



Faith Over Fear Bible Study

[Please provide: Bibles, hymnals, and copies of the Bible study for attendees.]

Putting Our Fears Before Us

There are many things which can cause us to be afraid while we live in this sin-filled world. When Jesus taught His disciples to recognize the signs of the end, He counseled them, *And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars* (Matthew 24:6). That signpost is as large as ever today. But there are many other causes of fear in our lives which may loom as large or perhaps larger because of their proximity. Criticism, conflict, divorce, growing old, poverty, as well as a diagnosis of cancer or other serious disease can all introduce fear. Spend some time in your group (or divide into smaller groups) and list fears that invade your thoughts or the lives of those you know. (We will take a second look at them toward the end of our study.)

Opening Prayer: Lord Jesus, we praise and thank You for being with us always. We know that we can count on You to help us at all times, especially at times when we are afraid. Be with us as we study Your Word today. Open our hearts and our minds to the truths You want us to know as we explore how faith in You conquers all fear. In Your saving name we pray. Amen.

The Face Of Fear In Scripture

Fear is as old as the Garden of Eden. Read Genesis 3:8–10. What was the basis of Adam's fear? _____

Why was his fear an understandable one? _____

Read 2 Kings 6:8–23. Two people in this narrative express fear. List the fears of:

The King of Syria (v. 11): _____

Elisha's servant (v. 15): _____

What was Elisha's antidote to his servant's fear (v. 17)? _____

Because Elisha trusted God, rather than listen to the voice of fear, he was able to be the ultimate diplomat as God worked through him to save both the Syrians and the Israelites from the consequences of war. If both the King of Syria and Elisha's servant had been able to see the bigger picture, would they have been afraid? _____

Read Isaiah 6:1–5, Luke 1:11–12, and Luke 2:8–9. What is often the first response of someone when they see God or His angel(s)? _____

Read Isaiah 6:6–7, Luke 1:13, and Luke 2:10. What is God's Word to those overwhelmed with fear of Him or His angel? _____

No Fear

In the children's story of *The Three Little Pigs*, the pigs dance while they sing, "Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?" They lived without fear – until it came knocking at their door. Read Genesis 6:11–12 and Luke 17:26–27. What was the attitude of people in Noah's day? _____

Read Genesis 19:1–9 and Luke 17:28–29. When Lot was living in Sodom, what was the attitude of his neighbors? _____

Unable to see what the future will bring, people often live free from fear. They cannot see the danger just ahead.

So we see that sometimes we humans are justified in our fear, sometimes our fear is based on inadequate knowledge, or sometimes we are ignorant of coming events and are unafraid even when there is reason to fear.

Jesus' Thoughts On Fear

Read Matthew 10:28 Who does Jesus say we are not to fear? _____

Who are those who can kill our bodies? _____

Who does Jesus say we should fear? _____

Who is the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell? _____

Like Adam, when we are aware of our sin and come face to face with God, our Judge, we have reason to be afraid. The reality is that we cannot keep God's Law perfectly as He demands. Because of the sin we have inherited from Adam as well as our own sins, we deserve to die eternally. Such a realization makes us quake with fear. But this, by the grace of God, is not where we, as believers in Christ, make our home.

Read Matthew 10:29–31. What comfort does Jesus give His disciples after telling them that they should fear the one who can condemn them to hell? _____

With these words, Jesus moves his disciples into the Gospel home of His love for us.

Read Romans 5:10 and John 11:25–26. What do these verses say Jesus has done for us? _____

Knowing that Jesus is your Savior, why do you no longer have to fear sin, death, and the devil? _____

Almighty Jesus

Fear of death is a universal fear. Matthew 8:23–27, Mark 4:35–41, and Luke 8:22–25 are three accounts of the same miraculous event. Why were the disciples afraid? _____

The disciples interpreted Jesus' lack of fear as indifference. Why could Jesus sleep through the storm? _____

To what did Jesus attribute the disciples' fear? _____

Jesus knows that until He returns to earth, we will face physical death. But our Lord also assures us that when we die, it is not the end. He told His disciples, ... *an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment* (John 5:28–29). This statement has potential to produce terrible fear in our hearts. We may wonder, "What if I haven't done enough good to merit this resurrection of life?"

What assurance does Ephesians 2:8–9 give us when we fear that we have not done enough good to merit eternal life? _____

What additional assurance do we read in 1 John 3:19–20? _____

Read 1 John 4:18. What can we do when fear invades our thoughts? _____

What To Do About Fear

Now return to the fears you listed at the beginning of this study. How does knowing that nothing can happen to you that is not known to God change the character of any of those fears? _____

How can viewing physical death, not as the worst thing that can happen, but as the transition to our eternal heavenly home make a difference concerning our fears? _____

Jesus does not deny that we will have trouble in this world. What does He say about those troubles and how we can view them in John 16:33? _____

Those who do not know Jesus as their Savior do not have this same comfort. They may, in fact, be like the people living in the time of Noah or Lot, blissfully unaware of what is coming. How does this shape your attitude toward them? _____

Fear is a human emotion. We have looked at various types of fear and lack of fear based on ignorance. We have learned that the gift of faith in God's love for us is the great antidote to fear. It brings us the peace of God which guards our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7). If we trust in our own ability to keep God's Law perfectly as He demands, there is reason to be afraid. But when we live in the house of God's love in Christ Jesus, fear loses its power over us.

Together, read out loud this reminder from our loving, forgiving, merciful God: *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior”* (Isaiah 43:1b–3a).

Closing Prayer: Lord, when our fears focus our eyes on **our** circumstances instead of on **You**, remind us that You have overcome the world. Because You have given us faith through Your means of grace: Your Word, Holy Baptism, and Your Supper, help us to know that we are secure in You. Help us also to share the good news of Your salvation with those who have everything to fear but don't know it. Give us Your patience toward them as we pray that they will be lead to faith in You, and to repent of their sins so that they will not perish but have eternal life. Amen.

Sing: “Have No Fear, Little Flock” LSB 735, LW 410

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