which we live. Here in the state of California, there are so many homes being foreclosed on. And what does the future hold? How secure is my job? Our state is facing a huge, huge deficit.

And I think that the solution for the state deficit is very, very simple. If our Democratic Senate would spend as much time and energy in seeking to make cuts in the expenditures as they seek to develop more ways of taxing us, the problem would be over. But they don't seem to think of cutting the expenditures, but they're working out ways of taxing more things.

And it's a tragedy because how much more can we afford in taxes? So we know that before, well, they say at the present rate that we will run out of funds in three months. And of course, the new year doesn't begin until July, so the fiscal year. So what's going to happen? What will happen? These uncertainties of the future.

David asked in Psalm 113, if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? And we are seeing so many foundations, things that we were trusting in, in our society. They are collapsing around us. And if your world is falling apart, what shall the righteous do? We need to hold on to that one Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, who promised that he would be with us even to the end of the age.

You need to find your hope and security in him, because he will never forsake you. He will never change. And that you can know for certain in this uncertain world.

It's an interesting thing when I was making my notes for the message yesterday, and talking about a lot of the things that are uncertain right now, how that I had written here in my notes that we do not know about the future. We know that we're going to have a new president, but we don't know what kind of administration that we will have. We don't know how to solve the problems of the economic turndown.

And we don't know about, and this was written in my notes, about the Middle East crisis. Will Israel attack the Hamas to stop the daily rocket barrage against them? Then I get up this morning, and I look at my notes from Israel on my computer. I have several sites from Israel that sort of get me apprised of what's going on.

And I read that yesterday Israel began a major aerial assault against the Hamas, and it is continuing it today. And I thought, whoa, you know, I wrote that yesterday when I didn't know anything about it. So that particular uncertainty is now a certainty.

They have attacked and, you know, seeking to thwart the constant bombardment of the Israeli cities, Ashdod and Sederat and so forth. And will they, as is rumored, seek to destroy Iran's nuclear capability before Barack takes office? That's a very common rumor in Israel right now. And so we are living in this uncertain world, this uncertain age.

And as we face the uncertainties of 2009, oh, how important that we not just fear and panic over what may possibly happen, but that we just might know for certain that the Lord is going to be with us. He's not going to forsake us. He's watching over us.

And he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And thus, he who has brought us this far is not going to just leave us to our own defenses or our own efforts, but he will be with us and he'll see you through. I don't know what 2009 may owe, but I do know that the Lord is with me and will not forsake me.

And in that, I take comfort and I take hope. Father, we thank you for that hope that we have and that knowledge and that assurance, the blessed assurance that you're going to take care of things and that we need not to fear what the future might hold because, Lord, you're there and you've gone before us. And as with the children of Israel, you said, I went before you and prepared the place for you to pitch your tents.

And so, Lord, we realize you've gone before us and you've already prepared the places where we have not yet arrived. But when we do arrive, we'll discover you were there before us. You prepared the place for us to pitch our tent.

And so, Lord, may we go forward with confidence and with assurance into the future knowing that you are there, you will not forsake us, and that you are the same yesterday, today, and forever. And for this, Lord, we give thanks in Jesus' name. Amen.

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