

Saturday "Sermon"

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"Living in Frightening Times"

As Christmas approaches this year, America is at war. Factories and businesses continue to close, and unemployment rates are climbing. Increasing numbers of us are unable to pay for our mortgages, our utilities, or even for food. Terror stalks in darkness and at midday. We're afraid, and our fear frequently takes the shape of worry.

Jesus had some straight talk about worry: "*So I tell you, don't worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food, drink, and clothes. . . . Look at the birds. They don't need to plant or harvest or put food in barns because your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are. Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not. . . . God will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern*" (Matthew 6:25-27, 33).

God's invitation to us this Christmas—indeed, every day of our lives—is that we anchor our lives in Him, not in earthly relationships, wonderful as they are, or in material things that have no enduring value and cannot carry the weight of life. Paul reminded us that it matters a great deal where we focus: "*We don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever*" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Things were a lot worse than what we face this winter when the prophet Habakkuk wrote, "*Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains [to my eternal home]*" (3:17-19).

Our nation was also at war when Ruth Caye Jones wrote these words in 1944: "In times like these you need a Savior; in times like these you need an anchor. Be very sure, be very sure, your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock! This Rock is Jesus, yes, he's the One: the Rock is Jesus, the only One! Be very sure, be very sure, your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!"

Does your anchor hold?