

Don't Let Fear Direct or Control Your Life (Go To Meeting)

Norbert Bohnert—October 1, 2021

Unfortunately, in Canada we had real turmoil here with cancellations of Feast sites due to various restrictions, vaccine mandated, not being able to assemble unless you have a vaccine. Our election was held last week, and Justin Trudeau has been re-elected. We are in dire straits here in Canada and I hate to think about what things could develop.

As it turned out, we were able to sneak off, about 35 of us to a resort in Southeastern Canada, and we basically—because of the mandate—did not have a hall, but we chose to assemble at this resort. Everyone had their separate units, and people were listening to the messages in their rooms and also had some people in the rooms. We did assemble outside on a few occasions, and that was a blessing that we were able to do that.

The only other Feast site that we were able to have of a somewhat nature was that Bruceburg was able to go into Saskatchewan and they had about 15-16 people meeting in a hall, and their vaccination mandate took place today (after the Feast).

There were many in Eastern Canada that were not able to assemble unless they had some people in their homes. It's something that we were hit with suddenly and we have a very, very bleak future ahead of us in Canada.

I'm glad to see that the United States was able to conduct some Feast sites; unfortunately, we weren't able to, but we have stay in contact with people. As you have seen, with the mandates it has affected some people. My brother is one of them. He was not too concerned about it; he's dealing with that issue now. But he possibly will lose his job due to this. He's an instructor at the college. We're trying to go through some loopholes; we'll see what happens, God willing.

I myself had to renege on a job and was not able to fulfill my design work. I'm a structural engineer and was able to do the design work, but was not able to commit myself on site because it's at a college campus and they would not allow me on site. So, I had to back out of that job.

There are many out there in predicaments here in Canada, and God willing we'll get through this. We know that we will get through this, and that's the basis of my message today.

With everything going on and what's leading up and things are not looking well in Canada. I understand that parts of Australia are just

as bad, or worse than we are. ***We need God now more now than we ever have before!***

So, my message is ***don't let fear direct and take control of our lives! We are in a time of great despair on a worldwide basis!*** I want to cover specifically one aspect of what has and is developing in our world today. Regretfully it is affecting the states of the world, and more importantly it is affecting the Churches of God today.

It's about ***fear*** and what it is doing to general society as a whole. People are scared! ***What is it doing to the Churches of God and the brethren at the present time?*** Not all, but there are numerous brethren in Churches of God babbling:

- this fear
- this anxiety
- this panic

with what's going on and occurring!

Fear is making us compromise at times the words of God. Whether we see that or not, or realize it, it is becoming increasingly evident as time goes by. It is also dividing the Church! Believe it or not, it is dividing the Church in some aspects. Unfortunately, it's bringing friction amongst us.

- Do we realize this?
- What's happening out there in the world?

We are being misled by the fear factor that is out there today!

Who is the author of that fear? ***Satan is the author!*** Nothing would be better for Satan to intervene and get the Church of God brethren all in turmoil, with ***angst, anxiety, anger and fear!*** It's very prevalent out there!

It's been a crazy couple of years, and now times are even getting crazier. Something that we have not had to experience in most of our lifetimes up to this point. There is turmoil everywhere:

- riots
- looters
- protestors

taking over the society around us!

The people are becoming less and less law-abiding as is witnessed every day in the news, including our leaders and top officials. Mindsets of individuals, the attitudes and thinking has changed drastically, especially in the last few years, and nothing is the same anymore.

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Society is changing so fast around us with technology—and the abuse of technology and media—and the way that people think and live is totally, totally drawing people away. Even those who have a little instinct of God and the importance of having God in their lives is pulling them away from God totally.

The homeless are becoming more prevalent in our streets, poverty is rampant and growing every year. It is reported now that over a third of the population in the U.S. is approaching poverty. We see government's deficits increasing yearly, and people are getting scared. They're scared of the environment around them, the circumstances that they have live under, and they have no recourse but to be confused and panicked. They have anxious moments that also causes difficulties as it creates people to do things that they would not normally do.

