

Good morning, Foothills Church. My name is Dillon and I am one of the pastors here at Foothills. It's a pleasure to be here with you this morning. We have a special guest this morning that I'm going to introduce in just a minute, but I want to say a word of welcome to our 9:30 Classic/ Online Community. Thanks for being a part of our service today.

On January 22, 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued a presidential proclamation designating the third Sunday of January as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. **The proclamation stated:** *"I call upon the citizens of this blessed land to gather on that day in homes and places of worship to give thanks for the gift of life, and to reaffirm our commitment to the dignity of every human being and the sanctity of each human life."*

Today is the 3rd Sunday of January, and we want to reaffirm our commitment to the sanctity of each and every human life.

As you know, Foothills Church is committed to being a kind of House of Refuge for anyone in this church or people you know that need a place of Refuge. A place to run to not from when life goes sideways on you.

Today, on Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, I want to reaffirm a few things: While we will always champion sexual purity, we want you to know, if you find yourself in an unplanned pregnancy, please know that being pregnant is not a sin, and the child you carry is not a punishment; it is a blessing. God is knitting your child together in your womb. The child you carry is made in the image of God and is intrinsically valuable and loved by God. God does not make mistakes. He is the author of Life.

Since Foothills Church is committed to the value of life, here's how we will

seek to respond as a Church:

Here's what we won't do:

This church family will not gossip about you, shame you, or abandon you. This is a House of Refuge, and we will not allow the family of God to harm one another with words or actions contrary to the Love of God as revealed in his Word.

Here's what we will do:

As a church we will do whatever it takes to help you carry and care for your precious child before and after birth. We will do everything in our power to remove whatever obstacles stand in the way of you having this child. There are people in this church ready to mentor you, minister to you through Embrace Grace, throw you a baby shower, and connect you with resources like the local pregnancy center, PCS Health or Alternatives Pregnancy Center in Sacramento.

Finally, if you have ever had an abortion in your past, we want you to know that abortion is not an unforgivable sin. Whoever confesses and forsakes their sin finds mercy. We want you to know you are not the only one in this church who has gone through that. We want to connect you with our abortion healing support group so that you can walk in complete healing and freedom.

Tragically, despite the reversal of Roe v. Wade in 2022, the abortion numbers in 2023 approached one million. You should also know California has become a "surge" state performing nearly 500 more abortions per month since the Roe/Wade reversal. Friends we simply **must remain vigilant** in the pro-life effort.¹

One of the ways that we champion women and pregnant women in our

¹ <https://www.gutmacher.org/news-release/2024/number-abortion-united-states-likely-be-higher-2023-2020>.

community is by supporting local pregnancy centers that exist to support women through the pregnancy journey and beyond, and to point them towards Jesus and towards life. We support Alternatives Pregnancy Center down in Sacramento, and PCS Health in Placerville. This morning I would like to welcome Brooke Nave, the director of PCS Health to come and share with us. Let's welcome Brooke.

Interview Questions:

1. Tell us about PCS Health. How long has PCS been serving in El Dorado County and what kinds of services do you provide?
2. How has offering medical services impacted the way you are able to serve your clients and reach a broader population of women?
3. When we think about pregnancy centers we might be tempted to think that the support and help stops when the baby is born but that's not true. Tell us about how you continue to walk with these families after the baby arrives.
4. Tell us about your baby boutique and how you keep it well stocked?
5. How do we get involved and how do we pray?

Let's Pray for Brooke and PCS

Brooke, thank you for all you do and thank you for spending the morning with us. There is a table on the patio with lots of info about PCS and how you can get involved.

OK, Let's turn in our Bible's to Isaiah chapter 8. We are going to continue our series this morning.

The message that Isaiah shares with us this morning is born out of a moment of crisis for the people of Judah and Ahaz their king. In chapter 7 verse 1 we learn. . . (Read 1-2.). I'm sure that the threat of being invaded by your closest neighbors, would be terrifying for any king or people group, and it is certainly scary for Judah and Ahaz. Looming in the background of this threat was an even greater one. Assyria, the superpower of the middle east, was conquering all the nations or subjugating them through threat of military action. Israel and Syria had

both submitted themselves to Assyria's authority and were paying heavy taxes. However, Judah had not yet submitted to Assyria's rule.

This left Ahaz and the Judeans at a crossroads in their faith. They were afraid, and fear makes people think and do a lot of strange things. Who would they trust for deliverance and safety? Would they trust the strength of their soldiers? The thickness of the walls of Jerusalem? Deliverance from a political ally like Egypt? Would they submit themselves to Assyrian rule? Or would they trust in God?

