

1. Our year of jubilee continues today with our talking about being freed from fear.
2. I have said it before, but the phrase “do not be afraid” or some variation of it is found 365 times in the bible. I don’t believe that is a random number. It sounds to me like God wanted us to be reminded every single day that we have nothing to fear.
3. And yet it is also a reminder that every single day our enemy will do his best to get us to live in fear.
4. But living in fear is not God’s plan for our lives, and because it is not his plan, he has made a way for us to live lives that are free from fear.

**TEXT:** **Psalm 46:1-3** God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. **2** Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, **3** though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

**TITLE:** **No fear**

**INTRO:**

1. I remember years ago listening to the story of Stanley Praitnath.
2. Stanley was one of only 18 people in the south tower who survived the world trade center attack on September 11, 2001.
3. He looked out the window of his office and saw flight 175 coming directly for him.
4. He dove under his desk and the wing of the plane lodged in a doorway only 20 feet from where he had been standing. He was bruised and covered in debris and if it had not been for another man hearing his cries for help, he might have never gotten out of the building alive.
5. You know I can’t imagine standing in an office building and seeing a plane coming right for me. I can’t imagine what it must have felt like when that plane impacted the building and exploded sending burning jet fuel in every direction.
6. I can’t imagine what it must have looked like when Stanley crawled from under his desk and realized that almost everything around him had been destroyed.
7. I can’t imagine how he must have felt when he reached the ground, the building came crashing down, and he realized that his life could have been lost that day.

8. I really can't say I understand any of that, but the truth is we don't have to understand any of it to understand fear.
9. All of us at one time or another have been overcome by feelings of intense fear.
10. King David, the writer of Psalm 46 would have been amazed by our modern-day buildings and technology and lifestyle. David's mind would have been on overload just to see a plane fly and to see a building with over 100 floors. None of what Stanley described would have made any sense to David except when Stanley started talking about fear. Fear, David understood.
11. It is with almost the same type of emotion and experience that David describes the things that can produce fear in our lives. In Psalm 46 David talks about the earth giving way and mountains falling into the sea. He talks about waters roaring and the mountains quaking and everything that is supposed to be stable being thrown out of place.
12. I shared with someone the other day an incident of going through an earthquake while I was in Costa Rica.
13. The instructor dove under a table. The wall flapped like a piece of paper in the wind.
14. Fear has the ability to do just that. Throw everything off balance. Fear can torment us and threaten to make us powerless.
15. When we are fearful, we don't think clearly. Fear can immobilize and paralyze us. It can rob us of our common sense; it even threatens to destroy our faith. Fear is a powerful thing.
16. I am extremely certain we could go around the room and out of our experiences we would encounter some of the most fearful circumstances any person could endure.
17. Some of you in this room were in the military and could describe fearful events of war that have forever altered your life.
18. Some in this room have experienced the loss of a spouse or a loved one and feelings of fear overwhelmed you as you wondered how will I ever be able to live without them.
19. Some here in this room have experienced trauma, physically, verbally or emotionally, and you know fear because every time the source of that trauma got near you were afraid.
20. Someone here today can't really point back to any particular experience that would cause almost uncontrollable fear to be present

in your life, but yet there it is. Sometimes the fear just overwhelms you for no particular reason.

21. David describes the terrible things that can occur in our life much like someone would describe an earthquake.
22. Earthquakes strike suddenly and without warning. Earthquakes cause you to be disoriented and not know which way is which. Earthquakes cause what is normally secure and strong to become weak and fragile. I know because I have lived through several earthquakes.
23. But it isn't an earthquake. That isn't what David was describing; he was describing the ability of life to just shake us sometimes.
24. But he also prefaces this description of life by saying Psalm 46:1-2 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear...
25. I don't know about you, but I can hear the resolve in David's voice and the confidence in his tone. God is our strength, God is our refuge, and God is our help in times of trouble.
26. The truth is troubling times come. The truth is fearful experiences happen in life, but it's as if David is saying no fear is too great for God. No shake-up is so terrible that I can't run to God. No circumstance is so frightening that God can't calm my fears.
27. It's like the little boy who called out in the middle of the night, daddy, daddy I'm afraid, I'm afraid.
28. What are you afraid of buddy? I don't know, I'm just afraid. So, the father climbs up in the bed and wraps his arms around the little boy and in just a moment the boy says, daddy you chased my fears away.
29. Well how do you know buddy? Because you're here now and my fears aren't.
30. Our heavenly father is here with us. Our heavenly father is able to chase away the fears that so suddenly try to overtake us.
31. But not all fears are sudden. Sometimes fears overtake us over a period of time.
32. We have talked before about the subject of strongholds. A stronghold is an area of our lives where the enemy hides, comes out every now and then to torment us, and then goes back into hiding.
33. Fear can become a stronghold in our life, but we have the power, through the Spirit of God to destroy any attack of fear.

