

From fear to faith

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I like to keep up with local and world news, so often watch the TV news. Sometimes our grandkids jump on the couch to watch the news with Poppy. But pretty soon I have to change channels or switch the TV off. Sometimes there is a warning, 'Some viewers may be offended by what follows'. Other items on the news fill children with fear without warning; if not about violence, it is about child abuse or drugs or the Mardi gras. The news is R rated, restricted viewing for children.

In school children get taught things that cause them to fear. They are taught about dangerous climate change, so much so that they take to marching in the streets and gluing themselves to bridges. They are taught about domestic violence and child abuse almost every day. No wonder children are filled with anxiety, and no wonder mental illness is on the increase among our children. They fear stepping out the door, they fear whenever there is a hot day. Children fear the destruction of their family home by divorce, which sadly is a fearful reality for too many children.

Rather than filling our children with fear every day, should we not be helping them to live without fear but with faith? Firstly, we should protect our children from horrible images and words, and from 'facts' that are not true- which mean no TV news! Some of what we see and hear is true of course, but we as parents need to be more discerning in this regard. Too many news reports and 'facts' are dramatized for the very purpose of shock and horror.

Is it not time we gave our children hope, hope in their future in this world- when was the last time you heard the word 'hope' in the media? It is a word you will find if you read the Bible. The God of the Bible is called the 'Hope of Israel'. Jesus came to bring hope to the lost, to people who are like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). If ever people were like sheep without a shepherd it is today. People look to politicians to lead them but they are disappointed because politicians are people just like us.

Where can we find hope for ourselves and our children? The Bible makes the comment, 'having no hope and without God in the world' (Ephesians 2:12). This means that hope is found in God. Jesus is our great hope, our sure and certain hope. Faith, hope, and love are the greatest gifts we can give our children, and these are all found in Jesus.

As a young man I read a book by Martyn Lloyd-Jones called, 'From Fear to Faith'; it was a book on the prophet Habakkuk. God's people were living in fear. Enemies were raiding their country; there was drought and disease epidemics, one disaster after another. The prophet called upon the people to trust in the Lord. When we trust in the Lord, and when our children trust in the Lord, they will not fear; they will live with hope. Please tell your children they do not have to fear pandemics or dangerous climate change because this world will come to an end only when God brings it to an end. Not so long ago Christians were derided for teaching 'doomsday nonsense'. Nowadays it is the unbelievers who are preaching real doomsday nonsense.

We continue to teach the judgment of God but we do not preach a gospel that is without hope. If you turn to Jesus confessing your sin and believing in him, and your children do the same, you and they will find salvation; you will find in Jesus Christ one who, like Noah's ark, will keep you through whatever dangers you face in this world and the even greater danger of divine judgment. From fear to faith is the message of the Bible. Faith, hope and love are what you will find when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.