

Sermon #49 — Isaiah Series

Title: **FAITH AND FEAR**

Text: Isaiah 12:2

Subject: *Faith and Fear*

Date: Sunday Evening — April 22, 2018

Readings: *Mark Medley and Mark Henson*

Introduction:

Fear is a horrible thing to live with. Someone said, “Fear is the tax that conscience pays to guilt.” Fear destroys joy. Fear erodes pleasure. Fear forbids peace. Fear torments the heart. Fear is a horrible thing to live with. Yet, no man living in this world is entirely free from fear.

Sometimes preachers get carried away and say more than they mean. And sometimes they mean more than they understand. I once heard a young upstart say, “fear and faith cannot exist together.” I have heard others say, “He who doubts is damned.” But that simply is not true. It is idealistic. **If we believe God, we ought not be afraid. If we have faith we should be free of fear. But very often what we should be and what we are, what we should do and what we do, are two different things.**

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David, the man after God's own heart, a man of remarkable faith, wrote, "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee*" (Psalm 56:3). His enemies oppressed him. Daily they sought his life. They were many. They were mighty. And they were united. And **David was afraid. Yet, he was a true believer.** He said, "*What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*" I offer no excuses for David's sinful fear, nor for ours. I simply state it as a matter of fact that is undeniable. If a man says to me, "I have no fear," I question either his sanity or his honesty.

Having said that, I want you to read the first two lines of Isaiah 12:2. — "*Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid.*" I take these words from God's prophet for my text. — "*I will trust and not be afraid.*" As God the Holy Ghost will enable me, I want to preach about **FAITH AND FEAR**. That is my subject. — **FAITH AND FEAR**.

Proposition: Faith in Christ both vanquishes fear and causes fear.

FOUR GROUPS

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1st — I must point out the fact that **there are four groups of people listening to me tonight.** I am certain that everyone here may be placed in one of four groups. I will not venture to guess who fits where, because I have no way of discerning the hearts of men. But, as I speak, you will know which group you are in.

Some of you have neither the faith nor the fear spoken of in our text. You may fear many things. But you are without fear toward God. You are not fearful of God's wrath. You are not fearful of judgment or eternal ruin, at least not now, though you have no faith. You think you are righteous and good upon your own merit, therefore you refuse to trust Christ.

- You do not want mercy.
- You do not want grace.
- You do not want a Substitute.

You look yourself over, comparing yourself with others, and you say, *“I am not as other men are; I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of*

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nothing!” **Oh, poor, blind, deluded soul! How utterly ignorant you are!**

- Of your Own Heart (Matthew 15:19).
- Of the Law of God (Romans 3:19-20).
- Of the Righteousness of God (Romans 10:1-4).
- Of the Gospel of God (Romans 3:24-26).

Some of you have fear but no faith. Though you may not use the words, you practically say, “I will be afraid and not trust.” You are sufficiently aware of your own sin and guilt, and of the holiness and justice of God, to make you afraid of his wrath. But you go no further. You do not close with Christ. You do not trust him. I am afraid for you. **I fear that you may begin to trust your fear and think that fear is salvation.**

Illustration: “I know that I am a lost sinner.”

Some people say, “Conviction is the doorstep to heaven.” And they may be right. But it would be a horrible thing to get to the doorstep of heaven and sit there until you wake up in hell! The doorstep is still

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outside! If you are on the doorstep, you have not entered in by the door, you are yet outside of Christ.

If you are not saved, you are lost. If you are not alive, you are dead. If you are not washed, you are unclean. If you are not regenerate, you are unregenerate. There is no place in between. I urge you, do not be satisfied with fear. — Seek faith. No! Seek Christ! — Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. — No. Do not seek faith. — Believe on the Son of God and go home saved, justified, and forgiven of all sin.

(Isaiah 45:22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

(Matthew 11:28-30) Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

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There is a third group. — **You who have faith but cling to fear.** — Some of you are true believers. You acknowledge your sin. You trust Christ as your only, all-sufficient Savior.

- You trust his Blood Atonement.
- You trust his Perfect Righteousness.
- You trust his Grace.

Yet, you live in constant fear. It may be that your fear keeps you from confessing Christ and keeps you from the blessed gospel ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. You are full of doubts. Your melancholy soul refuses peace. You seem determined to shut yourself out of comfort. When the sun shines brightly, you pull down the shades of doubt and despair. Such a disposition is not honoring to God.

- It is right to doubt yourself.
- But it is never right to doubt your Lord.

If indeed you believe God, it is time for you to be done with that which keeps you in the bondage of fear. This very night I urge you to confess, “*Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid.*”

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Note: There is a difference between faith and the assurance of faith. But we must not be content without the assurance of faith.

Illustration: Two People On the Same Plane — One is fearful, the other is confident. But both are safe.

Then there are some here who are blessed with “the full assurance of faith.” You can, with confidence and honesty, declare, “*Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid.*”

The person who can truthfully make this confession is one who has felt something of the anger of God in his soul, who has known the terror of the law in his heart, and who knows what it is to made free (Romans 8:1).

