

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

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Association Minister Message

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*FEAR/READY. "Do not be afraid...You also must be ready." (Luke 12:32, 40).* Today is a time of uncertainty, financial instability, worry about diseases, job insecurity, isolation, and deteriorating relationships with others. *FEAR* surrounds us and is even within us as terror and tragedy happen so frequently it is difficult to hear good news. So much is happening that we are not *READY* to deal with the next wave of shocking news and seem so helpless solving what is causing the *FEAR*. We have become so suspicious and cynical of others that we feel so alone and bathing in our own tears. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his 1933 inaugural address said, *"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."* His words were spoken during a time of global financial depression, hunger, unemployment, and thinking there was no hope for a future or recovery. Stability of banks, businesses, farming, and religious organizations was tenuous.

The Gospel writer Luke was a physician prior to following Jesus. Luke gives us many details of Jesus ministry and often included *"aside"* comments, those comments that are clarifications or *"however"* comments. In the passage from Luke 12:32-40, Luke includes Jesus saying, *"Do not be afraid, little flock..."* just as he included at another point Jesus calling His followers *"little children,"* terms of identification that might not be endearing. The *FEAR* of Jesus' first followers was about what it would mean to follow Jesus, uncertainty about financial security, and fear of persecution. Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* (Luke 12:34). *"Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit..."* (Luke 12:35). *"You must be ready..."* (Luke 12:40): *READY* to deal with all of life's complexities; *READY* to join Jesus in a movement that will have impact in the world; *READY* to share a message of hope, peace, and transformation.

President Roosevelt was insightful. When we *FEAR* living and focus on dying, relationships deteriorate, and evils around us have destructive power. There is no hope, no resurrection, no re-formation. However, living is stronger than *FEAR*. By faith we choose love, love that empowers, embraces, and casts out *FEAR*. Be *READY* to affirm the living presence of God that is within you and through you to have abundant living. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*