

"Danger Will Robinson. Danger." I can't tell you how many times I heard that line on the classic TV show "Lost in Space" as the Robot tried to warn Will Robinson about impending danger. When the Pharisees approached Jesus they may have said, "Danger Jesus of Nazareth. Danger." The Pharisees may have thought they were doing Jesus a favor when they told him, "**Get away from here if you want to live! Herod Antipas wants to kill you!**" (Luke 13:31) Or maybe they were just trying to frighten Jesus and get him to leave Herod's territory and go toward Jerusalem.

Threats were nothing new to Jesus. His life had been threatened repeatedly by Herod the Great and his family. Herod the Great tried to kill Jesus when he was still a baby, sending soldiers into Bethlehem to kill all of the boys under the age of 2 (Matthew 2:16). But God had warned Joseph in a dream so that he could escape with his family before anything could happen to Jesus. After Herod the Great died, his son Archelaus began to rule over Judea, so Joseph took the family back to Galilee, to the village of Nazareth. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish high council, had issued a formal arrest warrant for Jesus that read something like this:

Wanted Jesus of Nazareth!

He shall be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Anyone who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf. Anyone who knows where he is, let him declare it to the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

We know that there is always a certain degree of danger whenever you travel. The icy and snowing conditions can make travel in the winter a real challenge. The "Christmas Day Underpants Boomer" reminds us that terrorist pose a potential threat anytime we fly. If we allow it control us, fear can paralyze us and keep us from going any place. Or we can face the fears, weigh the risks, take necessary precautions and go.

Jesus faced the dangers for us. He didn't let Herod or the Pharisees or even His disciples keep him from making that final journey to Jerusalem and his appointment with a Roman cross. So Jesus told the Pharisees who tried to warn him, or perhaps frighten him, "**Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow; and the third day I will accomplish my purpose. Yes, today, tomorrow, and the next day I must proceed on my way. For it wouldn't do for a prophet of God to be killed except in Jerusalem!**" (Luke 31:32-33)

Jesus wasn't afraid of Herod. He wasn't afraid of the religious elite. He faced their threats because of His great love for us. He didn't stop to consider his options. He didn't yield to the pressures being put on him by the people around him. He stayed true to His course, even when the road narrowed and his options were limited.

Jesus knew he had only two options, save himself or save us. He couldn't do both. If Jesus saved His own life, we would still owe a debt for sin that would demand our lives. Since Jesus chose to save us, He had to give up his life on the cross. It wasn't easy. That is why He asked for strength to complete the mission in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of His arrest. Jesus prayed, **"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."** (Luke 2:42 NLT) He chose to save us because He loves us.

I would like to tell you that Jesus has eliminated all of the dangers that we might face as we make the journey of faith. But you wouldn't believe me because that would be a lie. Jesus said, **"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."** (Matthew 16:24) Carrying a cross is risky business because you never know when someone is going to crucify you. The cross we carry may not be made out of wood, but it can be very real. Christians face rejection by family and friends. Followers of Jesus face ridicule for standing up for their faith and holding to the moral standards that God gives to us. People try to silence us or marginalize us when we proclaim that there is only one true faith, that only Jesus can save us, forgive us, and give us eternal life.

When he was taking with His disciples about the things that had to happen at the end of time, Jesus said, **"There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven. But before all this occurs, there will be a time of great persecution. You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons, and you will stand trial before kings and governors because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me."** (Luke 21:11-13 NLT)

Now I don't want you walk away from here today afraid. Jesus warns us so that we can be prepared and not caught off guard. He also warns us so that we will be ready to turn to him, to walk with Him in turbulent times. When we walk with Jesus we have nothing to fear because He is with us. 1 John 4:18 tells us, **"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment."** Since Jesus took our punishment upon himself, we have nothing to fear. We may face some tough times in life. People may threaten us or even try to harm us. These things are only temporary. But God's love lasts forever. Because Jesus made the journey to the cross, because He defeated sin, death and Satan, we are safe as long as we walk with Him in faith. Only Jesus can give us the Peace of God and Peace with God. And when we have that, we have nothing to fear. Amen.