

God With Us 4 — ...So Do Not Fear

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Passages	Isaiah 41:10
Sermon Series	God With Us
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Introduction (Connection):

Good evening!

I have just a few minutes here tonight to attempt to wrap up the series we've been going through called "God With Us" where we've looked at the name and meaning of one of Jesus' many names, Immanuel, which means God With Us.

Tension:

And tonight I want to talk about fear.

Not the right kind of fears like the fear of heights that makes you cautious one the edge of a roof or drive slow in the snow.

I mean the kind of fear that keeps you restlessly turning on your bed late at night.

Can I ask you... are you fearful tonight?

Are you afraid of yet another fight with your spouse, or maybe never finding a spouse?

Are you afraid you'll never heal of the pain from what you lost or were never able to have?

Are you afraid of what may be coming now that the doctor has called and the tests came back positive?

You know what I'm afraid of?

I'm afraid of my life not amounting to more than a collection of gratified selfish desires.

I'm afraid of messing up my marriage and my kids because I can't seem to get work/life balance right.

Are you afraid?

Corrie Ten Boom is an evangelical Christian who is said to have saved over 800 Jewish refugees by hiding them in her home and was later arrested by Nazis and imprisoned in a concentration camp.

Do you think she'd be pretty well acquainted with fear, maybe even be considered an expert on the matter?

She once said "Worry is a cycle of inefficient thoughts whirring around a center of fear... Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength."¹

These kinds of fears fit more under the category of atheism than faith, don't they?

¹ Corrie Ten Boom, *Clippings from My Notebook*, accessed on Good Reads, available online at https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/102203.Corrie_ten_Boom [accessed online December 23, 2019].

Exposition:

Tonight, I want to end our series with a quick word on how God With Us can make us fearless.

I want to give you some fighting words the Bible offers, words you should paint on the walls of your home and by God's grace, chisel them into the tablets of your hearts.

It's just one verse.

Isaiah 41:10 — "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Here, we see two simple commands, things we are told to do or not do.

Do not fear, and do not be dismayed.

To be fearful is to be terrified, frightened, afraid.

To be dismayed in the Hebrew means "to dart glances this way and that" as if you're looking for safety and have no clue where to find it.²

It doesn't qualify what not to be fearful of or dismayed by, it just says don't do it.

So don't do it. All better? Did that ease your fears?

² J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 312.

It sounds like a counseling session with Bob Newhart... "Stop it! S. T. O. P. New Word I. T."³

God's a wee bit better of a counselor, isn't he?

Because he doesn't just give us the commands; they don't just hang in the air with no basis in reality.

If God commands us to do something, there are good reasons to do it, and the power to obey those commands comes from understanding and believing the reasons for those commands.

God gives five reasons to not fear or be dismayed.

"Do not fear..." Why?

"For I am with you!"

"Do not look anxiously about you..." Why?

"Because I am your God"

"I will strengthen you"

"Surely I will help you"

"Surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Personalize these.

I won't fear, I won't be dismayed. Why?

Because...

God is with me.

God is my God.

God will strengthen me.

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ow0lr63y4Mw>

God will help me.

God will uphold me.

Can't you see everywhere that God is in these promises?

God is with us = by our side.

God is our God = over us in all his sovereignty and power

God will strengthen us = from inside of us

God will help us = all around us from wherever the enemy comes.

God will uphold us = from underneath us.

God is beside us, over us, inside us, all around us, underneath us...

Therefore, do not fear! Do not be dismayed.

But what matter is it if God is with us... I mean who is he anyways? What's he done lately?

Think about it... if I'm the weight room looking to max out a Personal Record and I need a spotter, am I gonna pick the scrawny water boy nicknamed "Tiny Tim" to be the one standing over me and beside me to strengthen me and help me push that bar back up?

Or am I going to pick the 375 lb. lineman nicknamed "The Refrigerator" to be my spotter?

For this to mean anything to us enough to put to death our fear and dismay and make us fearless, God has to have a track record of showing up strong.

That is exactly what verses 1-9 right before this prove.

In those nine verses we see God pictured as the judge of every single nation in the world.

God rules the rulers of those nations and can wipe them out with just a word.

God brings whole nations into existence because he is the first and the last and His kingdom knows no end.

God chooses and calls people who are hopelessly far off from God and brings them near and freely lets him be their God.

This is the God who says to us who believe:

I am your God

I am with you.

I will strengthen you.

I will help you.

I will uphold you.

And boy did he prove this; he accomplished this all for us in Jesus Christ.

In Jesus, God is our God under a new covenant of grace.

In Jesus, God is with us (Immanuel)

In Jesus, God strengthens us to accomplish his will and stand against temptation.

In Jesus, God helps us to know his ways, to pray, and what to say.

In Jesus, God upholds us when we stumble and fall.

Therefore, do not fear!

Therefore — because I am the judge of the nations,

therefore — because I rule the rulers of history,

therefore — because I call nations into being,

therefore — because I choose freely my own,

therefore — because I — this great and sovereign God —

am your God, and
am with you, and
will strengthen you, and
will help you, and
will uphold you,
therefore, do not fear.

Can't you see why the angels first words to Mary and the Shepherds announcing the arrival of God With Us were the words, "Fear Not!"

Because Jesus marked the dawning of the age of fearlessness for the people of God because God is with us!

Application/Challenge:

So just like in Psalm 23, when we're walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we won't fear any evil, because God is with us.

God, the same God who can part seas with the breath from his nostrils, whose same breath can create life and topple empires...

This God has said, "I am with you."

I mean, what more can he say? What is something better he could say than that?

God is with us! What more can we ask for?

Do not fear.

I would like for you to repeat back to me the words "God is with me" after every sentence I say next.

Let's practice. When I say, "When I am afraid" you say... "God is with me."

When I cannot see the way ahead (God is with me)
When I am afraid of dying (God is with me)
When I doubt my own salvation (God is with me)
When I sin against God (God is with me)
When I am surrounded by my enemies (God is with me)
When I lose my own child (God is with me)
When I fail (God is with me)
When I can't find the answers (God is with me)
When I am alone (God is with me)
When I get the call and the test results are positive (God is with me)
When I can't make ends meet (God is with me)

Take heart, brothers and sisters.

Be fearless.

Jesus is born.

God is with us.

Conclusion (Cast Vision):

For those who are here tonight and you're skeptical of all of this,...

...or maybe you've stood on the edge of faith touching your toes to test the temperature but haven't jumped all in...

...or maybe you believe in a religion of some kind or that all religions are the same.

They're not the same; know why?

Because Christianity, this gospel, is the only faith that says God has come down to be with us.

No other god or gods have said this, no other religion is afforded the comfort, they only call for morality.

They all say, "Do this to come be with me," which only leaves us with fear of never measuring up.

Evangelical Christianity is the only faith where our God has said, "I have come to be with you not because of your goodness or merit, but because of my unstoppable love for you."

Only the gospel has the power to kill all fear.

Do not be afraid... God is with us.

When we're afraid of the dark, what does God do? He shines his light.

[Instruct on candle lighting portion]

[Family will sing first verse, then congregation joins in for remainder of song]

[When song is finished, blow out your candles, walk out quietly, as you are dismissed then to awake to the dawning of joyful celebration tomorrow morning]

[Thank you for coming]