

Do Not Be Afraid!

March 29, 2020 9:30 AM

As the world reels from an unprecedented global pandemic, we are also struggling with an epidemic of fear: Fears for our health and the health of our loved ones. Fears for our finances. Fears for our community, nation and world. Fears for our future.

The Lord has a word for us, and it's a message repeated 365 times in the Bible: "*Do Not Be Afraid.*" He calls us to find comfort, peace and hope in Him. In times of uncertainty and fear, we trust in the One whose love is certain and whose presence and promises overcomes all fear. But what does that mean? How do we find peace and hope and rest in Christ in such restless times?

Welcome

Our God, our help in ages past

Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

A thousand ages in your sight
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

Under the shadow of your throne
your saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is your arm alone,
and our defense is sure.

Our God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come:
O be our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home.

Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting you are God,
to endless years the same.

Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness
Our fallenness
God's grace to us in Jesus Christ

Scripture Readings and Sermon

God as Stronghold

Psalm 27:1

The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

Romans 8:32

Stronghold: _____

³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Isaiah 43:1-3a

Stronghold: _____

But now, this is what the LORD says—
he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel:
“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.
²When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
³For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

Romans 8:37-79

Stronghold: _____

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Isaiah 41:10

Promise: _____

So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

1 Peter 5:7

Promise: _____

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Luke 12:22-31

Promise: _____

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?
²⁷ “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Romans 8:28

Promise: _____

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

2 Timothy 1:7

Pursuing Peace: _____

⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Psalms 56:3-4

Pursuing Peace: _____

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.
⁴ In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid.

Philippians 4:6-8

Pursuing Peace: _____

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Hebrews 10:24-25

Pursuing Peace: _____

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Peter 5:8-9

Pursuing Peace: _____

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

John 16:33

Pursuing Peace: _____

³³ “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

It is well

When peace, like a river,
 Attendeth my way,
 When sorrows like sea billows roll;
 Whatever my lot,
 Thou hast taught me to say,
 It is well (it is well)
 with my soul (with my soul)
 It is well, it is well with my soul.

He lives—
 oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!—
 My sin, not in part but the whole,
 Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
 It is well (it is well)
 with my soul (with my soul)
 It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet,
 though trials should come,
 Let this blest assurance control,
 That Christ hath regarded
 my helpless estate,
 And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
 It is well (it is well)
 with my soul (with my soul)
 It is well, it is well with my soul.

And Lord,
 haste the day when our faith shall be sight,
 The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
 The trumpet shall resound,
 and the Lord shall descend,
 Even so, it is well with my soul.
 It is well (it is well)
 with my soul (with my soul)
 It is well, it is well with my soul.

Prayers

Please add your prayer requests to the live chat

Thanksgivings

Pastor: O Lord, we praise you
People: **Thanks be to God**

Petitions

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy
People: **Hear our prayer**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come,
 Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
 give us this day our daily bread;
 and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
 and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

*The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you
 The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace
 Amen.*

Cornerstone

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name

When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

*Christ alone cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Savior's love
Through the storm He is Lord, Lord of all*

When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless stand before the throne

For Reflection and Discussion

1. What are the greatest fears that you are struggling with at this time?
2. Which of the verses that we looked at today most spoke to you about dealing with fear?
3. What does the death and resurrection of Jesus say to us in our struggle with fear and anxiety?
4. What truths are most important for you to reflect on every day as you go through this crisis?
5. Which of the "pursuing peace" items is most helpful for you? Which ones would be good to make more of a practice in your life?

Offering

<http://stjohnslutheran.net/give/>

Blessing

The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.
Amen.