Just think that if people are scared now, what will happen when things start to get much, much worse. So called "mother nature"—if you want to call it that—is also against us. Of course, there's no such thing as 'mother nature'; God controls the weather! Plain and simple!

Genesis 7:4: "For in seven more days, I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will destroy from off the face of the earth every living thing that I have made."

This speaks of the Flood that God had warned people for breaking the Law, that the rain would fall 40 days and 40 nights and cause the Flood at Noah's time.

God controls the rain, the weather, right down to the very day that people claim and believe in 'global warming' or 'climate change.' We know that God also promises us that He would give us rain in 'due season' ***IF*** only that humankind would only keep His commandments! (Deut. 11:13-14).

That is what God promises us; He blesses His people and the nations of the world wonderful things, ***IF*** they would only keep His commandments and stand up against the evil in this world!

Satan is at his glory right now, and we, brethren, cannot be caught up in that! Exactly what Satan is planning to do is working in some aspects. The problem is that nations do not do—or even consider—what God tells them to do.

God is totally out of the picture and hopefully we have to be careful, too, that we do not set God aside and concentrate on the fears that are out there caused by the turmoil that's happening around us. It's not only the weather issues, but more

signs that we have with the disasters that have occurred in the world, including:

- hurricanes
- tornadoes
- flooding
- wildfires

and along with this:

- all the wrong misinformation, lies and scandals

that go on continuously and are driven by evil forces like the media!

We are living in times that are not normal. Everything is political and upside down. No one seems to care about people of the country anymore.

- abortion is rampant

Life is not important to many by allowing such a horrendous act to a human being at conception; and there are:

- drugs
- alcohol abuse
- divorce
- murder
- stealing
- looting
- etc., etc.

All sins that cause nothing but chaos, destruction and death, which is ***instigated and led by Satan's work!***

On that note, people want to 'defund the police.' People that are supposed to be keeping some law and order.

A spiritual war is being created with human beings being conducted here in America and also Canada. These leaders and movements are confronting us all over the states and in Canada.

Ephesians 6:12: "Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities and against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual power of wickedness in high places."

This is what we are up against now, and it will continue to only get worse. This is not fantasy, but reality. We are facing today in America, Canada and possibly in Europe, as well. And I can safely say Australia from what I have heard. Violent crime will soon hit and reach epidemic levels.

Isaiah 1:2: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken, 'I have reared and brought up children, **but they have rebelled against Me.**'"

- Does this verse apply today? *Of course they do!* Very much so!
- Does this not sound like America, Canada, Australia, the most blessed nations on earth?

God has given us everything in the past! God has given us this country and unbelievable wealth and resources. **What have we done with it?**

Verse 3: “The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master’s crib; *but* Israel does not know *Me*; My people do not understand.”

You Americans, Canadians and Australians—and I can ask of all nations—do you know and worship God? *Unfortunately, in generality, **NO!***

Verse 4: “Ah, sinful nation, a people burdened *with* iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they have gone away backward.” *The nations have become corrupt and very sinful!*

Verse 5: “Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.”

This describes what we are facing right now, and it is only going to get worse!

Verse 6: “From the sole of the foot even to the *top of the head there is* no soundness in it; *only* wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, nor bound up, nor soothed with ointment.”

These verses definitely tell the times that we are living in. With everything crashing around about us, having the governments take away our freedom of choice, our principles that God will never take away from us, **what lies ahead for us, particularly those in the Churches of God?**

Even in the Millennium we are told that God always allows His people to have freedom of choice, *free moral agency!* That is being taken away from us!

- Are we doing what we should be doing?
- Are we following God’s ways and having that confidence?

With that confidence, the crux of this message is:

- Do we have the faith that we need to fight these battles that we are facing? And yet to face?

Matthew 10:23: “But when they persecute you in this city, escape into another; for truly I say to

you, in no way shall you have completed *witnessing* to the cities of Israel until the Son of man has come.”

