

Theme: **SLIDE** Jesus Is With Us In Times Of Fear

Object: Snake

Scripture: “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” (Isaiah 12:2 ESV)

SLIDE Is anyone here afraid of snakes? **SLIDE** How about the dark -- is anyone afraid of the dark? **SLIDE** Are any of you ever afraid during a thunderstorm? Well, the fact is, we are all afraid of something. Even the rich and famous have their fears. Listen to a few of them.

SLIDE THE FEAR OF FLYING: John Madden, a famous football coach and sports commentator, is so afraid of flying that he will only travel by bus. In fact, he is so afraid of flying that he bought his own bus. I read that the bus cost him \$800,000! I guess if you're afraid to fly, it helps if you can afford to buy your own bus.

SLIDE THE FEAR OF CLOWNS: You have probably heard of Johnny Depp. He was the star of "Pirates of the Caribbean." You might be surprised to know that the sight of a clown makes this brave pirate shake in his boots! Yes, he is afraid of clowns.

SLIDE THE FEAR OF HEIGHTS: Actor Liam Neeson is one of many people who share this fear.

SLIDE THE FEAR OF INSECTS: Do creepy crawly bugs scare you? Well, you are not alone. Nicole Kidman can't stand butterflies, and singer Justin Timberlake is afraid of spiders.

SLIDE One day Jesus was with his disciples in the temple. The disciples were commenting on how beautiful the temple was when Jesus began to tell them about some things that were going to happen. He told them that the temple would one day be destroyed and that there would be wars, earthquakes, and people starving. He also told them that they were going to be hated and persecuted and even thrown into prison. Those are pretty scary things, aren't they? It would be understandable for the disciples to be afraid, but Jesus told them not to be afraid. He promised that he would be with them and that not a hair on their heads would be harmed if they put their trust in him.

Jesus has also promised to help us when we are afraid. Every one is afraid of something, and fear can be a good thing, but we should not let our fears keep us from enjoying the life that Jesus wants us to have. After all, He has promised to help us when we are afraid.

Dear Jesus, we put our faith and trust in Your promise to be with us when we are afraid. Amen.

Slide Witnesses of Christ

In the beginning of chapter five up through verse 16 we read about Jesus' healing the infirm man who had been crippled for 38 years. The Jewish leaders considered this healing a violation of Sabbath law. It was this act that caused the Jews to persecute Jesus in verse 16 and gave them one more reason and increased their desire to kill Jesus. We have learned in our study of this passage and the Old Testament Scriptures that in fact Jesus did not violate any Sabbath laws, but He did violate the rabbinic traditions that had been added to God's law by men desiring to control the people. Jesus chose not to defend Himself by pointing out this inconsistency to the Pharisees. Instead Jesus asserts His deity in verses 18 to 29 and His equality with God the Father and being equal to God, and therefore being God - Jesus had every right to perform miracles on the Sabbath just as God the Father had done. The Jews were shocked by this claim made by Jesus and instead of even considering the possibility that Jesus was the Messiah they increased their efforts to kill Jesus so that they might maintain their positions of authority over the people. Again Jesus responded by strengthening His claim of equality to God by doing works equal to God, having the ability to give life as God does, and by receiving equal honor to God the Father and by exercising the authority God gave Him to be the judge of all mankind.

Our study this morning begins with verse 30 summarizing Jesus' claim to be equal with the Father. **"I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me."** Contrary to the Pharisees claim Jesus that acted on His own, the truth was Jesus always

acted in complete unity with and under the authority of God the Father. When the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of wrongdoing they were in truth also accusing God the Father as well. Jesus warns these Jewish leaders saying in verse 30, “As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him (God the Father) who sent me.” Since God the Father and Jesus, God the Son are One and Jesus always is in complete harmony with the Father – Jesus’ judgments are always just. Jesus’ judgment of those who reject Him and oppose Him is just and right. Jesus tells us who these people are, **Slide** “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (John 8:44 ESV) This world most often does not live in black and white, but in the gray trying to justify their sinful behavior. Unfortunately, this may also be said of some denominations, churches and people who claim to be Christian. May this never be said of Canyon Bible Church or about any of us! May we live lives that honor our Lord as Jesus directed, **Slide** “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16 ESV) We are to live the Scriptures – which is simple and is straight forward. The Jews got into trouble because they took their focus off of God and made hundreds of man-made rules to control people’s behavior instead of seeking God to change their hearts. Today it is the same, churches are changing the scriptures to meet felt worldly desires and that then places them in dyer trouble for even though they may use the name of Jesus they do no believe in the Christ of the Bible, but a false Christ. To these who have distorted the Word of God Jesus said, **Slide** “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons,

and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’ ” (Matthew 7:22-23_{ESV}) This then includes all who reject the biblical Jesus.

