

Small Group Guide

THE VICTORY OF JESUS CHRIST OVER ALL OUR FEARS

The Church at Brook Hills,

Deric Thomas

September 9, 2012

Psalm 46

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

The Victory of Jesus Christ Over All Our Fears Psalm 46

[15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into **fear**, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! **Father!**" (Rom. 8:15)

I. The troubles, pain, suffering, and fears in this life are real because of the Fall.

1. The Fall affected nature.
2. The Fall affected people.
 - A. The Fall affected you and me.

II. The only ultimate solution to our troubles, pain, suffering, and fears in this fallen world is God.

1. He alone is our true and lasting refuge.
 - A. We need His protection.
2. He alone is our true and lasting strength.
 - A. We need His power.
3. He alone can truly help us in the real troubles of life.
 - A. We need His peace.
 - a. Because of God's trustworthiness and love, we do not have to fear our past, present, or future.

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b. Because of God's protection and power, we can have untouchable security, peace, and deep joy (eternal life and abundant life).

III. The Son of God has overcome all of our troubles, pain, suffering, and fears.

1. Jesus faced all the troubles, pain, suffering, and fears we face during His life on earth, and unlike us, fully trusted in the Father and never sinned.
2. Jesus faced our greatest evil enemies on the cross and personally fought them for us as our Warrior King.
3. Jesus defeated all our enemies by triumphing over them in His resurrection from death.
4. Jesus has been ultimately and finally victorious over satan, sin, death, and eternal suffering.
5. Jesus is not only with us as Christians, but He is also in us.

IV. Thinking deeper about our fears...

1. What are your greatest fears?
2. I am tempted to look ultimately to _____ as my refuge/protector when I am scared.
3. I am tempted to look ultimately for strength/power in _____ when I feel weak.
4. I am tempted to look ultimately to _____ to help me deal with the sufferings of life.
5. The person or thing you are tempted to ultimately take refuge in, trust in, or hope in when you are afraid could be an idol of the heart.

V. Application

1. When fears come, run to God.
 - A. Pray
 - B. Read, remember, and think about God's Word.
 - C. Sing
 - D. Worship and fellowship with the Church.
 - E. Look for ways to faithfully and lovingly serve others.
2. When you give into sinful fears confess your sin, rest in Christ's love, righteousness, and forgiveness, and keep your eyes on Jesus.
3. When you feel weak ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit.
4. Remember that no matter what comes your way, you always have hope because of what Jesus Christ has done for you. Always!

Message Summary

Troubles, pain, suffering, and fear exist as realities in this life because of the Fall of humanity, and the only solution is God. His Son Jesus Christ defeated all of our enemies through His death and resurrection, and because He has overcome, we are more than conquerors through Him. In response to our fears, we should reflect on whether we are turning to God for help or to other things or people, and we should confess any sin regarding how we have responded to fear and rest in the hope, forgiveness, and love of Jesus Christ.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Read Genesis 3:14-19. What are consequences of the Fall are listed in these verses? How has the Fall affected nature and people? How has the Fall affected you?
- What are your greatest fears? What types of things do you get anxious about? What causes you to fret and to worry? How do you battle fear and anxiety?
- What are you tempted to look to as your refuge and protector when you are scared? What do you rely and depend on for security? How have you dealt with fear in the past? How can you transform fear into faith in the Lord?

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- In reading Psalm 46:1, what words or images come to mind with the word “refuge”? What does it mean for God to be a refuge? The phrase “a very present help” expresses that God has proved Himself reliable in times of trouble. How has God been a refuge in your own life? Praise Him together for how He has provided strength and protection in times past and how this enables us to trust Him for the future.
- What are you tempted to look to for strength and power when you feel weak?
- What are you tempted to look to for help in dealing with the sufferings of life? Pray for those in the small group who are facing trials. Pray for them to experience God’s peace, to keep their eyes on Him, and to walk in faithfulness.
- Read Psalm 46:4-7. What is the primary message of these four verses? Though the earth gives way and kingdoms totter (Ps. 46:2, 6), the city of God shall not be moved (Ps. 46:5). The strength of God’s city (Jerusalem) and God’s people does not depend on anything other than God Himself. All of creation must obey His voice. How should this encourage us as believers?
- What are the implications of the two descriptions of God (“LORD of hosts” and “God of Jacob”) in Psalm 46:7? What is the significance of describing the “LORD of hosts” as the one who is with us and the “God of Jacob” as the one who is our fortress?
- Read Psalm 46:8-9. Psalm 46:8 invites people to behold how the Lord has brought desolation to the earth. Why is this something that we should consider? Throughout history, how has He made wars to cease? How has He broken the bow, shattered the spear, and burned the chariots with fire? How should this affect our understanding and view of God? Notice that these two verses emphasize how *God* has done these actions, and *He* is the one who is bringing peace.
- God alone can bring peace in our lives. How has the Son of God overcome all our troubles, pain, suffering, and fears? Discuss the theology and the implications of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Rom. 5; Rom. 8; Eph. 1:19-2:22; Heb. 4:14-16).
- What is the context of Psalm 46:10? Who is this command directed to? The people of God are to acknowledge His authority and claims because He is the high and lofty One. In light of this verse and this chapter, how should you respond when troubles, pain, suffering, and fears come?
- In the sermon, Deric Thomas encouraged us to run to God, which involves: prayer, reading and reflecting on Scripture, singing to God, worshipping and fellowshiping with the Church, and serving others. Are you doing these things? Which of these are a go-to for you when you are tempted to fear?
- What are the gifts God has given to you? How are you using those gifts to serve the Body? How are you using those gifts to serve outside of the Body?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today’s study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)

- *Church: Praise God for being our refuge and strength. Ask for His help as we face the troubles of this world. Pray we would seek to rely on God's presence with us and power over all rather than our own strength and skills. Pray the peace we can know through God will translate into confident witness among the nations. Pray eagerly for the day when God will be known among all peoples. Ask for His guidance in how you personally should be involved in sharing the gospel among unreached people groups.*
- *Local: As we return to the fall season, the lives of mothers get busier, and they have more opportunities to share the gospel and to influence others. Please pray this week for the mothers in our congregation. We are also praying this week for Valleydale Church, Dan Hall, Interim Pastor.*
- *Global: This week we are praying for Brook Hills partner Nathan and Keri S. serving in South Asia. Nathan oversees a team of Long-Term personnel who are engaging unreached peoples and planting churches among those being saved. The Church at Brook Hills has been a strategic partner with Nathan's team to see believers equipped and pastors trained so the church can be established, strengthened, and the gospel can go forward in this area. We are also praying for short-term teams serving in East Asia and South Asia.*