Are we being persecuted now? *If we call this persecution, we have not seen anything, yet; as we are told in the Scriptures!* Yes, it might be the beginning of persecution, but we are told to us clearly that there will be greater and greater persecution occurring against us.

There are also some failing to keep the Word of God out of anxiety and fear and angst, some even over this Covid pandemic that has occurred.

What will be coming in the future will be much worse than our Covid crisis now. We have to realize that! Let’s look at reality; we are facing tough times. We need to really buckle down now with all the pressures and distractions around us. Times are even going to get tougher.

- Where will we stand with God?
- Where will we be in determining our future?

Let us be aware of this, and if necessary ***I ask everyone***—Churches of God wherever they may be—***to wake up! We have to wake up!*** The writing is on the wall! God is a merciful God and we cannot let the world around us, and Satan ***overtake our thoughts, our ways of life and strike fear and anxiety in us to the point that we totally lose God and what God has promised us!***

God has promised us who stay steadfast, stay focused on His Word and commandments, that we stay strong and steadfast to the end. He will not forsake us!

Matthew 24:3: “And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His disciples came to Him alone, saying, ‘Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of Your coming, and of the completion of the age?’”

At that time even the disciples were asking Christ when the time will be of the signs that they knew of.

Verse 6: “And you shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See *that* you do not let *these things* disturb you. For it is necessary *that all these things* take place, but the end is not yet.”

We are in the midst of this! It’s only going to get worse. We need to be assured that God is there for us; that we have to stay steadfast and close to God. We have to be closer to God more now than we have ever had to be up to this point.

God is clearly telling us that we are going to see and experience all kind of crazy things, worse

than Covid, the fires, the riots, the looting, the murders, the corruption, the scandals going about us. He tells us to not be frightened or troubled.

It's easily said, I know! We are still human and we have carnal nature and if something goes against our convenience at times, we buckle. ***We must stay strong in the faith, and the faith is the crux of defeating this fear!***

Verse 8: "Now, all these *things are* the beginning of sorrows."

There's going to be anguish! It's going to get really hard for all of us. Reality must hit us in the face, because we are facing times that we have not experienced before.

Verse 9: "Then shall they deliver you up to affliction, and shall kill you; and you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake."

Are we afraid of Covid? *Yes, it has taken its toll even on Church members/brethren on a worldwide basis!* Even locally we have had an elderly lady who has come under Covid. Unfortunately, it is out there, and we cannot deny that. But there is going to be much, much more severe trials and circumstances that could result in our deaths.

I say again, let us be real in this world that we live in today. Let us realize where we are at, and let us wake up! This Covid in itself should wake us up, if nothing else! I mean not only by the world around us, but I mean the Churches of God should be awakened of how this has come about.

We are being impacted by this Covid, which came out of nowhere to the point and extent it is, unfortunately, affecting Church brethren's lives. Distracting them to the point of losing what God had laid out for them. It is that serious! We must stay strong! We must stay stronger now than ever before:

- stronger spiritually
- stronger for each other

Verse 10: "And then shall many be led into sin, **and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.**"

Is that what we're going to be expecting? That we betray and hate one another? *I would hope not!* But there are indications that that could happen even amongst Church brethren.

We are living at the end of the age. Maybe the start of it, but let us be real about what is happening around us. We cannot predict exactly, but the writing is beginning to show up on the wall, so o speak. Let us not be fooled.

Let us not be afraid ***and drop everything that we have learned by the calling that God had mercy on us and called us out of this world!*** So that we totally drop away and lose sight of God and start to develop anxiety, fear and angst to the point of taking us totally away from God.

If that were the case, we are feeding ourselves right into Satan's wants. Satan has got us where he wants us if we take that route. *We have to defeat:*

- that fear
- that angst
- that anxiety
- that panic

due to what is happening around us!

The crux of everything around us and against us comes down to the reality of what it says in:

Luke 18:8: "I tell you that He will execute vengeance for them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, **shall He find the true faith on the earth?**"

The question of the hour: ***shall Christ find faith on the earth when He returns?*** He is talking to us! Some of may be alive, and we must ask ourselves that question daily as if it was today!

