

YOU

Sermon Series: When Emotions Rise

To be used with: Session 2: Shaking Off Fear

Sermon Title Possibilities: Feeling Fearful

Scripture: Psalm 91:1-6,9-16

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study “*When Emotions Rise*,” this sermon explores how believers can handle situations that cause us to fear. When we feel fearful, we must stand on our faith in God.

Introduction: A number of things may cause us to fear. As children we may have feared what we imagined lurking in the dark, under the bed, or in a closet. When we become adults, feelings of fear may not subside, but rather find new sources. Keeping up with the news may stoke our fears as they relate to politics and the economy. In addition, some people in society prey upon our fears to further their own agendas.

In Psalm 91, the psalmist offers us an alternative way of dealing with fear. Rather than letting our fears overwhelm us, we can continue to trust in God. We have to be intentional about doing this, so that approaching problems in faith, rather than in fear, becomes our default response. We can train ourselves to focus on God and His protection.

1. Remain close to the shelter. (v. 1-6)

As the Most High, God is above anything that threatens us, so we are under His protection. Being under God’s protection enables us to rest, just as shade provides relief from the sun’s heat. God provides refuge in the midst of chaos and we must choose to find our shelter in Him. He is our fortress. In times of battle, fortresses provide protection. As our refuge and fortress, God is worthy of trust.

Those who are under God's care are safe from traps set for them and from plagues that may surround them. While God's protection is strong, it is also tender. Using the imagery of a bird, the psalmist asserts that God protects His people as a bird would protect its offspring. Things that normally cause fear such as the night, arrows, and disease need not terrify the people of God. We remain in God's care day and night.

2. Remember that you have support. (v. 9-13)

The psalmist reaffirms the key to experiencing protection. Consciously living one's life in God's presence provides safety. The problems of life will not overtake us. However, this is not an excuse to tempt God by acting in careless ways (Matthew 4:6-7). Instead we are to entrust ourselves to God according

to His will. When we do this, God surrounds us with His angels. They guard us and lift us up.

Alluding to the war imagery mentioned earlier, the psalmist declares that God will give the angels orders to protect His people. God does not remain passive and distant in the midst of our problems, but instead is active and near to us. Therefore, we do not have to fear the obstacles that could trip us up or harm us along the journey. We can rely on support from God as we serve Him.

3. Recognize the source of your salvation (v. 14-16)

Now God speaks. He affirms the assertions the psalmist has made and promises to save those who cling to Him. We must cling to God in our hearts. God loves us and desires our love in return. We must have a personal, intimate connection with God.

The Lord makes several promises regarding His children's calls to Him. God promises to answer, which in and of itself is a blessing, as it signifies that God is aware of us and is concerned. God promises to be with us in trouble. Problems will come, but we will not face them alone. God will deliver us and bless us. The Lord promises longevity and an opportunity to witness His salvation. During our lives, we repeatedly experience God rescuing us from dangers seen and unseen. The psalm ends as it begins, with believers safe in God's protection.

Conclusion: The Bible is full of examples of God intervening on his people's behalf in times of trouble. From the Red Sea, to the fiery furnace, to the lion's den, God steps into the chaos of life. Through Jesus, God intervened to rescue us from the power of sin. When we trust Him, then we have nothing to fear.

Antoine Wright earned a Master of Arts in Religious Studies from John Carroll University. He serves as an associate minister at Zion Baptist Church in Marietta, Georgia, where he was licensed and ordained for ministry. He is also a practicing attorney in the Atlanta area.