At this point we have to face and answer two questions. **Slide** Why should the people Jesus is talking to, the Jews, believe the claims Jesus is making? Secondly, why should they consider Jesus as a reliable source of these claims? To answer these questions and taking into account the Jewish law that required two or three witnesses for proof of truth in a testimony Jesus now cites three independent sources, which validate His testimony as true. **Blank**

Jesus begins by saying in verse 31, “If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true.” Jesus statement does not imply that His self-witness is unreliable. He is appealing to the Jewish law requiring two to three witnesses. The same situation arises in John chapter 8. The Pharisees said to Jesus **Slide** “‘You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.’” (John 8:13-14_{ESV}) Jesus’ point was that these Jewish naysayers claimed His self-testimony was not sufficient. The question is not the truth of Jesus’ testimony, but that the Jews would not believe His testimony without further evidence. In verses 33 to 47 Jesus presents additional confirmation of His testimony from three sources that were and are still above reproach, truth that even these Jews who were interested in preserving their power and position had to submit to or they should have.

Slide John the Baptist

Jesus speaks first of the witness of Him through John the Baptist in verses 32 to 35, “There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.”³³ You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.³⁴ Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.³⁵ He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.” John is the first prophet in over 400 years and many believed that John fulfilled the prophesy in Malachi chapter 4, of God sending the second Elijah. Reading from the Book of the Prophet Malachi, these are the words of God speaking through the prophet, **Slide** “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

(Malachi 4:5-6 ESV) **Blank** John was considered the greatest and last prophet of the Old Covenant. We know from the first chapter of John that we studied in March of this year that John the Baptist’s ministry was to prepare the nation for the Messiah (1:23) and to identify the Messiah when He came (1:31). Even Herod “rejoiced for a while in his (John’s) light” until John confronted Herod with his sin. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that the destruction of Herod’s army was sent by God as a punishment for Herod taking John the Baptist’s life. (Book 18, chapter 5, 116 to 119) The Pharisees in Jerusalem sent a delegation to John the Baptist in chapter one the Gospel According to John for they considered his testimony to be truth. This is what verse 33 is referring to. However, John began to fall from their grace and was discounted as a prophet when he supported Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah. These Pharisees were just like their fathers who had rejected and killed the earlier prophets sent by God. In 2 Kings we read, **Slide** “Yet the LORD warned

Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.'

Slide But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God." (2Kings 17:13-14 ESV) So they rejected and killed the last prophet of the Old Testament. **Blank** Citing the testimony of John the Baptist by Jesus was not meant to make up for any lack in Jesus' testimony, but confirmed by the mouth of one recognized as a prophet of God that he spoke the same truth about Jesus. Jesus' words here in verse 35, "He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light," were both a tribute to John and a rebuke to the Jewish leaders for rejecting John's witness as a prophet sent by God. Like moths to a lamp, the people were drawn to John to hear - for they knew he was the lamp and light of God. John called the nation to repent in preparation for the Messiah. This is God's calling for the lives of believers today as well. We are to call our nation to repentance in preparation for the second coming of the Messiah. Those who hear, repent and accept Christ are to be baptized, just as John did over 2000 years ago. As John reflected Christ's light we are to reflect the light of Christ today and just as some came to Christ at the time of John and many rejected Christ, so too it is today as we reflect the light of Christ to a darkened world. Howard Hendricks stated the problem clearly, **Slide** "In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering."

Slide God's Works Performed by Christ

The people considered John the Baptist to be prophet and his testimony of Jesus carried considerable weight, now look in verse 36 of our study passage, Jesus says, "But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John." Jesus introduces a

testimony more convincing than John's. As verse 36 continues, "For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me." Jesus is speaking of the signs, miracles and wonders He has been performing, as the miracle Jesus performed at the beginning of this chapter – speaking and the invalid of 38 years walked. These miracles reveal God because God is seen in these miracles. The miracles of raising the dead demonstrate that Jesus is Lord and the giver of life. The miracle of multiplying the loaves of bread and fish show that Jesus is the sustainer of life. Jesus feeds people both spiritually and physically. The healing of the blind shows Jesus grants both physical and spiritual sight. Jesus repeatedly pointed to His miraculous works as confirmation of His claim to be the Son of God and the Messiah. Jesus is not saying that He is inferior to God, for remember Jesus voluntarily gave up His divine attributes in order to come to earth that mankind might be saved. After Jesus' resurrection the Holy Spirit came and He regenerates souls and brings the first resurrection to people. This demonstrates that the Holy Spirit submits to Christ but is not inferior to Christ. As Christ submitted to God and carried out the Father's works, so too the Holy Spirit's prime purpose is to reveal Christ and bring people to worship Christ. Jesus' works or miracles were not only supernatural, but they were in perfect harmony with the Father that sent Him.

