



# How to Be Faithful in a World of Chaos

ISAIAH 8-9

SERMON BASED SMALL GROUPS

Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Today's Lesson

Today's lesson is based on the sermon from Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025, by Pastor Tim Brigham. This message continues our series on the book of Isaiah.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of today's lesson is to help us understand that God has called us to be faithful when our tendency is to put our focus on circumstances and become overwhelmed by the chaos in the world we live in.

### MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 9:6 – For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

### MONDAY DEVOTION – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Remember the prophecy to Ahaz last week in Isaiah 7:14-16, when God gave the sign that Ahaz refused to ask for. King Ahaz's sign was to be a child born of a virgin, named Immanuel, and before he reached a certain age, the nations that Ahaz so feared would be deserted.

Isaiah 8 and 9 is God continuing to speak to King Ahaz, in spite of Ahaz being wicked and wanting nothing to do with God. God is a speaking god. God is saying, "Don't fear. Trust God."

Isaiah's first wife dies, he remarries a young woman who was never married, never had a child (a virgin), and she gives birth to a son and names him Immanuel, but God instructs Isaiah to name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means "the spoil speeds, the prey hastens." For Ahaz, this is the child of the prophecy.

The point of this intro and background is this: God shares His Word and God keeps His Word. God kept His word to Ahaz, and within a few years the nations Ahaz so feared were wiped out, just as God said they would be.

Judah celebrates the apparent victory and even claims it as their own, only to discover that Assyria, the country they put their hope in, is actually their oppressor. When we turn to things other than God, they become our prisons, our addictions, and our failures.

*TUESDAY DEVOTION – DON'T CALL EVERYTHING A CONSPIRACY – ISAIAH 8:11-12*

We live in a world where we don't trust anyone to give us the straight truth. We have come to distrust various media outlets (with good reason), and the result is that we are bombarded with all sorts of competing information and opinions. Most of the time we're not sure who to believe. This has given rise to all sorts of conspiracy theories in our world today. If you search very long on the internet, you can find someone who will tell you almost anything you believe is actually a vast conspiracy. I'm not here to tell you which things are conspiracies and which are true. Isaiah tells us we shouldn't exhaust ourselves chasing after all the conspiracies the world tells us exist because our confidence doesn't come from knowing who is lying to us, it comes from knowing what is ultimately true. If we stick by the Lord, the conspiracies are irrelevant.

We live as though the world is out to get us and as if the world is determined to make sure the church never succeeds. But who is in charge? Remember what God uses crises to do? The trials and tribulations we face in this world are part of God's plan for our growth and other's redemption.

*WEDNESDAY DEVOTION – DON'T LIVE IN DREAD OF WHAT FRIGHTENS YOU – ISAIAH 8:11-12*

News media outlets (and politicians, advertisers, salespeople, etc.) have learned that fear motivates people more effectively than many other things. So most forms of media come up with endless reasons for us to live in fear. There is a saying in the news "if it bleeds, it leads." Fear gets people worked up and causes us to seek out people who can alleviate our fears. Of course, the savior being held out to us is usually some political candidate, cause, or product.

There is always something new the world tells us to be afraid of. Once the thing we were supposed to be afraid of last week stops being scary, they find something new for you to fear this week.

Just looking at the last couple of years we've been told to fear a virus, vaccines, not getting vaccinated, the danger of not wearing masks, the dangers of wearing masks, the loss of freedom, civil war, world war, the collapse of the economy, and any number of other things. Our challenge is not to decide which of these things is right to fear, it's to focus on being obedient to the Lord in all things instead.

**Isaiah's principle is simple: it is always better to do what the Lord tells us, even when everyone else tells us it is foolish.**

*THURSDAY DEVOTION – FEAR THE LORD – ISAIAH 8:13*

God tells Isaiah not to fear what the world does, but to fear the Lord instead. We don't like the idea of fearing the Lord, because we recognize that He is loving and gracious to us. He certainly is, but we should also recognize that He is not someone to be trifled with. The Lord is a powerful ally, but He can also be a powerful enemy. We must examine our lives to see on which side of the fence we are living. We should live with a holy fear of God and do what He says. We must fear the Lord more than we fear anything the world can do to us.

What does it mean to fear God? I'm not to live afraid of God, but I'm to live with such respect of God that I live according to His ways.

