

**Monday, October 1** – *“No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Matthew 6:24)* This whole money as security thing has been a part of our human culture for a very long time. These are the words of Jesus and without a doubt he isn't finding a new situation regarding money with which he must deal. Money became largely used in the Biblical region of the world some 700 years before the birth of Jesus. As soon as trading goods and services was replaced by the purchasing power of money, what we relied on for security immediately changed. For 700 years devoted people wrestled with their reliance on money over and above their reliance on God. Jesus doesn't mince words, no confusion here. One doesn't need a seminary education in theology to understand what Jesus is saying. The question for all of us living in a material world is this: Who am I serving?

**Tuesday, October 2** – *“Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” (Genesis 28:15)* These are the words of God to Jacob as he dreamed of a ladder from earth to heaven. God was promising Jacob and his descendants not only the land, but God was also promising his presence. It is one thing to give someone a gift, it is quite another thing to give someone yourself. The promise of presence in the life of another is sacred and not to be taken lightly. Our material world has replaced the promise of presence with the purchase of stuff. It is much easier to give someone something as opposed to giving yourself to someone. God's promise of presence in your life will wipe away every fear, every worry, and every shred of guilt or shame. Take some time today and consider truly believing that God will never leave you nor forsake you.

**Wednesday, October 3** – *“It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.” (Deuteronomy 31:8)* We don't have security in our lives because we believe that God will get us out of any and all jams and provide us with all that we want. We have security in our lives because we believe that God is with us. We believe that his very presence is security enough in good times and in bad, in plenty and in want. Thus, we can let go of our fear and dismay. Yet, in fear and dismay is exactly how our material world wants us to live. Without the power of fear and dismay consumerism is dead. Without the power of fear and dismay there is no need to buy more stuff, no need to accumulate more wealth in order to protect us from our fear and dismay. The very nature of our culture goes against the power to be found in the presence of God. Christianity is counter-cultural. Always has been and always will be until the day that Jesus returns.

**Thursday, October 4** – *“No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.” (Joshua 1:5)* These are the words of God to Joshua as he takes over as the leader of the Hebrew people upon the death of Moses. Joshua had some pretty big shoes to fill and God's words of assurance are nothing more than a simple promise that he will never leave him or forsake him. Knowing that God was with him was all that Joshua needed to be a successful leader. He could have let fear and dismay rule the day, but instead he simply allowed God to be with him. In this simple promise of presence, God paved the way for Joshua to be all that he could be. The same is true for you. God has made the same promise to you. Was Joshua's life easy? No. Did Joshua make mistakes? Yes. Did God live up to his promise of presence? Yes. It is no different for you.

**Friday, October 5** – *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)* What must one have in order to overcome fear and dismay with a promise of God's presence? Faith. None of what we have been talking about, the power of grace and the security we find in following Jesus, will do anything to transform the brick wall between you and God into a bridge if you don't believe it. Having faith isn't a big deal. You believe in a great many things. The question for today is if you are willing to have faith in the promise of God's presence and if you are willing to believe that this promise can and will remove all fear and dismay from your life? Connecting last Sunday's message with this week's devotions I have given you four scriptural examples of God's promise of presence. Research tells us that hearing something three different times is enough to cement it into your psyche. This is true in advertising and I am hoping it is also true in this situation. May your fear and dismay be replaced by God's promise of presence!

God's \_\_\_\_\_

Greed =

Worry =

We start looking at the \_\_\_\_\_ and we experience

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_