I feel like these questions are just as relevant to us today as they were for Judah back then. While we have the luxury of being in the United States and unlikely to be under direct threat of a conquering nation at the moment, it still seems like the world is continuing to spin out of control. We all have reasons to experience fear at times. Whether its global events, economic uncertainty, personal hardship, or watching our loved ones experience hard things, each of us will experience some degree of fear and worry in life. The question is, when we are afraid, what will we do with our fear? Who will we turn to? How will we find strength in the middle of our fear? These are the questions we are going to wrestle with briefly, and hopefully in the end, find that Jesus is the best answer to these questions, (just like we learned in Sunday school) that he alone is trustworthy, and that he has a plan.

Despite appearances, God is in control.

In Chapter 8, Isaiah is given a message to share with Judah, this message is found in the names of two children. One brings judgment, the other brings salvation. The first child is Isaiah's son. Let's look at verses 1-4.

Imagine naming your son Maher-Shalal-Hash-baz. I mean, I've heard some really interesting names but this has to top them all. It means Speeding to the plunder, hurrying to the spoil. Talk about rough. I bet that kid got made fun of. I've got to be honest, I'm glad I am not an Old Testament prophet, or his kid aren't you? All joking aside, this child's

name is a message of God's plan to bring judgment on Israel and Syria and to deliver Judah. How will he do it. Before the child is old enough to say mom or dad, (roughly a year old or so), Israel and Syria will be overthrown and carried off into exile before the king of Assyria.

This is huge news for Judah and Ahaz. God has a plan and he is going to use the superpower of Assyria to carry out his plan. That's fantastic right? How good it is to know that God has a plan. Sometimes that is all we need to get through our day or our current trial. Simply knowing that God has a plan and that we are part of that plan gives us the confidence to keep moving forward and keep trusting. It was a gift for Judah that Isaiah shared God's plan for delivering them. However, it wasn't going to all be good news.

Fear can cause us to reject God's plan and provision:

Look at verse 5-10. Isaiah uses water as a metaphor for God's deliverance. The waters of Shiloh is a reference to a small stream fed by a cistern outside of Jerusalem. This is before Hezekiah dug his tunnels under the city protecting the water supply, so this stream was just a small flow of water through town. Yet it was incredibly useful for the inhabitants of Jerusalem and helped to sustain the city. It was a symbol of God's provision, small as it may seem. God promised to watch over Judah and protect them if they simply followed after Him and worshiped him alone. That's it, Follow God's laws, walk in obedience, and be faithful to him alone. But Judah rejected God's provision, So God said Assyria, like the great river Euphrates, would overflow its banks, and flood the nations, even Judah, all the way up to the neck. You guys get the idea. Flood waters up to here.

This is such a great warning for us. Not a lot has changed since the days of Isaiah. We are to Love the Lord, walk in the Spirit, and say no to the flesh. If we do these things we will avoid all kinds of heartache and trouble. But I can't tell you how many times in life I have chosen to live in fear or in selfishness instead and every time I chose fear or selfishness I quickly pay the price. It is so easy to scorn God's plan and provision and

not even realize that we are doing it.

Another thing that fear does is **Fear can trick us into trusting in the deliverance instead of the deliverer.** If God was going to use Assyria to deliver Judah from their enemies, then maybe Assyria is where they should put their trust. I think this is why God warned them that Assyria would be like a flood sweeping over the nation up to their neck. Deliverance would come with a great cost. And at the end of the day Judah still had a decision to make, would they trust in God or would they trust in Assyria?

We are at risk of this as well aren't we? Let's say we face a financial crisis in our lives. We pray, we work hard, we make the best decisions we can, and God provides, we have enough to pull through. Well if the answer to the financial crisis was earning enough money, and budgeting well, then maybe we should figure out how to earn more money, save our money, not spend our money, so that next time we will have enough money and we won't need God's help. See how that works, we replaced our trust in God with a trust in the provision that God granted. The same can be said of our health. Let's be careful not to replace God with what he has given us. Let's make sure we worship the giver of every good gift, and not the gift that is given.

When we are living in fear, we are easily misled by conspiracies and lies. This next warning to Isaiah, again, so important for us today. Look at verse 11-15. When people get scared we will listen to all kinds of things that affirm or confirm our fear. Isaiah warns us not to get caught up in all kinds of conspiracies and lies. Well, there goes half the internet. Seriously, I read that Silver prices were through the roof. Over \$80/ounce, so I did a little research online, and next thing I know YouTube was flooded with videos declaring the end of the world because all the world banks are buying all the silver and if you don't buy some too you are sunk. I could have doom scrolled for hours. That's just one tiny example. When we are ruled by fear instead of trust, we will believe anything if it confirms what we are afraid of.

