

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

**“WATER WAYS:
“WATER” YOU AFRAID OF?”**

Throughout life we are afraid of things. As children it may be the monster in the closet, as adults it may be the threat of unemployment or rising crime rate. Whatever fear there is, God can help. This week we will learn how to bring our fears to Him.

DAY 1

Today's Scripture:

Isaiah 43:1; Jeremiah 1:5

The Word

Is there someone who knows you really well? Maybe it is a spouse, friend, or relative who can tell what you are feeling just by looking at you. Or perhaps you are the type who hides your feeling so no one truly knows how you think or feel. Others are just the opposite, sharing their emotions with everyone. No matter your personality type, God knows your heart. He is well acquainted with you because He created you.

Isaiah 43:1a

*¹ But now, this is what the LORD says—
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not..."*

Verse 1: God created you. He knows all about you. He understands you more than you understand yourself. He knew you before you even came to be.

Jeremiah 1:5

*⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."*

Verse 5: Before your conception, the Lord knew your personality, everything you would do in life, your birthday and even your date of death. He realizes what you are afraid of. He is fully aware of what you are facing in life. This God wants to tell you "Fear not."

Please note that God does not say, "If you are feeling brave, then do not be afraid" or "Try to not think about it" or "I wish you wouldn't be fearful". He does not give options. He gives a command. "Fear not." The same God who tells us not to commit adultery, not to lie, not to steal, not to gossip tells us not to fear.

How can we not be afraid? The situation has not changed. We are still facing a looming problem of some sort. How do we obey this command? By changing our focus.

Isaiah 43:1b

*"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine."*

Verse 1: When we look at our problems, they are magnified into giant monsters ready to attack us. When we look at our God, He is magnified as our Redeemer, Savior, and Father.

Redeem means to "buy back". You were enslaved to satan. With His precious blood, Jesus redeemed you from eternal death. He cherished your life and valued you so much that He gave His life for you. Would your Redeemer fail to help you in your difficult circumstances now?

A Savior is someone who saves. Jesus saved us from our sins by taking our sin upon Himself on the cross. He chose to save you. Before time began, He picked you out, He called your name and said, "That one right there, I am going to save that one." If He would make the ultimate sacrifice to save you for eternity, would He not save you from your present problems?

He is your Father, your Parent. He has done everything to prove His affection for you. Would you trust His love for you?

Up Close and Personal

Praise your Creator, Redeemer, Savior, and Father. Lavish affection on Him for all He has done for you.

In the back of most Bibles is a section called a "concordance". In it, you can look up a word and it will tell you places in the Bible where the word is found. It will give you an abbreviated listing of the name of the book plus the chapter and the verse. For example, if I looked up the word "fear" the first listing in my concordance is "Dt 6:13". Near the beginning of my Bible there is a page called "abbreviations" so I can discover that Dt stands for "Deuteronomy". (You can locate your abbreviation page by looking at the Table of Contents). The numbers "6:13" means chapter 6, verse 13. By using your concordance, find verses on Redeemer, Savior, and Father. Write the ones that are meaningful to you below.

DAY 2

Today's Scripture:

Isaiah 43:2; Job 1:8, 4:7-9, 42:7-9

The Word

I have to tell you the truth: problems will come your way. From minor incidents to overwhelming situations, you will face difficult times. Often we question why hardships come into our lives. As believers, we feel like somehow we should be shielded from pain. That is not a biblical principle. We live in a fallen world. Believers and unbelievers alike suffer in this world. However, when believers suffer we are not alone.

Isaiah 43:2

*² When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.*

Verse 2: There is one verse in there that sums up life's reality for us: "when". It is not "if" you go through difficult times it is "when" you go through them. You will pass through water and fire in life. You may not know the exact time of their arrival, but you can expect that they will arrive.

The following thought is true but it may not feel too comforting: problems will come, it is just a matter of time. But let it comfort you in the fact that it happens to everyone. Often we feel so alone when we suffer through a trial. Often our loneliness is magnified because we act as if believers should not face tough issues. This lie has been believed for thousands of years. Job was told the same thing.

Job was a righteous man who loved God and His family. Yet, this man faced mind-boggling tragedy. In one day all of his children die, all of his wealth is stolen, and most of his servants were murdered. Not long after that, his health deteriorated to the point of him having boils all over his body. I would call that a difficult season in life, wouldn't you?