- That person, who has never known the burden of sin will never know the joy of faith.
- He who has never known the fear and dread of God’s anger can never know the comfort of God’s anger turned away.

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“Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid.” — **The person who can truthfully make this confession is one who enjoys the comfort of the Scriptures** (Romans 15:4).

- Covenant Mercy (1 Samuel. 23:5).
- Substitutionary Atonement (Isaiah 53:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8).
- Free Justification (Romans 3:24).
- Forgiveness by the Blood (Ephesians 1:6; 1 John 1:9).

“Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid.” — **The person who can truthfully say, “I will trust and not be afraid,” is the one whose heart declares, “Behold, God is my salvation!”** That is the basis of assurance. — “God is my salvation.”

- God the Father is the Author of my salvation (2 Timothy 1:9).
- God the Son is the Mediator of my salvation (Hebrews 8:6).
- God the Spirit is the Agent of my salvation (Zechariah 12:10; John 3:8).

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- God in the Trinity of His Sacred Persons and in the Fulness of His Glorious Majesty, is my Salvation!

Is God your salvation? If he is you should say, “*I will trust and not be afraid!*”

Illustration: Simeon — “*I have seen thy Salvation!*”

(Romans 8:28-39) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? **If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?** (32) **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?** (33) **Who shall lay anything to**

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the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. (34) **Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.** (35) **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is

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written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (18) And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

NO REASON TO FEAR

2nd — **If God is my salvation there are some things I have no reason to fear.** I do not mean to suggest to you that I am free of fear. I am not. But my fear is my

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shame. I know that if God is my salvation I should be free of free. Obviously, I have no reason to fear...

- Satan.
- Men.
- The World.

But in the context, this statement is made in reference to the anger, wrath, holiness, and justice of God. The text means, “Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid of him.”

I will trust Christ and not be afraid (John 3:14-16).

(John 3:14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

- Trusting Christ, I will not be afraid concerning all my past sins (Romans 8:1; 1 John 1:9).

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- Trusting Christ, I will not be afraid even regarding my present corruption and sin (Romans 4:8; 1 John 2:1-2).
- Trusting Christ, I will not be afraid of my future sins (Psalm 89:31-34).

(Psalm 89:19-34) Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, **I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.** (20) I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: (21) With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. (22) The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. (23) And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. (24) But **my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.** (25) I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. (26) He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. (27) Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. (28) **My mercy will I**

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keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. (29) His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven. (30) If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; (31) If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; (32) Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. (33) Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. (34) My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Trusting Christ, I will not be afraid of anything that concerns the welfare of my immortal soul.

- Satan's Roaring
- Death
- Judgment
- Eternity

And between now and my divinely appointed last day, whatever my God may call me to do or to

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suffer for his name's sake, I will trust and not be afraid.

- He will supply all my needs (Matthew 6).

Illustration: 100,000 Bushels of Manna Every Day for 40 Years

- He will protect me in all my ways. (Matthew 10:30).
- He will preserve me in his grace.
- He will receive me in death.

SEEK CONFIDENT FAITH

3rd— **We who believe on the Son of God should earnestly seek from our God this confident faith in him.** You see, fear and faith are totally inconsistent with one another. Fear is unbelief. Faith is freedom from fear. To the extent that I trust God, I am free of fear. And to the extent that I am afraid, I am plagued with unbelief.

Fear is a shameful and detrimental thing among God's saints.

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- It dishonors God.
- It robs you of joy. — Keeps you from enjoying God's mercies.

Illustration: “I won't have enough money to bury me.”

Fear increases and multiplies rapidly.

- In yourself.
- In those around you.

It is fear that causes us to murmur against God
(Romans 8:28; 11:36).

(Romans 8:28) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

(Romans 11:33-36) O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (34) For who hath known the

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mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (35) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? (36) For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Faith in God is a blessed work and gift of grace.

- It pleases and honors God (Hebrews 11:6).
- It gives you peace (Philippians 4:4-7).

(Philippians 4:4-7) Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice. (5) Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. (6) Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Illustration: *Paul and Silas in Prison*
Paul on the Doomed Ship

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It is faith in Christ that makes saved sinners strong in service to him.

Illustration: Caleb — “Give me this mountain.”

Faith in Christ makes people bold in the cause of Christ.

Illustration: Peter and John — Acts 4

David — “*Is there not a cause?*”

Faith in Christ encourages others to believe.

APPLICATION

Nothing is so needful and beneficial to our souls as faith in Christ.

- Faith in Christ receives free justification by Christ (Romans 3:28; 5:1-11).
- Faith in Christ is saving faith (Luke 7:50).
- Faith in Christ brings upon us the blessings of God (Mark 9:23; Luke 17:5-6).

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(Mark 9:23) Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.

(Luke 17:5-6) And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. (6) And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ sees the glory of God revealed (John 11:40).

- In the Purpose of God.
- In the Sacrifice of Christ.
- In the Face of Christ.
- In the Providence of God.

(Hebrews 4:4) For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. (5) And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest. (6) Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first

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preached entered not in because of unbelief: (7) Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. (8) For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. (9) There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. (10) For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his. (11) **Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest**, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

“Behold God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid!”

Amen.