Will Christ find faith on the earth? A very, very valid question. It has really come to light with what has occurred over that last 18-20 months.

Matthew 17:20: "And Jesus said to them, 'Because of your unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a *tiny* mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Remove from here,' and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you.'"

Can we say that we are at that point? *I would guess not for the most part!* That is why we need to:

- work on our faith
- strengthen our faith
- build our faith by
 - ✓ hearing
 - ✓ going to the Word of God
 - ✓ living by every Word of God
 - ✓ overcoming any fears that come our way

Romans 10:17: "So then, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through *the* Word of God."

If we want to grow in faith, we must study the Word of God regularly, daily, meditate on it and of course, prayer. Prayer is so important. That is what it takes, and that is where it all begins:

- hearing the words of God

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- applying the words of God
- acting on the words of God
- seeking God

That is what Bible study is all about! God gives us faith. We need to seek more faith in what God has planned for us.

You cannot conjure it up, but you must do your part. We must pray daily so that we can understand the Word of God. If we do our part, God will give us that faith. We need to please Him, but we have to do our part. The things will be well with us if we have that faith to put one foot in front of the other, little baby steps, so to speak.

God will be there leading us. He will take care of things, but we must seek Him. We must do what we should be doing. We must take care of that part of it. With that ***we can move forward and defeat any fear, angst, panic or anxiety that may come our way!***

If we do not do that, and we refuse to keep the Laws of God and follow His ways to the fullest, because we are scared or frightened, we can never please God. Remember, half of the virgins did not have enough oil. They do not have enough faith at the end. ***Let us not put ourselves in that same position!***

Hebrews 10:38: "Now, *it is written*, 'The just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul does not delight in him.'"

With faith comes trust! We must have trust, otherwise we shrink back, and God will not have pleasure in us.

- Have we done that in the past?
- or*
- Can we say that we have that presently in our state of mind?

We must assess and ask our self that question!

- Are we compromising God's Word?
- Are we compromising our trust in Him?

We are living in very, very crazy times, and we know that they are even going to get crazier. So, it is not that we have not been forewarned. We know that things were going to get tough, but now that we're facing it in reality, are we accepting that fact that we have fight on, battle the fears, battle the anxiety that is out there and stay focused on what God has in store for us.

1-Peter 3:17 "For ***it is better, if it is the will of God, for you to suffer while doing good than to suffer for doing evil.***"

It's God's will that we keep the Sabbath and Holy Days. Let us ask:

- Have we compromised that in any way?
- Have we taken a step back and found excuses and reasons that we cannot keep them as we have been commanded to?

Yes, there have been external forces, basically forcing situations like that. But we can do our part. These are all questions that we must ask ourselves.

I want to throw this scenario out to you, and I hope that it would never happen, but let us just say that all those baptized brethren went to a Feast site and got Covid-19 at the Feast, and everyone went home and died.

- Is that a bad thing?
- If we gain the Kingdom of God would that be a bad thing?

Brethren, I'm just making this as a statement, and with that said, it's about principle, ***the principle of God's love toward us and us trusting in Him!*** With that trust comes faith. That does not mean that we make rash and stupid decisions. But rather use God's Word to be wise, to make wise decisions. With those wise decisions re-enforce the principles that we have learned through God's Word.

Many of us are getting older and we do not exactly know how long we have left. I do this scenario out of example and emphasis of principles:

Let us say that we get extremely sick and are diagnosed with cancer.

- Would you trade 20 more years of life by not keeping God's Holy Days, not going to Church, not getting Covid-19, but losing out on the Kingdom of God?
- Losing out on eternity?
- Are we willing to trade that?
- Are we willing to trade however many years of that awesome calling that God has given us?
- And a chance and opportunity for the Kingdom of God?
- Does fear and anxiety prevent us from following the Word of God as we have been instructed to do?

Ephesians 5:15: "So then, take heed that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as those who are wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (vs 15-16).

God's Holy Days are good for all of us. We know if we are committed and convicted to the Word of God.