If Job was not already struggling enough, some "friends" come to encourage him. This is what they told him.

Job 4:7-9

⁷ *"Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished?
Where were the upright ever destroyed?"*

⁸ *As I have observed, those who plow evil
and those who sow trouble reap it.*

⁹ *At the breath of God they are destroyed;
at the blast of his anger they perish.*

Verse 7-9: Basically his friends told him that the reason that all this bad stuff happened in his life was because he was being punished by God. Yet, they were wrong. God Himself had called Job righteous.

Job 1:8

⁸ *Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."*

Verse 8: Even the righteous face difficult times. Do not feel that it is due to a lack of faith or that you haven't been good enough or God is up in heaven waiting to punish people. The truth is, bad stuff happens. Sometimes it may be the consequences of our sins. Other times it is because we live in a fallen world. However, whatever comes our way we can know this truth: we are not alone.

Isaiah 43:2

² *When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.*

Verse 2: The Lord is with us. We do not need to be afraid because He is walking through the trial with us. God does not abandon us when we are facing hard times. Instead, He is close enough to hear our voice over the rushing waters and able to see us in the smoke of fire. He is right beside us. And He gets mad at anyone who tells you differently.

Job 42:7-9

⁷ After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." ⁸ So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." ⁹ So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

Verse 7-9: It was the friends of Job who had it all wrong. They thought suffering meant God was punishing him. They were not right. Job was righteous yet he faced some of the most difficult times of anyone who ever lived. He had to pray for his friends who were still living in "prosperity" but were considered by God as the sinners in the situation. Job was close to God and God was close to Job. Even as he passed through the water and the fire.

Up Close and Personal

Thank the Lord that He is with you whenever you face difficult circumstances.

How will you fight the lie that God is far away from you?

In what ways have you been discouraged by others when you were already dealing with difficult circumstances?

How will you lift someone up who is facing a rough time?

DAY
3

Today's Scripture:

Isaiah 43:2-3; Proverbs 3:5-6

The Word

God is with us during difficult times. You do not have to be afraid for the Maker of heaven and earth is with you. Of course, that seems easy to write when I am sitting comfortably in my office. But are these words true? How do we know for sure? In order to encourage us to believe, the Lord reminds us who is making the promise.

Isaiah 43:2-3

² *When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.*

³ *For I am the LORD, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
Cush and Seba in your stead.*

Verse 2-3: You will make it through difficult times not based upon your own merit, your own skill, your own ability to handle crisis, your family connection, your money, or your power. Instead, you will walk through times of trial and come out the other side because the Lord has said you would.

When I was a child we would promise one another things. If someone asked you to not tell a secret you would say “I promise” or maybe it would be to help them and you would respond with “I promise”. Of course, my promise did not always hold up because something may prevent me from keeping my word or because I decided to break my promise. In my fallen human state, I broke many a promise. The Lord is not promising anything in these verses. He is telling you what will happen. “I will be with you; the trial won’t overwhelm you; you will make it through this. Why? Because I am the Lord.”

Does everyone have this confidence? No, not everyone, only those who know the Lord personally. When the Lord becomes your God then the provision of His Presence is extended to you. God will walk through the trials with you because you are His own. You became His own when you accepted Him as your Lord and Savior.

If the Lord is our Lord and He is always with us, why do we worry during trials? Because we are choosing to sin. Whenever we choose to stress out, we are in effect saying, “God, I just don’t think you can handle my problems.” It seems foolish but all of us have been guilty of it.

We must choose to take the Lord at His Word and accept that He will do as He told us.

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;*

⁶ *in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

Verse 5-6: Your path may lead straight through water or straight through fire but you can know that God is directing you through it. You will not be in your time of trial forever. But you must cross through to the other side. The Lord, the Holy One of Israel, will ensure that you will make it.

Up Close and Personal

Confess anything you are worrying about. Choose to trust God to guide you through your problems.

When are you most vulnerable to the sin of worry?

How do you turn worry into trust?

How will focus on the fact that you will get “through” the problems with the Lord’s guidance help you when facing difficult times?

