

He Holds the Future



Theme: The signs of the end times. Proper 28 (33) Year C

Object: A bag of fortune cookies

Scripture: He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them." Luke 21:8 (NIV)

Do you like Chinese food? I love it! When we go out to eat, one of my favorite places is a Chinese restaurant. After you finish eating, they always bring some fortune cookies. When you break them open they have a little strip of paper with your fortune on it. Here are some examples of what they might say:

Good things are coming your way.

Success will be yours at school and at play.

You will have a pleasant surprise soon.

You will make very good choices today.

The time is right to make new friends.

Something you lost will turn up soon.

You will do something soon that will make your family proud.

You will live a long, happy life.

When you read your fortune from a fortune cookie, do you believe it? We might get a good laugh out of some of them, but it is foolish to think that a piece of paper in a fortune cookie could tell what is going to happen in your future.

In our Bible lesson today, Jesus had some things to say about people who claimed that they could predict the future. Jesus and his disciples were in the temple and the disciples were talking about how beautiful it was with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God. Jesus said to them, "The time is coming when all these things will be completely destroyed. Not one stone will be left on top of another; every one of them will be thrown down!"

The disciples were frightened by what Jesus said. "When will these things happen?" they asked. "What signs can we look for that will let us know that these things are about to take place?"

"Don't let anyone mislead you," Jesus answered. "Many will come in my name, claiming to be the Messiah, and saying, 'The time has come!' But don't believe them." You see, Jesus knew that

these people could not see into the future. Only God can do that!

There are some people today who think that they can see into the future. They may say some frightening things, but we need to remember what Jesus taught his disciples. "Don't worry!" he said. "Not a hair on your head will be harmed. You will be saved by being faithful to me."

Heavenly Father, we don't know what the future holds, but we know that you hold the future. We know that we will be safe when we put our faith and trust in you. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BALLOON POPPING GAME: A fun activity that helps to reinforce the truths taught in this lesson. [CLICK HERE](#) for instructions and all of the materials needed to play the game. (Except for the balloons!)

HOT POTATO: Fill a sack with slips of paper of ways that people can be deceived (such as by the TV, newspaper, teachers, friends, books, billboards, etc). Children will sit in a circle and pass the sack around while someone plays music. When the music stops, the one holding the sack takes a question out of the sack, reads it and answers a question from the teacher if desired. Continue until everyone has a chance to answer at least one question or to read one slip of paper.

BEAN BAG TOSS: The teacher sits in the front of the room and tosses the bean bag to a child. The teacher will try to "deceive" the child and act like the bean bag will be tossed to a child that the teacher is "LOOKING" at but the teacher will deceive and throw it in another direction. Tell children to stay ALERT so they won't be deceived and drop the bean bag. If time allows and the teacher would like to, children can take turns doing the same tossing from the front chair.

SIMON SAYS: Let children play the game of SIMON SAYS and tell children NOT to be "deceived" as a leader named SIMON will tell the children things to do. IF "SIMON" doesn't say, then the children remain still but if SIMON says to do it, then the children will do as told, such as SIMON SAYS TO JUMP 3 TIMES, or SIMON SAYS TO TAKE THREE STEPS FORWARD...or HOP 4 TIMES (oh oh SIMON didn't say to), so if a child is "deceived" and hops, then he will sit out on the side lines. Play for as long as time allows.

MOBILE LEAVES: Give children supplies to make a mobile with leaves hanging down from the "mobile hanger" that will have words from today's Bible lesson — such as BE READY, DON'T BE DECEIVED, FOLLOW JESUS, etc. Children can cut out traced leaves of FALL colors and hang by orange or brown yarn.

FUTURE IN HAND: Children can trace their hand as it lays sideways on the construction paper or just draw a hand to look like it is holding something. Give children cut out letters to stick on the hand to write FUTURE.... or children can draw fancy large letters to say FUTURE. Tell children to remember that our FUTURE is in GOD's hand.

LOOPS NECKLACE: Give children strips of construction paper. Children will make one loop by gluing two ends together. Make another loop and hook it inside the first loop and continue to make a loop chain until the loop necklace can fit over the child's head to wear as a necklace. Tell children that each loop can stand for a way that we can be deceived if we don't follow Jesus, OR each loop can represent all the ways that Jesus watches over us to keep us from being deceived. For older children, if the teacher desires, there can be different colors to represent different types of deception, such as one color for being deceived by friends, or a color for deception of family, or TV, etc.