34. How do we defeat fear? Recognize the difference between healthy and unhealthy fear. Rely on the presence of God.
35. First let's talk about...

### Healthy fear.

1. Remember we are talking about a subject that has the ability to become a stronghold in our life. When dealing with strongholds we know that the battle ground is the mind.
2. Fear becomes unhealthy when Satan has been allowed to twist and pervert the truth.
3. I love the song by Zach Williams. Fear is a liar.
4. Fear, he is a liar  
He will take your breath  
Stop you in your steps  
Fear, he is a liar  
He will rob your rest  
Steal your happiness  
Cast your fear in the fire  
'Cause fear, he is a liar
5. What is the truth? **The truth is there is such a thing as healthy fear.**
6. Fear is a normal human emotion and reaction. God created us with the ability to fear.
7. Fear is a survival instinct that helps us in times of danger. Scientists tell us that even as babies we possess the ability to be afraid when we sense that danger is around.
8. Healthy fear, or a healthy respect for things, serves to protect us. Many times, when we sense fear, it is a sign to us that danger is ahead, and it helps us prepare for that danger.
9. When I was a boy, we had several pigs that we raised. We had a sow that weighed about 550 pounds. She was huge.
10. She was in a stall with a boar and we were trying to load the boar and not the sow onto the truck. My dad gave me a piece of plywood and told me to block the shoot up into the truck and to only let the boar past and not the sow.
11. Well, I probably didn't weigh 125 pounds. I was no match for that sow. She started to run towards me and then circled away, back into the stall.
12. She started towards me again and every time I got a little more afraid.

13. She did that about 6 or 8 times and on the final time I guess she figured out; I can take that little skinny kid and she hit that piece of plywood and just ran right over me.
14. My dad asked me if I was ok and then directed me to pick my plywood back up and get back in my place. Now I want you to know I respected my dad. I would have done anything dad told me to do, but in that moment, I was more scared of the pig than I was of being disobedient to my dad.
15. I could be wrong, but it's possible my dad didn't think I was going to be able to block the doorway, but he wanted me to have a healthy respect for the animals we were working with.
16. As I got older, he was going to give me more responsibility. Later on, he would make me his partner and we made some money together. But in order to be successful I had to respect or have a healthy fear of those animals because that healthy respect would keep me from getting hurt.
17. Later on, I could be around those animals in almost any situation and be safe because I knew and understood proper boundaries.
18. Healthy fear helps us to know that some places and some things and even some people need to be off limits. We're not safe to be around them.
19. Mothers have a great way of just knowing when something is too risky. They listen to that little voice in their mind, and it helps them keep those they love safe.
20. God has designed and allowed a certain measure of healthy fear to exist inside us because he uses that healthy fear as a tool to guide us into the best that he has for our lives.
21. That is a healthy fear. But that also makes fear dangerous. Because too much fear can turn into an...

### **Unhealthy fear.**

1. The way Satan manipulates healthy fear and causes it to become unhealthy is by blurring the line between healthy and unhealthy.
2. Unhealthy fear is a fear that turns into anxiety. Anxiety is similar to fear but with one important difference. With anxiety there isn't actually anything happening right at the moment that should be causing that feeling.

3. Let's go back to my pig story. I was in the way of that pig. I needed to have a healthy fear or respect, because I was in the middle of a circumstance that had a great chance of doing me harm.
4. But now let's suppose two days later I am walking by the pig pen. That same sow is locked up secure inside the pen. There is no way she can get out. I am safe, but I walk by and see her, and I become anxious.
5. I really don't have any reason to be anxious but I just am. Why am I anxious, I am anxious about something that could happen, even though there is no present danger.
6. That fear just became unhealthy. I'm not in danger. I have no reason to suspect that the pig can get out, but I'm uneasy and I'm anxious and I am not comfortable,
7. That fear just moved from being a healthy tool to protect me into being an unhealthy fear that has the potential to hurt and control me.
8. Some people have an unpleasant experience happen in their life and for years to come they become anxious every time they think about it because they are afraid it could happen to them again, even though there is no reason to suspect it will.
9. I want to pause for a moment because I feel like I have reached a place where I need to clarify something.
10. I want to be clear that I am not putting down any person, or making light of the fears that can overcome our lives.
11. I believe that trauma exists, and I believe that if that trauma is severe enough, it can cause PTSD, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
12. Now because I am not a qualified counselor on the subject, I don't want to go further there, but I just want to be clear that I am not blaming the one who deals with fear. Many times, our fears are based on things that happened to us that were entirely out of our control.
13. What I want to declare is that I believe there is a loving God who longs to bring healing from those fears.
14. Ok disclaimer over.
15. Sometimes we become anxious about things that God has promised to protect us from. God has promised us that he will take care of us in a certain situation and that everything will be ok, but yet we are still plagued by fear.