Jesus then summed up the problem for these unbelieving Jews in verses 37 and 38 saying, "And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent." These unbelieving Jews had both the Old Testament Scriptures and the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures spoke hundreds of things about the Messiah; who He would be, and what He would do and even how He would be born and

come into this earthly world. Jesus fulfilled every one of these predictions of the Old Testament. In fact I read an article some years ago where a mathematician calculated that for Jesus to perfectly fulfill everything that the Old Testament predicted about the Messiah was over one trillion to one – amazing, and yet, these Jews rejected Jesus showing their ignorance of God and His written Word given to man that they might know God, thus demonstrating their unbelief and showing that they did not know God. This brings us to our next witness of Jesus that shows He is God the Son.

Slide The Faithful and True Writings

Read along with me in John chapter 5 beginning in verse 39, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.⁴¹ I do not receive glory from people.⁴² But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.⁴³ I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.⁴⁴ How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?⁴⁵ Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” I bet there are those here today that thought there was no way I could teach on 17 verses in one Sunday. It is just another miracle of God.

Jesus begins this last reference of the Scriptures as a witness to His divine nature of being God saying that these Jews were searching the Scriptures, the very words of God the Father in a desperate and futile search for the “key” to eternal life. Yet, as

hard as they studied the Scriptures they failed to understand that it is these very Scriptures that testified that Jesus was sent by God the Father and was the Messiah. The Scriptures testified that it is Jesus who is the “key” to eternal life. Jesus gave the teachings of God in what we now call the New Testament and we know from these teachings that it is the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Scriptures and transforms the mind of a person enabling them to understand the Word of God with spiritual wisdom not just man’s intellect. The testimony of the scriptures then is the strongest and most important of the three witnesses Jesus has now presented to support His claim of Godhood. These three witness to Jesus being God the Son were given to meet the legal demands of having two to three witnesses to validate something is true. These verses we just read, verses 37 to 47 are one of the most significant summaries of the importance of Scripture in the gospel of Jesus Christ as the God the Son.

As the Jews of Jesus’ day either misunderstood the Scriptures or deliberately tried to make the scriptures say something that God did not say in order to make the Word of God serve the purposes of man instead of man serving the true and holy God, so too, it has been throughout history to this very day. Many religions and people change the Scriptures of God to suit their desires or they write what they claim are scriptures or the words of God in an effort to make a religion of god that in truth is a religion of man. Why is this done? Because all mankind is fallen and born with a sin nature and until God calls them, until God the Holy Spirit regenerates a person’s soul they are spiritually dead. Spiritual dead people cannot know God and they in truth serve the “prince of the power of the air.”

Jesus then makes clear the problem for these unbelieving Jews and it is the same problem people have to this very day. Jesus says in verses 46 and 47, “For if you

believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?" Moses inspired by God wrote the first five books of the Bible. Christians are not the only religion that believes God created Adam and Eve, and in the fall of mankind from God's grace, and in the calling by God of Abraham to become the father of a nation that worshipped the true God, and that God sent Moses to free the enslaved people of God. However, if you believe God did these things then you must believe in Jesus as the Messiah, as God very God or you are lost and separated from God. If you do not believe in Jesus as the Christ then you do not believe in the Scriptures both the Old and New Testaments. God Himself testifies that Jesus is the Savior sent by Him so that mankind might be brought back to God and live as the children of God having a relationship with God and experiencing the first resurrection, the spiritual resurrection here on earth that will continue after their mortal death on into heaven, as believers living in the presence of God for all eternity. Rejecting Abraham, Moses and Jesus is to reject God and suffer eternal damnation. This is a hard truth, but now I want to close with a glorious truth, a truth of eternal hope.

I want to close this morning by reading what God inspired Apostle Paul the Beloved to write over 2000 years ago that is as true today as when it was first written. If you will turn in your bibles to the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, I will begin reading in chapter 2. Hear the wonderful Word of God which transitions from our lost state to our rich promise as those who believe in Jesus as their Savior.

Slide "And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind,

and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” This is the state of all mankind – fallen, sinful and spiritually dead. Now hear what God has done.

⁴ “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us,
⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—
by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him
in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show
the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by
grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the
gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his
workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared
beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

Slide “For by grace you have been saved through faith.”

This is the God Creator, who loves His creation, this is the God I worship, this is the God rich in mercy and love, this is Jesus – He is my Lord and Savior and I live with Him today and always. I pray that it is the same for you. If you do not know Jesus as God very God, as your Lord and Savior, then come to me and let me pray with you. We will pray that the Lord, who is rich in mercy, will bring your soul to life. As I close in prayer to our God, if you want to live eternally come up here to me and we will pray and all the believers here will pray and we will be brothers and sisters and children of the living God together, today and for eternity.