Self-Evaluation: What is your first action when you enter a crisis? What is your attitude when you're being tempted or tested? How do you respond to someone challenging or ridiculing your beliefs? Do your actions in these kinds of circumstances demonstrate that you fear God?

Read Matthew 10:28 and think about how fearing God relates to how we handle sin. Read Proverbs 29:25 and think about who you live in greater fear of; men or God?

*FRIDAY DEVOTION – PRESERVE THE TEACHING OF THE LORD – ISAIAH 8:13*

Isaiah knew that many people would not listen to what the Lord said, but that didn't mean he could stop speaking on His behalf. Isaiah's job (and ours) is to hold out the truth to the world. Our world longs to have truth but continually finds it out of reach. The truth they are looking for cannot be found on CNN or Fox News. It will not be found in the latest scientific research or in the latest trends in psychology or medicine. It will not be found in the popular opinion of our society. It is only found in the word of God. When we, as Christians, focus on proclaiming anything else more loudly than we do the teaching of the Lord, we are failing in our duties, and we are leading others astray. Our focus should be to preserve the teaching of the Lord both in our lives and in the lives of those around us. God's Word is the only truth on which we can rely.

Isaiah tells us that those who fear the Lord will be kept safe by Him, but to many others, He will be a stone that makes them stumble and a rock that makes them fall. People claim to want the truth, but often we really only want truth that coincides with what we already believe. As such, many people, when confronted with the truth, reject it because they don't like it. As Christians we must be careful not to make this mistake. We must look intently into God's word and see what it says. When what God says goes against what we believe, we must change. If we choose to ignore the difficult teachings of scripture, the things we don't like, or the things we would rather weren't there, then we too will find ourselves tripped up by the Lord rather than protected by Him.

We sing of millions groping at darkness - how do we dispel the darkness? How do we live out the Fear of the Lord and Preserve His teaching?

### ***SATURDAY DEVOTION – PRESERVE THE TEACHING OF THE LORD – ISAIAH 8:13 – STUDY AND SHARE***

- 1. Study the Bible for yourself and diligently work to align your life with God's truth.**

If we want to stand on the side of the Lord, then we need to align our hearts with His. This means we should be people of the book. We should spend time daily reading our bibles—not to get through a reading plan, but to understand what God tells us about how we should be living our lives. As you see things in the scriptures that are hard or that challenge what you believe, don't simply gloss over them. Stop, pay attention, and strive to put them into practice, even if they are hard. When the scriptures show us, we need to change, we need to change. If we live this way, we need not fear any enemy, because we are on the side of the Lord.

- 2. Share the hope of the gospel to those around you.**

Everyone seems to agree that our world isn't as it should be, but we disagree on what the solution is. There is only one hope and one solution and that is Jesus Christ. We need to devote far more energy to pointing people to Jesus than we do trying to convince them of our political beliefs, the conspiracies we believe, or whatever other soapbox we may choose to stand on. If we are pointing people somewhere other than Jesus, we are sending them to grope in the darkness.

We have hope, we have truth, we have light! That light is Jesus Christ alone.<sup>1</sup> He is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace! So, we must share Him with the world.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERMON BASED SMALL GROUPS

1. Use the sermon notes you have taken along with this handout to discuss the sermon with your family in your home as part of your daily devotions.
  - We would love to hear about conversations you have in your home around the table with your family – how is the Bible impacting your daily lives?
  
2. Use these resources to help you apply the sermon in your daily life, at work, school, home, at Walmart and Waffle House, etc. Remember, sermons aren't events to be attended. The Word is not for information, it is for transformation. The sermon is meant to be obeyed.
  - Talk with your family about how to successfully apply the sermon in your daily life. Look for “teachable moments” when real life events happen and discuss how we should react and respond according to Scripture.
  - When you are successful at applying Scripture in a real-life situation, share it with one another.
  
3. Use these resources and your daily experiences with your small group the following week; discuss what God showed you through applying the sermon; discuss how you have grown, and areas you are struggling and want the small group to pray for you in and hold you accountable.
  - Be a confidant for your fellow class members. Don't' ever let a matter of prayer become a morsal of gossip. Be trustworthy and watch how God uses your integrity and faithfulness as a group to help you grow closer to Him and to one another.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://sermons.logos.com/sermons/880899-hope-in-dark-times-isaiah-8>