16. That fear is unhealthy, and it is a result of the lie of the enemy. It is a result of the enemy's attacks on our minds.
17. And the tendency might be to think, well it's just fear, and it only affects me, but that too is a lie of the enemy.
18. It isn't just fear, and it doesn't just affect you. If fear is left to grow it can become a stronghold that affects other parts of your life and other people in your life.
19. Unhealthy fear can cause us to become insecure, which can cause us to become angry and to inappropriately lash out at people.
20. I used to think that people who lash out and react that way were just bold and brash, I learned later that most of the time those reactions are driven by fear.
21. Sometimes my own reactions are driven by fear. Unhealthy fear will mess us up. It will hinder and destroy our relationships with those we love. Fear is dangerous.
22. But there is a remedy for fear.

### **The presence of God.**

1. David had discovered something in his topsy tervy life. He had discovered that the most wonderful antidote for fear is the presence of God.
2. That's why he says in **Psalm 46:1-2** God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. **2** Therefore we will not fear.
3. **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?
4. I love this verse of scripture because we find that while the enemy is attempting to set up a destructive stronghold of fear in our life, we also find that Jesus is trying to set up a protective stronghold of his presence in our life.
5. David knew all about strongholds. He had fought against many of them, and he had even stayed in some of them.
6. But now he saw the presence of God like a stronghold in his life. He saw the presence of God like a walled city that would protect him from the attacks of the enemy.
7. He saw the presence of God as a place that he could run to and be saved from the fears and the earthquakes of this life.

8. That's why David says in Psalm 91:1-2 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, *He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.*
9. That word trust is a powerful word. David says, I will trust in God.
10. At its root, Satan uses fear in our lives to try and convince us that God cannot be trusted.
11. But his goal is not just to make us miserable, living in fear, his ultimate goal is to isolate and cut us off from the very presence of God that has the ability to calm and heal our fears.
12. But remember, fear is a liar. Satan is a liar. And the way we combat lies is by exposing the lies to the truth.

### Conclusion:

1. So, what is the truth about fear.
2. The very fact that Satan uses fear as a tool in our lives to try and keep us from trusting God, is proof that God can in fact be trusted.
3. If God couldn't be trusted, our enemy wouldn't need to work at all to convince us of it. If God couldn't be trusted, pretty soon we would figure that out all on our own.
4. But the fact that Satan is continually telling is that God can't be trusted, is in fact the proof that he can be trusted.
5. And *it is in God's presence that we know God can be trusted.*
6. When I was growing up, we sang a song titled, in the presence of Jehovah.
7. I loved that song because it reminds us that...
8. In God's presence fear can't exist. In God's presence fear doesn't have air to breathe.
9. In God's presence the lies of the enemy are exposed. In God's presence the line between healthy and unhealthy fear becomes clear.
10. In God's presence what was once confusing becomes understandable. In God's presence anxiety turns into calm. In God's presence worry is transformed into peace.
11. In God's presence the earthquakes of life become the calmest of seas.
12. The antidote for fear is the presence of God.
13. But I thought God is always with us. I thought God's presence is everywhere. I thought God never leaves us nor forsakes us. All those things are true, but in times of fear we can lose sight of the fact that his presence is real and tangible, and touchable.



14. In times of fear, we have to intentionally seek for and desire his supernatural presence.
15. Would you stand with me right now and would you join me in intentionally seeking the tangible presence of God.
16. Ask the Holy Spirit to make God's presence real to you right now.
17. Would you ask the Holy Spirit to show you any sins or attitudes that would hinder your experiencing the presence of God?
18. If you are experiencing fear, raise your hand so we can pray with you.