When we chose to live in fear the consequences can be devastating.

Look at what Isaiah says will happen to those who reject the Lord and live in fear. Verse 20-22. Living in fear leads to darkness, bitterness and despair. It can effect a whole nation, and lets be honest, it seems like this darkness and fear mentality has really infected our nation today.

But we have an answer to this fear and darkness and his name is Jesus. Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah seven hundred years before his birth, and he gave him a name, actually four names that demonstrate that **the Messiah will overcome fear in every way**. We don't have time this morning to unpack every part of this prophecy but it will sound very familiar since we read it regularly at Christmas time. Let's look at 9:1-7.

I want to focus on the names of the Messiah that Isaiah gives us. This could be a whole sermon. These four names dispel the fear that we so often face.

Wonderful Counselor. Jesus promises to give us wise counsel. Isaiah 11:1-4a. *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.* Colossians 2:1-3. Paul says: *For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Isaiah reminds us not to get caught up in the cycle of fear and conspiracy.

Instead, we are to trust in the Lord. We are to trust what God says, not what is shouted at us on the news or social media. But in order to trust what God says, we need to know what God says. **We have to be rooted in his word, acquainted with his voice, and sensitive to his Spirit.** One of my seminary professors said that Christians should have a news paper in one hand and our Bible in the other. Aware and involved in the world, but rooted in God's word and truth.

Mighty God. Jesus fights for us. This word for mighty is used to describe soldiers who were distinguished in battle. King David had a group of mighty men who fought beside him in battle. Throughout the Old Testament God is described as the Mighty One of Israel. So in Jesus we see one who is fully man and fully God. He is strong and mighty. Zephaniah 3:17 says: *The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you with his love; he will exalt over you with loud singing.* As we watch the world go crazy around us, as we fight our own fears and personal battles, let's remember we have a mighty one who is fighting for us. He is able to overcome any trial, any sickness, any threat or enemy, and he is on our side.

Everlasting Father: Jesus is a strong and safe provider. This one seems a little bit confusing, especially as we read the New Testament and Jesus speaks of God as his Father. God has revealed himself as Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, distinct in personhood and one in nature. So we don't want to confuse the messiah with the Father. So how do we understand this name? Think about this as describing how the messiah will act towards his people as a loving Father forever. Psalm 103:6-13. *The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does*

he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

As strong, loving father should be a source of safety and provision for his children. When they are afraid they run to him. Jesus is that loving source of strength, like a sanctuary or strong tower, someone we can run when we are afraid. Jesus promises to provide for us, to look out for us, the way a father would work hard and provide for his children. We see this in many of the miracles that Jesus performed.

Prince of Peace. Jesus promises to bring peace on earth and in our lives. As war and threats of war continue to dominate the news cycle, we cannot help but long for the Prince of Peace to come. Isaiah describes how one day Jesus will bring true and lasting peace to the nations. Until that day comes, we continue to pray and trust that God is in control. In John 16:33 Jesus reminds us *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* It doesn't always feel like Jesus has overcome the world. Sometimes it really feels like evil is winning. But we hold fast to God's promises and in the midst of all the craziness in the world, we can have peace in our own hearts when we trust in him. Paul tells us in Phil 4:6-7. *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

So, the nation of Judah was at a moment of crisis. They were being threatened with attack by an alliance of nations, they were full of fear, and they had a decision to make. Would they be ruled by fear and all the pitfalls that came with it? Would they put their trust in Assyria, the superpower in the region though it would exact a heavy price, or would they put their trust in God, the mighty one. God promised that one day, a Savior would come that would bring true wisdom, strength, and lasting peace. He has come and his name is Jesus. And when each of us face

our own fear, we too will have the choice to either look for help in the world around us, or to look to Jesus for our strength and our help.

This week as you go, here are a few questions to wrestle with.

1. What are you afraid of? Are you allowing that fear to rule over you or are you surrendering it to the Lord?
2. Are you recognizing God's provision in your life? How is he meeting your needs today and are you content with that provision?
3. Who are you listening too? There are so many voices in the world today, and we can easily get swept up in conspiracy and lies. Who are you seeking out for wisdom and truth? Is it time to turn all that stuff off and just listen to the wisdom that the Lord has for us?

Think about those things. Let's pray.