**Faith Over Fear During This Pandemic**

1. **Introduction**
* This came from a Bible reading plan from christinityworks.com with Bernie Diamond doing the teaching.
* I understand how serious this is and the responsibility that I have been given so my goal today is to share this lesson from God’s word in such a way that everyone can take away something that will help them get through this very difficult time.
1. **Don’t Be Afraid**
* All we hear is how bad things are during this pandemic which makes it hard to not be afraid or have fear.
* We hear about the stock market crashing, retirement savings evaporating, businesses failing and a large number of the population losing their jobs and or their income.
* The Bible tells us that God is in control and to have faith in Him!
* Seek the Lord, He will answer you and deliver you from all your fears! (Psalm 34:4)
* My desire today is provide scriptures from God’s word that will encourage each of us and give us the confidence to trust in the Lord during this difficult time!
* Life application questions:
	+ Take a moment to step back and think about how you are coping with this pandemic?
	+ On a scale of 0 – 10 (0 – sheer panic… 10 – complete peace), how well are you really coping?
	+ What specifically are the things that worry you the most?
	+ Read Psalm 34 and list the 3 most important promises that you hear God speaking into your heart through His Word.
	+ Take some time to pray on the specific concerns that you have.
1. **He Has It Covered**
* How strong is your faith during this difficult time?
* With this Corona virus unfolding the way it has, people are dying from it. Are you concerned about catching it?
* We know that this pandemic is very serious and we should be taking all the sensible precautions (social distancing, washing hands thoroughly, wearing a mask, etc.).
* The reality is that some people will lose their livelihood, some will get sick and some will die from this virus.
* The important thing to remember as we go through this very difficult time is that God wrote down all the days of our life before we were even born – today, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year.
* What is happening in the world right now is no surprise to God, He knows everything that will happen to each of us from the day we were born until the day we die. He has it all covered!
* Let’s all be sensible regarding this pandemic, but let’s not be afraid!
* Read Psalm 139:16
* How can we stand firm in our faith?
* Lets look at some steps we can take to not get caught up in the fear:
* Life application questions:
	+ How strong do you feel in your faith right at this moment? Why do you think that is?
	+ What does your reaction to the coronavirus pandemic tell you about your faith in Jesus?
	+ After reading Psalm 139:16… What are the implications of God having written all the days that were formed for you, before you lived your first day of life?
	+ Take some time to pray that God will write these powerful truths on your heart!
1. **The Big Shut Down**
* Churches have suspended their worship services for many weeks, people are quarantined in their homes due to the stay at home order and until just recently most businesses were closed due to this virus.
* How are you handling all of this?
* People are retreating into a shell of self-interest and self-protection which is very understandable.
* There is a huge opportunity for us right now as children of God - what the world needs is for God’s people to step up and show our faith, the calm confidence, assurance and peace we have in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!
* When people see this in us, they are going to want to know how and why we are acting in this manner and then we can share the good news about Jesus and how he died for each and every one of us!
* We need to always remember that God is with us during difficult times. Let us do all that we can to be an encouragement to those around us who are struggling with fear.
* Life application questions:
	+ Picture the faces of people you see who need encouragement and confidence in the midst of this pandemic…
	+ Is the way you are carrying yourself encouraging them toward, or draining them of confidence in God?
	+ Let’s open our Bibles and read Proverbs 14:26-27. What is God speaking to your heart about how you can have confidence?
	+ If you lived this way, what do you think other people would see in you?
	+ What specific opportunities do you have to share the hope that you have in Jesus Christ with the people around you?
1. **Will It Impact Me?**
* The big question that we all have during this pandemic is, how will it impact me?
* There has already been a great deal of suffering during this pandemic, people have died, people have lost their jobs or businesses. There is still more to come.
* This can strike fear in the hearts of all people, even those who believe in Jesus Christ!
* Let’s read Matt. 14:22-33 – where Jesus walks on the water
* Are we as God’s children going to step back or we will step out in faith as Peter did?
* Life application questions:
	+ Be completely honest with yourself – how much is your self-interest, your instinct for self-preservation, dominating your thinking at the moment?
	+ How much do you relate to the picture of the Disciples (who had just seen Jesus feed the 5,000) huddled in the boat in fear for their lives?
	+ What does it mean for you, in the midst of this terrible storm, for Jesus to come walking towards you on this violent sea?
	+ Do you relate more to Peter as he stepped out of the boat in the midst of the storm, or to the other eleven Disciples?
	+ Let us spend time in prayer asking the Lord to give us the courage to step out of the boat in faith in the midst of this pandemic!
1. **The Power Of Prayer**
* Most people turn to prayer when they are really struggling or facing dire circumstances. We can be sure that there are a lot more people praying now than there were before this coronavirus pandemic started.
* Prayer was never meant to be a last resort!
* The only type of prayer we find in the God’s word is the type that brings powerful results. So we have to approach the throne of God boldly and with confidence to make our petition to Him!
* When we are surrounded by fear, we must remember to pray to God! It’s so easy to forget this crucial part in our relationship with Jesus.
* When we are facing trials and tribulations, we tend to try and battle them ourselves but must always remember that we have Jesus on our side to help us in this battle!
* Prayer plays a key part in our faith and can help ease the fear we are facing.
* Life application questions:
	+ What’s your usual approach to prayer? To pray in times of trouble… or to pray through the good times and bad times?
	+ How are we reacting during this difficult time, are we using prayer to help us deal with all the concerns we are facing?
	+ Let us read Heb. 4:14-16… What is God saying to you?
	+ Set some time aside – quiet and unhurried time – to pray to God. Let us come boldly before the throne of God to allow Him to fill us with His confidence and love!
1. **Conclusion**
* We are facing a very difficult time in our country and throughout the world during this pandemic, a time like most of us have never seen before.
* We must remember though that God has already written down every day of our life before we came into this world and no matter what happens, He will take care of us, He always has in the past and he will in the future!
* Let us put our trust and confidence in our Father in Heaven and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!
* If you have never obeyed the Gospel and become a child of God, there is no better time to do it than right now. Please contact the Elders or Terry or any of the men and we will help you to do this.