

WHEN ALL HELLS BREAKS LOOSE

Week Three

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for being here with us and for looking to actively move in our lives. Help us to say 'yes' to what you have for us here today.

Talk it Over

This week we are talking all about fear. As we talk, let's all agree to make space for the various ways we may struggle with this complicated subject without trying to fix one another. Let's commit to be with one another right where we are. In addition, as we talk through this subject let's remember it's okay to not be okay. If anyone feels stuck or in need of more resources, feel free to reach out to care@eastlakechurch.com.

- While some fears we struggle with may inevitably be quite serious, other fears may appear much more innocent or even humorous. Tell us about any silly fears you currently have.
- What were some fears you remember having as a child?
- While childhood might come with its own list of fears you have now outgrown, sometimes childhood also comes with a measure of boldness or invincibility.
 - Are there any things you did **not** fear as a child you now look back on and see was foolish innocence?
 - Is there anything you are regrettably afraid of now but you didn't fear as a kid?

Read Psalm 118:6 (Voice)

This week to help us explore one Biblical response to fear, we looked at this psalm, or song, written by King David. David's posture in this particular psalm showed immense boldness and fearlessness. This posture is the one we will be looking at throughout our time today. But as we do that, it's worth noting David wasn't always so bold or fearless. A full look at David's psalms reveals he encountered and processed all sorts of feelings within the context of his loving relationship with God. This is important to understand. God welcomed David no matter how he felt. It's also important we understand fear is not a sin according to the Bible. Feeling fear is a part of life. Our problem exists when fear controls areas of our life it's not intended to control.

- What are some healthy fears a healthy human should respect?
- What are some unhealthy fears you have allowed to impact your choices in the past?
- Are there any fears you are giving too much control in your life this season? Tell us about those fears and the control those fears currently have in your life.
- While we cannot always consciously track the origins of every fear we have, sometimes there is a clear birthplace for some of the fears we struggle with. What are some things that have caused fear in your life?

Read Philippians 4:6-7(Voice)

As we continue our conversation, we will be looking at four practices or tools we read about in these verses that can impact how we address our fear. The idea is that if we practice these tools enough, ideally they can become habits that can help sustain us and offer us peace.

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1. **Celebrate God all day, every day.** This is about giving God more of our attention.
 2. **Be gentle, kind, and on other people's sides.** Freedom is found in caring for others well-being. This is a commitment we can make regardless of how others behave.
 3. **Pray instead of worry.** Instead of allowing yourself to get caught in worry, pray. This requires self awareness. Pray about others, pray for yourself, pray for the things that consume you. Pray about the big things and the little things.
 4. **Be thankful.** Become aware of the good you do have. Focus on the ways God has provided for you.
- Of these four practices, which one comes the most naturally?
 - Which of the four practices often feels like the hardest for you? Why do you think that is the case?
 - While these tools might not solve all your struggles with fear, what good might come into your life if you worked on implementing these ideas?

In addition to these new tools and practices, sometimes what we need is a new perspective of God. Here are some verses that help us grasp a larger view of God's tenacious love for us.

Read Psalm 118:1-6 (Voice)

Earlier we read verse six, but here we read more about how David landed in his bold, fearless posture.

- David had no problem running to God in his fear. How difficult or easy is it for you to get honest and open with God about your fears? Why do you think this is the case?

Read 1 John 4:17-18 (MSG)

God's perfect love looks to be the loudest voice and the loudest force in all of our lives. If we are living in fear, we are not living in God's perfect love for us. This isn't meant to shame those who are really struggling with fear but to make it clear that God's desire is for each of us to fully grasp how deeply and completely he loves us. He wants us to see the things that block our ability to truly know that and wants to guide us to healing so we can trust his perfect love.

- On a scale of 1-10, 10 being "I absolutely believe it" and 1 being "I cannot believe it", how much do you buy into the idea that God pursues you with perfect love?
- In your own words, how would you define perfect love?
- What are some things we can do to help us better understand God's love?

The unfortunate reality of living in a broken world is that even when we adopt new practices and perspectives, sometimes our fears do come to pass. Our spiritual commitments don't exempt us from the struggles of life. But, God does invites us to walk with him in the pain and to keep our focus on who he is even when all hell breaks loose.

Read Psalm 18:19 (NLT)

God is a rescuer. This means that even when things seem to have fallen apart, God is not done moving. God delivers us again and again.

- Tell us how you have seen God move in you even when your fears came to life.
- Without minimizing our fears or pain, sometimes our fears coming to pass can empower us in unexpected ways. For example, failure teaches us we can fail and get back up. Recovering from failure can teach us we are safe to risk again. Failure can teach us we can survive and thrive even if the worst happens. How have you seen a struggle in your life build you up in unique ways?

Read Isaiah 50:7-8 (Voice)

- In what areas of life do you want to learn to trust God with the sort of courage Isaiah references?
- What would look different in your life if you trusted that God is your helper, your rock, and your hero?

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Closing Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here and inviting us to find our safety in your perfect love. Help us to lean into your trustworthy character and nature. Help us to see that you are always moving on our behalf and that we can always run to you honestly about our fears. We want to live our best life with you. Amen.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.

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