

I GIVE UP!



Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Worry/Fear | March 13, 2022
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue a series we're calling *I Give Up!* This series is inspired and informed by the season of Lent, the forty-day journey to Easter, which invites us to ask ourselves where we need to "wave the white flag" in order to follow Jesus more closely.

This week, let's give up letting *fear/worry* control our lives – let's release, with the Holy Spirit's help, these honest and real emotions to Jesus, who promises to "fight our battles."

7 *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. 8 With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." 2 Chronicles 32.7-8*

II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever thought, "If I could just turn back or turn forward time....?" If so, why?

What do you think are the top 3 things people (and maybe you) worry about today?

What scriptures can you humbly share with others that the Holy Spirit has drawn you to reflect on in personal times of fear/worry/anxiety?

III. Study the Text

- a. Read **2 Kings 18.1-8**. (I encourage you to read ahead of time, **Chapters 18 & 19** to better understand the larger context of the challenge that is before King Hezekiah....)

If God can raise up for Judah a reformer king like Hezekiah, what does that imply for the future of God's spiritual kingdom? How can this scriptural witness help us learn live into hope and peace of Jesus, and not fear?

- b. Also read **2 Chronicles 32.1-23** (This is the "Cliff Note's version" of the **2 Kings** story....)

How did King Hezekiah deal with the crisis before him? What strikes you about these preparations?

What tactics did Sennacherib use to undermine the morale of Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem? How was the invasion actually defeated? Did Hezekiah play any role in it? Did he get credit for it?

Facing any "Sennacheribs" in your life right now? How can those you share/live in community with, help you prepare to "defend yourself"?

IV. Prayer Exercise

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives



39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. (from **Luke 22**)

Reflect

How have you imagined Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? Have you also been influenced by traditional paintings or pictures of the scene, in which Jesus appears serene, almost above it all?

What difference does it make to you that Jesus felt deep anguish as he prayed?

Do you really believe Jesus "gets" you in a deep way? (Even when you might be struggling with fear/worry?) Why or why not?

Pray Together:

Lord Jesus, I have so many thoughts and feelings as I read about your time of prayer in the garden. I can't even begin to imagine the anguish you felt, knowing what was coming for you. As horrible as that anguish was for you, I'm grateful that you were fully human, so that you could feel pain and suffering. Not that I wish this on you, Lord! But I am so thankful that you know our suffering and pain, my suffering and pain. You understand my weakness, my humanity.

Thank you for knowing me in this way. And thank you for loving me even so. Amen

V. Digging Deeper

- a. Do you ever doubt that God is in charge of history and of the world today (His sovereignty)?
- b. What has God promised in your life? Take time to meditate on God's faithfulness and what Scripture tells us about his reliability to fulfill all His promises? What Bible verses come to mind?
- c. Has God ever "tested" you? Have you ever "tested" Him (by trusting in His promises)? How has acting in faith been risky for you? How have you grown in your faith and understanding of Jesus?
- d. *Longing. Hoping. Lamenting. Trusting. Resting.* These past two years have been a mixture of the hard and the beautiful for many of us. We are longing for our Savior. We can rest in the knowledge that He loves us and is with us during these difficult times. Share with one another what these (above) five words bring to your heart and mind today...
- e. What fear/anxiety/worry do you need to release (give up!) into the hands of Jesus?