FORTUNE COOKIES: If time and space allows, children can make their own cookies with a message slip of paper inside, of their choice. (Directions for fortune cookies can be found on line). If this is not workable, then children can write a "fortune" slip of paper and place inside a cookie that they have made from two round pieces of construction paper taped together. Children can decorate their paper cookie with dots for chocolate chips, etc and can write FOLLOW JESUS on the cookie and decorate the edges.

FAITH AND TRUST BALLOON BOPPING: Divide the class into two groups and each group will get 2 balloons to blow up and when the game starts, children have to BOP the balloons, working together to keep FAITH and TRUST from falling down. If one of the balloons touches the floor, the team gets a point against them as being "deceived". Continue as time allows and see which team has the fewest points of being deceived and keeping FAITH and TRUST up off the floor!

When I Am Afraid



Theme: Jesus is with us in times of fear. Proper 28 (33) Year C

Object: None is needed, but you could use a rubber snake or a fake spider.

Scripture: Luke 21:5-19; Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation. Isaiah 12:2 (KJ21)

Is anyone here afraid of snakes? How about the dark -- is anyone afraid of the dark? 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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

Interactive Group Activities

by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: "When I Am Afraid"

Scripture Reading: Luke 21:5-19; Isaiah 12:2

TEMPLE BUILDING AND DESTRUCTION: Give the children can building blocks to build the Temple and talk about our Bible lesson today and children can take turns at destroying the temple at the correct time of the Bible lesson when Jesus told them this would happen.

FEAR FISHING: The teacher will make plastic fish cut from milk cartons prepared before class. Each fish can be spray painted and will have a different word printed on it using a washable marker representing things that we fear. Put a paper clip on each fish and a magnet on the string from a "fishing pole" made from a dowel rod. Let children go fishing with fish behind a board or in a bucket, etc. After the children have "fished" for their fish and have read the word off their fish for reasons for being afraid (such as darkness, new class, loud noises, thunder, etc), have the children throw their fish into a bucket of water. The words will disappear because of the washable markers and their fear will also disappear when they trust Jesus!!

NO FEAR TREE: Have the children can trace their opened hand and part of their arm and make fingerprints in greens, oranges, browns and yellows as the "leaves" of a tree. Children can write NO FEAR in some of their little fingerprint "leaves", or other words of our story such as BE NOT AFRAID, JESUS WILL HELP ME, etc. This NO FEAR TREE paper could be glued onto a brown or orange piece of construction to make a pretty Fall poster.

GIVE THANKS POSTER: Give the children pictures or stickers to glue onto an orange piece of construction paper, with the title of GIVE THANKS FOR NO FEAR BECAUSE JESUS IS HERE.

PUMPKIN PATCH MATCH: Option 1: Teacher can have pumpkins cut out for a Match Game. Words to match (2 of each) could be HELP FROM JESUS, NO FEAR, DISCIPLES, TEMPLE, NO HARM, TRUST IN JESUS, etc.

Option 2: Children could take turns going to the PUMPKIN PATCH and taking a pumpkin off and seeing what is written behind the pumpkin on the poster.

HAPPY FACE CUPCAKES: Teacher can have an orange frosted cupcake for each child with a little happy face drawn on with brown frosting. Children can get their cupcake after sharing with the class about having NO FEAR WHEN JESUS IS NEAR!

FEAR HOPSCOTCH: Draw two hopscotch games on the floor or parking lot. FEAR can be written on a rock and then tossed to a square on the hopscotch for children to play the game. Children are not allowed to hop on the square where the FEAR ROCK had landed. If the number of children is too many for one game, another hopscotch drawing could be made, side by side.

FEAR FACES: Provide children with colored ink pads and index cards. Children will make a few finger prints on the card and use a thin ink pen or marker to draw a fearful face on each fingerprint. Children can then use a bright colored marker to write, " HAVE NO FEAR FOR JESUS IS NEAR at the top of their card.

NO FEAR BUTTONS: Have each child cut out a round circle from card stock paper and color and decorate the edges. Write NO FEAR...JESUS IS NEAR and tape a small safety pin to the back to wear on their shirt.