

Fear Not!

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By Elsa Day



My favourite name for Jesus is Emmanuel – *God with us*.

I have been re-reading ‘The Return of the Prodigal’ by Henri Nouwen.

I have also, like him, been struck by the picture on the front cover which is Rembrandt’s picture of the moment of return in Jesus’ parable.

In the picture, the son kneels at the feet of the Father and is clasped oh so very close to the very heart of the Father. He is home and he is safe that is all that matters to him at this time.

I see nothing but love shining out of the face of the Father at his son’s homecoming.

This brings back to me lovely memories of feeling so safe sitting on my own Father’s lap as a child, listening to the steady, strong beat of his heart.

In many of the letters I have received this Christmas, almost every letter expresses a longing for this year to be over, and contains Uncertainty in what lies ahead.

The words of the Angel to Mary, when he suddenly appears giving her the news that she is to bear God’s Son, are, ‘Fear Not!’

When the message to Joseph is given in a dream that Mary's story, about her coming son, is true, it is also prefaced by the words 'Fear Not.'

We all know that the Shepherds, confronted by a choir of angels and a dazzling light, were told by the messenger among the angels to 'Fear Not'... keep reading and you will find the Bible full of 'fear nots.'

At the end of a year most of us will be glad to see over, these words from the Lord hold a special relevance; maybe we need to accept this message 'Fear Not' for ourselves today: 'Fear Not!'

It brought Good News to Mary... they were a reassuring word to Joseph... they spoke directly into the very real fears the Shepherds were experiencing.

'Fear Not!' Hear the beat of the Father's heart as we turn to Him for comfort and reassurance.

Not dealt very well with this year's strains and stress; felt sorry for yourself like me? Not the shining Christian example in time of trouble? Did fear creep in? Did anger at the unfairness of it all? What about God; did you get angry with Him? Did thoughts like... "Where is He in all this?" creep in? After all, He is in control... isn't He?

All these thoughts and actions and fears pull us away from Him. Where's trust?

Feeling guilty? 'Fear Not.'

The Father is just waiting for us to turn back, find His heartbeat again.

Know that He understands, His welcome never changes.

As we look towards the New and leave the Old behind... FEAR NOT.

Our Father in Heaven is the same as the One who sent His Love gift to us so many years ago His welcome to us is assured. Welcome Him afresh into our heart's and lives, it is never too late to begin again with Emmanuel.

(Image by [ErikaWittlieb](#) from [Pixabay](#))