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Verse 17: "For this reason, do not be foolish, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*."

Do we understand what the will of the Lord is? *Of course, it's God's will that we keep His days, His appointed Holy Days and Feast Days!*

Proverbs 29:18: "Where *there is* no vision, the people perish; **but happy is he who keeps the Law.**"

We need to keep the Law; that is the crux; that is so vital in our spiritual journey and spiritual walk with God. Yes, Satan is distracting us, Satan is trying to draw us away by making us fearful, anxious and panic.

1-Samuel 13:13: "And Samuel said to Saul, **'You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you;** for now the LORD would have established your kingdom upon Israel forever."

There are circumstances for not living by every Word of God. King Saul paid a heavy price for His decision. We also need to stop and think about all that we do. We do not want to pay a heavy price.

I am not here to tell you or express to you that I am not lacking in faith. I think we all do. We all lack to some degree in faith that we should have in God; all of us! I think I safe in saying that. We are human and still carnal, and our mind plays games on us. We have limitations and easily swayed. We can be easily distracted and removed from what we are striving to be. To be true stewards of God up to the end.

Maybe I'm being a little negative with this message, but I think it's important now that we realize where we're at. With what is going on around us, and Satan is amplifying his presence wherever we are. Let us face the reality that is out there. Let us be aware more than ever with what is going on, and where we are spiritually in our lives.

- Where does our faith rate?
- Where does our trust in God rate?

It is crucial! We're in a very crucial time in our lives to fight the evils around us. Building that trust and faith that all of us desperately need to get there at the end.

We must overcome these fears, these anxieties and doubt that comes with it, and everything else that can negatively influence us in our spiritual walk with God.

Hebrews 10:23: "Let us **hold fast without wavering to the hope that we profess, for He Who promised is faithful.**"

We do not have anything to worry about! Remember that ***if you want to save your life, you're going to lose it!*** That's is what the Scripture says. The only person that can save us from what is coming is the Almighty God and Jesus Christ, *no one else!* We cannot save ourselves, and even in that some of us are still going to be martyred. ***They may be the ones that are the most faithful!***

We cannot save ourselves; God is going to save us! God is going to do whatever He can to get us into His Kingdom! He wants us there, He really wants us there!

- God called us for a reason
- God called us for a purpose
- God's will for us all is to be in His Kingdom
 - He is dependable
 - He is sure
 - He is faithful to His Word

We need to be the same in the covenant that we made with Him at our baptism!

This message is not intended to make little of Covid. Covid is real, it's out there and we should be concerned. With that concern we cannot be fearful. Covid is real and has killed people. There is no doubt about it. Our fear factor is different in all of us. That is also a given. There's nothing wrong with being cautious and having concerns.

Fear over Covid, the rioting, the chaos that's occurring around us everyday—the looting and many other things—can easily have a bearing on our fears. But we must overcome those fears and live by every word of God. We cannot compromise:

- the Word of God
- the plan of God
- His appointed Holy Days

We cannot compromise! We cannot!

As we move forward in this terrible and difficult times, the fear factor will only increase for all of us. We need to keep this under check that it does not release us from God's Word and His commandments.

- we need to be faithful and build on that faith
- we need to seek God
- we need to become strong in faith

Stay strong, brethren! Stay strong!

We need to figure out—each one of us—how to keep the Word of God, even though we have conditions around us that makes it difficult and makes us afraid at times. ***We must figure out how to do that, no matter what!***

If you go somewhere and you make the

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decision to wear a mask, is it okay? *If you make that decision, wear it!* It is okay. It is not Scriptural that we shall not wear a mask in such circumstances.

If we decide not to shake hands with each other, do not do it! Nobody should condemn you for that.

If you want to wear gloves, wear them if that makes you comfortable.

What I'm saying is that we have been given free moral agency, and always we have been given choices by God and we will continue to be given those choices.

