

Sermon: December 18, 2011

**"Afraid?"**

Christmas is a time of deep emotions ... emotions all over the place.

To me ---- it's because the Christmas story captures so much of the human spirit.

We can "identify" with the main characters:

\*\*the parents ... homeless and scared, a baby on the way.

\*\*the shepherds ... isolated and alone ... and then they get this confusing call. How often have you felt isolated and alone? ... feeling unworthy of anyone's attention ... let alone God's!@!!

\*\*the wise men ... the seekers ... always looking and searching. Maybe that's us ... following some kind of star, but never really getting there.

I think of Mary --- young, not married, expecting a child. Many of us have been there ... but then ----- we don't have an angel coming for a visit and bringing comfort!!

Mary was afraid ... she didn't understand. She and Joseph are on this journey ... with an unknown destination.

And so ... I'm thinking ...

I'm on a "journey" ... and I often don't understand it.

I don't always know where I'm going ... even tho' I try to act like I do, most of the time.

On the outside ... we may look self-assured. We try to look like we have it "all together." And we may have a plan and vision for our lives.

But there are times ... as a man, as a person ... as a shepherd, as a minister ... as a dad or grandpa ... a spouse, or as a friend ... as a citizen of this crazy universe ----- I CAN BE AFRAID.

Afraid of what??? ... I wonder.

getting older? not being "as good" as I used to be?

not being a good enough provider for those I love? afraid of myself? ... my inadequacies?

And ... every once-in-a-while ... an angel comes along ...

with a hug or a smile ... maybe just a quiet voice ----- and says to me: "be not afraid."

I'm thinking about all this ... and into my office walks Gerry Levenda.

Last night Gerry's dad died ... Victor ... 92 years old ... a good run!!

We talked about "dads."

My dad has been gone for about 9 years. I've told you many times ... how I would call my dad every Sunday night at 7:37 PM. On the one end of the phone, there is my dad ---- having a "high ball."

Does anybody ever say "high ball" anymore????

On my end ... a glass of brandy

I called my dad "Layman" ... "Layman --- how are you tonite????"

"Quite well ... good "reverend" ... how was the sermon today?"

"Border-line average ... but ok."

My dad was the "patriarch" of our family. And when he died ... well, I became the "patriarch."

Like one of my buddies said after his funeral ---- "Don, welcome to the orphan-club."

I don't want to be a "patriarch" ... and I don't like being an "orphan."

Am I afraid of not being "good enough" ... of not living up to the standards my dad has left behind??

I think of the main characters in the Christmas story.

Most of them are "afraid."

The shepherds are afraid of where they are going.

The wise men ----- afraid of following the wrong star.

Even Jesus' mom and dad are afraid ---- what are people saying about us??"

When Jesus grows up ... when he begins his ministry ... he reaches out to those who are afraid.  
Those afraid of being sick ... afraid of being in the wrong religion ... afraid of not being good enough ...  
afraid of being different & being an outcast ...  
Kind-of sounds like us ... you and me ...  
REMEMBER ... JESUS IS WITH YOU ...  
when you are afraid of being cut from the team ... afraid of hitting the wrong notes in your concert ...  
afraid of your mortgage payment ... afraid of God ...  
And Jesus makes it clear ... there is lots to be afraid of "in life" ----- **GOD IS NOT ONE OF THEM!!**

Interesting ...  
Just talking about "being afraid" this morning ... makes me less afraid.

ANGELS come in all shapes and sizes ...  
all colors and all ages,  
blue jeans and tuxedos ...

Let's take a moment and listen, and pray ...  
a simple song ... with simple words:

***"Be not afraid ..."***

Don Borling  
All Saints Lutheran Church  
13350 LaGrange Road  
Orland Park, IL 60462  
December 18, 2011  
[www.allsaintsjoy.com](http://www.allsaintsjoy.com) [allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net](mailto:allsaintsjoy@sbcglobal.net) 708-448-2939