

Sermon Discussion Guide

Defeating Fear During the Virus Crisis

Rick Warren
March 14-15, 2020

Dear friends, we are praying that all will be well with you and that your body will be as healthy as we know your soul is! 3 John 1:2

Saddleback is a purpose driven global church with campuses on four continents. Early on we saw that coronavirus was growing exponentially and a two-fold plan was developed. First is to keep our congregation safe. Second is to create a well-reasoned response to the crisis and to be a light to the world. This message is to give guidance to our congregation as we walk through this unprecedented emergency, to hear the commitment that our church is making to us, and to know what our church is requiring from us. Let's Talk It Over!

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want!...And even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me! Psalm 23:1, 4

1. What do God's promises in Psalm 23 verses 1 and 4 mean to you? Pray as a group that God will use each of you to offer comfort to others around you.

The gullible believe everything they're told but the prudent sift and weigh every word. Proverbs 14:15 (MSG)

2. In what ways are you practicing discernment as you engage with media?

When you go through deep waters, I will be with you! When you pass through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned up; it will not consume you! Isaiah 43:2

3. After reading this scripture, what assurances or promises do we have that God will go through this crisis with us?
4. The world's approach to solving this crisis changes by the hour. Men think they have control but ultimately, we know it is God who is in control. In what ways are you leaning on God in this changing time?

We often suffer, but we're never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do, we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we're knocked down, we get up again... Because we know God raised the Lord back to life. And just as he raised Jesus, he will also raise us back to life, and will bring us into his presence together. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 14

5. Because we live with hope in the midst of pain, what are some steps you can take now to improve your outlook? Every need in our world is an open door and God wants to use you to help others. How is God calling you to open a door this week by serving your community or someone in need?

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

6. Share about a time when God got you through something that was overwhelming or scary. How can you use this experience to help others overcome their fears or challenges during this time of crisis?

<https://saddleback.com/coronaresponse>

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. Not everyone is at equal risk for the coronavirus: the most vulnerable people are those over 60 with a pre-existing condition that weakens their immunity, such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, or upper respiratory problems. What are some ways you can help someone in this demographic? Come up with some next steps as a group.

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NIV

2. How does knowing that your troubles will not last make you feel in light of what's going on today?
3. How does knowing one will have all their needs met and having someone capable with them change their attitude and magnitude of their goals?



REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- Icebreaker: When life seems out of control, people can do some crazy things. What’s the funniest thing you remember hearing about, seeing, or doing in such a time?
- Goal: Recognize that as a church family, we are uniquely equipped to be of service during times of crisis or emergency.
- Prayer: Father God, give us the spirit of calmness to walk without fear through any valley of darkness. Give us the peace that surpasses all understanding amidst the fear that surrounds us. Fill us with your joy, confidence, and wisdom. Jesus, use this crisis of the worldwide coronavirus outbreak to draw people to you and your kingdom. Heal those already affected by this illness and bring care to those in need, whether through medicine or miracle. Instead of being self-centered, help us to serve others and protect the vulnerable. Above all, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. If anyone hasn’t accepted Christ into their hearts, help them pray: Jesus Christ, I ask you to come into my life and save me. I can’t save myself. Forgive me for all my sins. Help me to know you, trust you, and receive your love for me.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.



Defeating Fear During the Virus Crisis **What to Remember**

1. REMEMBER NOT EVERYTHING I HEAR IS TRUE

The gullible believe anything they're told but the prudent sift and weigh every word. Proverbs 14:15 (Msg)

The wise man looks ahead. The foolish person attempts to fool himself and won't face the facts.

Proverbs 14:8 (LB)

Get the facts at any price, and hold on tightly to good sense. Proverbs 23:23 (LB)

2. REMEMBER NOT EVERYONE IS AT EQUAL RISK

3. REMEMBER THIS WILL PASS

Dear friends, don't be surprised or shocked when you going through painful trials and fiery tests in life.

1 Peter 4:12

The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted the instructions of God, violated his laws, and broken his covenant. Therefore... the earth has broken down and has utterly collapsed. Everything is lost, abandoned, and confused.

Isaiah 24:5, 19

For our temporary and momentary troubles will not last But they are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we focus not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18

4. REMEMBER TO FOCUS ON WHAT IS UNCHANGING

1. God sees everything I'm, going through
2. God cares about everything I'm going through
3. God has the power to answer prayer
4. God always acts out of his goodness to me.
5. God's plan is always better than my plan
6. God will never stop loving me
7. I cannot lose my salvation once I have trusted in Jesus

5. REMEMBER NO MATTER WHAT I GO THROUGH GOD WILL GO THROUGH IT WITH ME!

When you go through deep waters, I will be with you! When you pass through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned up; it will NOT consume you! Isaiah 43:2

6. REMEMBER THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE STORY!

We often suffer, but we're never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do, we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again ... BECAUSE WE KNOW God raised the Lord back to life. And just as he raised Jesus, he will also raise us back to life, and will bring us into his presence. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 14

7. REMEMBER THAT GOD WANTS TO USE ME TO HELP OTHERS

1. Care Kits – For those who need to stay at home.

2. Care Callers – those who have to be isolated or quarantined, hard on emotions or mentally ill. We can't visit everyone but we can call. Just fellowship on the phone. Those who are healthy but need to stay isolated for own protection can be care callers.



Defeating Fear During the Virus Crisis **What to Do**

<https://saddleback.com/coronareponse>

We'll be meeting as a church in small groups for a while. If you're not in a small group email: PastorRick@saddleback.com and we'll get you in a group!

Rick's Promise to you, because we are a PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH:

1. **I PROMISE YOU you're not going to be alone! We're going to face this together!**

Together you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of that body. 1 Corinthians 12:27 (NCV)

WE WILL COMMUNICATE WITH YOU EVERY DAY: EMAIL, TEXT, SOCIAL MEDIA

If we don't have your contact information, we need it. How do we get it?

2. **I PROMISE THAT we will keep you spiritually healthy!** Meet with your small group each week.

Dear friends, we are praying that all will be well with you and that your body will be as healthy as we know your soul is!
3 John 1:2

3. **I PROMISE WE WILL SERVE YOU IF YOU GET SICK**

4. **I PROMISE THAT WE WILL CONTINUE to offer Worship Experiences** through our Small groups

5. **I PROMISE THAT WE will help you share the Good News** with our neighbors like never before!

"Your love for each other will show to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:35 (NLT)

WHAT RICK NEEDS FROM YOU:

1. I need your emergency contact information. As your spiritual doctor, your pastor, I need to know how to get in contact with you in an emergency. So email me: PastorRick@saddleback.com with your mobile phone and your email.

2. I need you to sign up for online giving so we can keep serving everyone! Many of you studied the Door of generosity this past week in your small group. Now I need you to put that into practical action.

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside some of your money in proportion with your income, and give it as your offering to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)

3. **Meet with your small group each weekend for a worship together.** I'll still be teaching you!

For Giving to Saddleback Church online go to: <http://Saddleback.com/offering>