

“Fear”
All the Feels: When Emotions Get the Best of Us
Psalm 46:1-3
Rev. Brandon Blacksten
August 30, 2020

What God cares about is not our religiosity, but our _____.
Last Week: You will be angry. Don't let it make you _____.

When Fear Gets the Best of Us

Like all emotions, fear is _____, but causes problems when it controls us.
Fear can _____ us in the face of challenges or even bring our fears to fruition.
Fear can even lead us to justify behavior that is clearly _____.

What is fear?

Fear comes from our response to a perceived _____.

- _____ happens in the presence of whatever scares the person
- In contrast, _____ involves an imagined threat that may or may not materialize.
- _____ is a specific type of anxiety in which we repeatedly think about feared outcomes in situations involving uncertainty.
— Dr. Seth Gillihan, University of Pennsylvania Psychologist

In the right amount, anxiety can _____ us to take action.
In the wrong amount, it leaves us _____.
In an election year, fear is _____ for political gain.

“Fear is the simplest emotion to tweak in a campaign ad.” Political Strategist Rick Wilson

What does the Bible say? “Do not be afraid”

The phrase “Do not be afraid” appears in the Bible over _____ times!
In the face of an armed crowd coming to arrest Jesus, all of the disciples _____.
Peter, the “rock” on whom Jesus would build the church, denied even _____ Jesus.
If you feel afraid, anxious, or worried, you are not _____.
The resurrected Jesus brings _____, even to those who denied him.
Because Jesus is risen, we do not have to be _____ by fear.
After Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples were so unafraid that even _____ did not discourage them.

Action Steps

1. Acknowledge your fears and reassess them.
2. Face your fear through action. Take the first step.
3. Limit your exposure to social media and news. Bible before phone.
4. Release your worries to God. Breathe and pray.

Daily Reading and Reflection

August 31-September 4

Monday – Psalm 23: *“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me.” Psalm 23:4*

This is one of the most recognized and recited Psalms in all of Scripture, and it is for good reason. These words have provided comfort, peace, and calm to generations upon generations of people. These words remind us of God as our Good Shepherd, a strong yet tender protector and caregiver. Fear leads us towards thinking and feeling as if we are alone, which can result in responses which are reactionary and not representative of our true selves. When we remember the presence of God with us, we can respond faithfully.

PRAYER: Lord God, remind me today that you are with me. I am not alone or unprotected. You are with me in all things, and in you I trust. AMEN.

Tuesday – Luke 1: *“And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was much perplexed by his words and wondered what sort of greeting this might be.” Luke 1:28-29*

Throughout Scripture we find messengers from heaven having to preface their good news by imploring people to not be afraid. You can’t blame these people! How many of us would be able to stand in the presence of some divine entity and do little more than gawk, jabber, or run away? Probably not too many. Fear can be a natural response to encountering something we don’t know. God’s invitation to us is to not flee or fight, but to listen and receive.

PRAYER: Jesus, help me to remain in the moment when I encounter something unfamiliar. Open my eyes and my heart to receive the Good News you’d have me receive. AMEN.

Wednesday – Psalm 46: *“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10*

In his message on Sunday Pastor Brandon said, “Fear can paralyze us in the face of challenges or even bring our fears to fruition.” Paralysis isn’t helpful as we make decisions and respond, nor is mania as we try and regain a sense of control of our environment. God calls us to be still, but not stuck. Be still, take a breath, remember your God, remember the presence of the Holy Spirit within you.

PRAYER: Holy Spirit, come. Come and give me a spirit of strength and gentleness, sober-mindedness and goodwill towards others. Get rid of my self-doubt, and fill me with confidence in you. AMEN.

Thursday – Matthew 8: *“And they went and woke him up, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are perishing!’” Matthew 8:25*

The Biblical witness doesn’t ask us not to experience fear. Fear is one of the many emotions which make us who we are as created humans. Fear can be a good thing. Pastor Brandon reminded us fear comes from our perception of a threat. If an angry mama bear rears up on her hind legs while you’re walking on a trail, fear is going to lead you to run more quickly than you ever have before. The disciples in today’s reading had every right to experience the fear that comes with being a small fishing vessel during a tumultuous storm. When we are afraid, let’s cry out to God – God will hear our cries. Don’t suffer in silence.

PRAYER: Almighty God, you created me in your image, and I am grateful. You are my help and strength, and I give you thanks that when I am afraid, I can cry out to you, and you will listen. AMEN.

Friday – Psalm 56: *“You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record? Then my enemies will retreat in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me.” Psalm 56:8-9*

We do not have to plead our case before God in the midst of our suffering and fear. We don’t have to curry good favor by doing good works and practicing charity in order for God to hear our prayers. God is for us. This is the promise of Scripture throughout the Old and New Testaments. God is for us regardless of what we have or will do. We accept this grace and know that it binds us to God, and the more we grow in our faith, the more assurance we have in this truth.

PRAYER: O God, if you are for me, who could be against me? Help me to grow in your grace so that in each day and in every moment, I will trust that you are with me, and you desire love and goodness to reign in my life. AMEN.