

## BE NOT AFRAID, ( 3 )

The Lord's words to Paul were, "Be not afraid. ..For I am with thee." This week we have been considering some things which Christians should not fear to the extent that they are hindered from doing God's will. We should never be afraid to let ourselves be used in the cause of righteousness. We should not hesitate to take an open and courageous stand for what is right, even if it means going against the majority. In continuing with this theme, today, let us emphasize that fear of the world should not prevent our confessing Christ.

While the enemies of Jesus were condemning Him on the night before His crucifixion, Simon Peter, one of His chosen twelve, was afraid to confess Him. We read in Matthew, chapter 26, verses 69-74: "Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou art also one of them; for thy speech betrayed thee. Then began he to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew." Only a few hours before, Peter was quick to confess Him, saying he was ready to die before he would deny the Lord. But under pressure, his courage failed and he denied that he knew Jesus.

The Lord says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 10:32-33) We know of no consideration more solemn. We are presented to His Father by Jesus in keeping with the way we present Him to our fellow men.

In becoming a Christian one must confess faith in Christ. In Acts, chapter 8, a treasurer from Ethiopia asked what hindered him from being baptized. The preacher answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." He answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The Bible says: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. " (Romans 10:9-10) It is significant that faith in Christ is the only confession required of penitents who desire to be baptized. Faith in Him is the fundamental issue. One who sincerely states that he believes in Jesus as the Son of God implies a willingness to trust his destiny to the Saviour. True Christians find great joy in announcing to the world their faith in Christ and their loyalty to Him.

I would be ashamed to be afraid to confess the Saviour. I would be afraid to be ashamed. Let us confess Him daily in word and deed. May the Lord give us

boldness to declare our faith and love for Him everywhere and to everyone. As with joy we name Him before men, He confesses us before the Father in heaven.

There are, of course, other things we should not fear do do; but these thoughts suffice to teach us that we must never be afraid to do those things which please God. Tomorrow, the Lord willing, we will talk about some things that we ought to fear.