

## Small Group Guide: Living in God's Sovereignty

### Based on Isaiah 41:1-20

#### Opening Prayer

Begin by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and help group members apply God's Word to their lives.

#### Icebreaker

Share a time when you felt like you were "holding onto the side of the pool" instead of trusting God completely. What made you hesitant to let go?

#### Key Scripture

**Isaiah 41:10** - "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

#### Summary of Main Points

1. **God Is Sovereign** - We must not just know or declare God's sovereignty, but live in it daily
2. **Three Word Pictures of God's Help:**
  - God upholds us with His righteous right hand (like a father catching a child)
  - God turns our weakness into strength (from worm to bulldozer)
  - God provides abundantly in our need (rivers in the desert)

#### Discussion Questions

##### Understanding the Text

1. Why does God tell His people "fear not" over 80 times in Scripture? What does this repetition tell us about human nature and God's character?
2. In Isaiah 41:5-7, the people turn to idols they've made with their own hands. What are modern-day equivalents of these idols? What do we create or control to manage our fear?
3. God calls Israel "my friend" (v. 8). How does this relationship differ from merely being a servant? How does Jesus expand on this in John 14:27?

## Personal Reflection

4. The sermon mentions we often try to hide our weaknesses, but God wants us to acknowledge them. Why is it important to "rest and even rejoice" in our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9)?
5. Think about the image of the child jumping into the deep end of the pool, trusting his father to catch him. What "deep end" is God calling you to jump into right now? What's holding you back?
6. Pastor Steve mentioned how God provided neighbors when he moved to a new town. Share a time when God's "bulldozer" showed up in your life in an unexpected way.

## Application

7. The sermon emphasizes replacing our "I wills" with God's "I wills." What are some "I wills" you need to surrender to God's sovereignty this week?
8. Isaiah 41:1 says, "Listen to me in silence." How can you create space for silence with God in your daily routine? What practices might help you stop being "handsy" and start listening?
9. What fears are currently driving your decisions? How would those decisions change if you truly believed God is sovereign over those situations?

## Key Takeaways

- **Fear is not our story** - As God's friends, we have a different narrative than the world
- **God absorbs our fear into His strength** - We don't have to fix everything ourselves
- **Weakness + God's sovereignty = Strength** - Our limitations become opportunities for God to show His power
- **Silence precedes surrender** - We must stop, listen, and invite God into our fears

## Practical Applications

Choose one or more to practice this week:

### Individual Practices

- **Morning Declaration:** Each morning this week, say aloud: "This is the day the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it" - then consciously surrender the day to God's sovereignty
- **Fear Inventory:** Write down your current fears. Next to each one, write Isaiah 41:10 and ask God how He wants to address that specific fear
- **Silence Retreat:** Set aside 15-30 minutes this week to sit in complete silence before God, inviting Him to speak to your fears

### Group Practices

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up and share one area where you're trying to be "handsy" instead of trusting God. Check in with each other throughout the week
- **Testimony Time:** At your next gathering, share stories of how God has been your "bulldozer" or caught you when you jumped into the deep end

### Memory Verse

**Isaiah 41:13** - "For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the one who helps you.'"

### Closing Reflection

Read this quote from Andrew Murray (mentioned in the sermon):

*"It is our weakness, heartily accepted and continually realized, that gives our claim and access to the strength of him who has said, 'My strength is made perfect in weakness.'"*

**Question:** How does accepting your weakness actually become a strength when living in God's sovereignty?

### Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- Confess areas where you've been trying to control outcomes instead of trusting God
- Ask God to help each person "jump into the deep end" in their specific situations
- Thank God for His sovereign care and His promise to never forsake His people
- Pray for courage to live in God's sovereignty this week

### Before Next Week

Journal about one moment this week where you chose to trust God's sovereignty instead of giving in to fear. Be ready to share with the group.