



Afraid Of What? Devotion

The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:5b–7).

In today's world it is very hard to find someone who is not afraid of anything. Most everyone is afraid of something, be it snakes, storms, heights, or loss. What are you afraid of? Take a moment to reflect silently on something that you fear. If you feel comfortable, share your fear with the rest of your group.

Perhaps some fears that you currently face have to do with flying, violence, finances, infertility, or the fear of losing a spouse or loved one. When we look back on our childhood fears, we can usually remember being scared of things like the dark, the monster under our beds, or perhaps what would happen if we got caught doing something bad. This and the actions it caused were first faced by Adam and Eve.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:8–10).

Adam was afraid because he knew that he had sinned. He knew he was in the wrong and he feared God's response as a result of his disobedience. Adam knew what he deserved for his sin--death. In Adam and Eve's sin, all people also fell into sin (*Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, CPH, ©2017, Q.22, p. 56). *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me* (Psalm 51:5) Because of the sin we inherit and for our own sins that we commit, we also deserve to die (Romans 5:12). Sin is darkness. Sin causes pain. *For the wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23). Sin brings fear with it.

Thankfully, through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ overcame sin and death for us. *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear* (1 John 4:15–18).

Through the faith in Him God gives us through His Word and when we are baptized, He leads us to turn our fears and anxieties over to Him as we trust in His almighty power. When we partake of the Lord's Supper, He forgives our sins and releases us from the guilt, pain, and darkness they cause. Through the bread and wine, Christ's true body and blood, God strengthens us to follow Him and to serve Him. Whenever we are afraid, He comforts us with ... *His peace that surpasses all understanding* (Philippians 4:7).

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, You are all-powerful and all-knowing. Your love for us is forever! From Adam and Eve's first sin, You promised to save us from the eternal death that sin brings. You gave us the gift of salvation, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life through the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus. Even though we know Jesus has conquered sin, death, and the devil, there are still many things on this earth that cause us to be afraid. Please give us the wisdom to hand those fears to You so that Your peace may wash over us. In Jesus' saving name we pray. Amen.

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