We should also rightfully by the laws of the land live according to the laws of the land **as long as it does not go against God's Word!**

We are being destroyed by what's happening around us. Unintentionally, maybe, but we are being destroyed if we are not careful. ***Satan wants us to destroy ourselves!***

We are here at the Go To Meeting Fellowship Meeting, and that was also a choice. We made that choice to be here and that is what matters. Whatever it takes to keep the words and commandments of God is up to each one of us individually. How we achieve that without breaking God's Law is up to us.

The problem that is becoming prevalent, unfortunately, in many fellowship groups—and I'm sorry to say Churches of God—is that **brethren are making judgment on others** on what they have decided to do. Not based on breaking God's Laws but choices that they have made. Whether it be wearing a mask or not shaking hands, or not feeling comfortable shaking hands—whatever the cases—**this is not to be!**

We are not to cause division within the Body of Christ. Let us wake up! This Covid is a test; we are being tested! Maybe we haven't realized that, but this is a test for us and decides the faith factor. Let us not become divided over stupidity and irrelevancy. Ask if it's a salvational issue.

- Is it a salvational issue if we need to wear a mask?
- Are we opening the door to Satan?

We cannot do that! Satan is in his glory to see the destruction and division within the Churches of God. ***This is not to be!***

We are not here to condemn one another. Let us rather lift each other up! Be there for each other. Even if we do have some fear within us over certain circumstances, let us forbear and understand and encourage each other, *not condemn them!*

Yes, we must get our fear factors under control. But that is a personal thing we must each do. Our relationship and closeness to God is a personal relationship and we cannot let others dictate to us what our personal relationship with the Father and Jesus Christ will be. \

Remember that our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is a personal relationship, *not a group relationship!*

- ***We cannot let or help Satan divide us!***
- ***We cannot let Satan divide us for anything!***

Are we going to sit back and let Satan divide the Church and put us at each other's throat? *Unfortunately, in some respects it is happening already!*

Sidebar: There was a Church of God in Alberta, that basically was able to meet and they separated and segregated the vaccinated from the unvaccinated. They were not able to meet together in the same room, which was determined by the leadership of that Feast site.

Is that not despicable?

The vaccine mandate I was not going to bring up. We are facing it here in Canada. We are being dictated what we must do. Unfortunately, Satan has his hand in that.

Brethren, we must be stronger now more than ever to resist such things! Let us not be divided over things like this. It all comes back to faith, having faith and trust in God as difficult as it may be.

As difficult as you see things happening around you, please, please do not fall away with the fears that come our way!

We know that the fear factor will not go, we know that we are still human. We have carnal nature and emotions, and feelings. But as time goes on we desperately need to get closer to God, more now than ever.

- build on that faith
- build on that truth
- we need God
- we cannot do this on our own
- we cannot fight on our own
- we cannot fight Satan on our own

We have to have God take us through these times. Only God can protect us! Only God can be there for us!

- **let us not be afraid**
- **let us do our job; the job that God has called us to do**

- **let us do that job**
- **let God do His job**

We have a responsibility with our calling to do our job so that we can rightfully be there in the Kingdom of God as rulers and priests, fulfilling the future as God has laid it out.

We have just gotten over the Feast of Tabernacles and The Last Great Day, ***that is the plan of God coming true in the future!*** That is what we should be striving for, to be there with Christ ruling as it's intended for us to do.

Each one of us, in a personal nature, has a responsibility that we be there.

- let us put out fear and have that faith
- let us be strengthened by what we have learned
- let us be strengthened by each other
- let us stay strong
- let us not condemn one another
- let us be strong in the faith

Let us be strong unto the end!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 7:4
- 2) Ephesians 6:12
- 3) Isaiah 1:2-6
- 4) Matthew 10:23
- 5) Matthew 24:3, 6, 8-10
- 6) Luke 18:8
- 7) Matthew 17:20
- 8) Romans 10:17
- 9) Hebrews 10:38
- 10) 1 Peter 3:17
- 11) Ephesians 5:15-17
- 12) Proverbs 29:18
- 13) 1 Samuel 13:13
- 14) Hebrews 10:23

Scripture referenced, not quoted:
Deuteronomy 11:13-14

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