DAY
4

Today’s Scripture:

Romans 8:28-29; Isaiah 42:23-25, 43:3

The Word

One of the most comforting thoughts to me as I face difficult times is that there is a purpose for everything that I am going through. I may not know how it will all work out in the end but I can trust that God is in control, He has allowed this situation in my life, and He is walking with me through it.

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Verse 28-29: The purpose of all of our circumstances is to conform us into the image of Christ. Difficult times are often the catalyst the Lord uses to bring godliness into our lives.

C.S. Lewis wrote in his book *The Problem of Pain*, that "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

God shouts in our pain. He wants to get our attention. Sometimes He will use strange ways to achieve His purposes, but in His desire to make us more like Christ, He is willing to allow all types of situations to come our way, even painful ones.

The nation of Israel experienced this first hand. They had been rebellious toward God so He punished them.

Isaiah 42:23-25

*²³ Which of you will listen to this
or pay close attention in time to come?*

*²⁴ Who handed Jacob over to become loot,
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD,
against whom we have sinned?
For they would not follow his ways;
they did not obey his law.*

*²⁵ So he poured out on them his burning anger,
the violence of war.
It enveloped them in flames, yet they did not understand;
it consumed them, but they did not take it to heart.*

Verse 24-25: The Lord allowed Israel to be defeated by foreign armies because He wanted them to turn from their sin. He allowed the difficult times but it was to serve His purpose. It was to cause His people to return to Him. He wanted them to hear His voice and obey Him. Once they returned, He would cause the enemy that had previously been triumphant to now be defeated.

Isaiah 43:3

³ *For I am the LORD, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
Cush and Seba in your stead.*

Verse 3: In the book *Thru the Bible* with J. Vernon McGee, the author comments on this passage. He states:

He does not lower His high standard in salvation. How could God give Egypt and Ethiopia a ransom for Israel? The answer is simple. God says in effect, "I used these nations to discipline you. I gave them, that is, I permitted them to treat you as they did, and now I will judge them."

In Proverbs 21:18 we read, "The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright." Have you ever wondered why God permitted the enemy to cross your path and cause you all the trouble he did? He did it in order to bring you into line and in order to develop you spiritually. God gave him for your deliverance. Proverbs 11:8 says, "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead."

God wants us to become more like Him. He will go to any lengths to carry out His Word to conform us into the image of Christ. Whether our problems stem from our sin or just because we are in this world, we need to allow the situation to mold us so that it has served an eternal purpose in our lives.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to speak to you and show you any area of your life that He wants conformed to the image of Christ.

Can you testify to the truth of the C.S. Lewis quote? When have you heard God shouting in your pain?

Why is God concerned about us being conformed into the image of Christ?

How can you learn from difficult times instead of just getting through them?

What does God desire to change in you at this point in your spiritual journey?

How will you implement this change?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture:

Isaiah 51:7, 54:4; Jeremiah 42:11; Lamentations 3:57-58; Haggai 2:4-5; Romans 8:15-16; 1 Peter 3:13-17; 1 John 4:16-18

On Day One we learned God commands, "Fear Not". The following verses are "Fear Not" verses found throughout the Bible. These are just a sample of them all. I have heard that there are 366 verses telling us to not be afraid. That is at least one a day for a year, no matter what we face. Read the verses below and put a checkmark next to the ones that relate to what you may be going through. Be willing to commit them to memory. Even if you are not facing a trial at this moment, I guarantee sometime soon you will. These verses will be a comfort to you then.

Isaiah 51:7

*⁷ "Hear me, you who know what is right,
you people who have my law in your hearts:
Do not fear the reproach of men
or be terrified by their insults.*

Isaiah 54:4

*⁴ "Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame.
Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated.
You will forget the shame of your youth
and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.*

Jeremiah 42:11

¹¹ Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands.

Lamentations 3:57-58

*⁵⁷ You came near when I called you,
and you said, "Do not fear."*

*⁵⁸ O Lord, you took up my case;
you redeemed my life.*

Haggai 2:4-5

⁴ But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,' declares the LORD. 'Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the LORD, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the LORD Almighty. ⁵ 'This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'

Romans 8:15-16

¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

1 Peter 3:13-17

¹³Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." ¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. ¹⁷It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

1 John 4:16-18

¹⁶And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. ¹⁷In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. ¹⁸There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Up Close and Personal

Spend time in prayer, focusing on the God who is more powerful than anything you might face.