

Fact Sheet for **“Fear and Trust”**
Isaiah 36:1-22

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Fear is a very strong feeling. It is used as a motivating tool in sales and insurance. There is a balance between our fears and our trust in God, between what is wise and what is foolish. And, we all do this dance. For the next several Sundays we will be looking at some events recorded by Isaiah that speak directly to trust in the face of great fear.

Isaiah is largely a prophetic book, but right in the middle is an island of narrative, story. We connect easily to stories (Cain and Abel, Abraham sacrificing Isaac, Joseph and his brothers, Moses and the Ten Commandments, David and Goliath, Daniel and the lion's den, the paralytic being let down through the roof, Paul on the Damascus road). Each of these stories teaches us about God and about ourselves. Each encourages us in our Christian walk. This story from Isaiah, though not well known, is as powerful as the others. And God considered these events so important that they are recorded in three books of the OT (Isaiah 36:1-22; 2 Kings 18:13-37; 2 Chronicles 32:9-19).

Here's the background. Temple worship had been shut down... the doors had been shut, the lamps had not been lit, incense was not lit and burnt offerings we not made. Because of this they were being judged by God. In the first year of Hezekiah's reign he called the priests and Levites together and had them cleans the temple and restore worship in the temple. The Passover, which had been neglected for years, was observed with a great celebration. In the cities places of idol worship were torn down. Tithes and offerings were again brought to the Lord. The people were reconnecting to God! (Read 2 Kings 18:5-7a and 2 Chronicles 31:20-21.) However, in the 14th year of his reign he faltered (2 Kings 18:13-16). Now we come to Isaiah 36.

Read Isaiah 36:1-2

“The Rabshakeh” is not a proper name. It is a reference to the field commander.

Read Isaiah 36:3-6

There is a hint here that there may have been a hope that Egypt would come to their rescue.

Read Isaiah 36:7

The field commander was referring the the places of idol worship that Hezekiah had torn down.

Read Isaiah 36:8-9

They were vastly outnumbered by the Assyrian army.

Read Isaiah 36:10

The Lord was behind this attack, but the field commander was taunting Hezekiah and actually didn't believe that.

Read Isaiah 36:11-12

Then the field commander turned his attention to demoralizing the people of Jerusalem.

Read Isaiah 36:13-20

This was a direct challenge to God, and it would not turn out well for Assyria.

Read Isaiah 36:21

Imagine you were there in Jerusalem that day and had heard the words of the field commander. It would have put your faith to the test.

Assyria had overrun several cities in Judah.

They had a vastly superior army.

The field commander was offering life if they surrendered, but the strong possibility of death if they resisted.

Would fear have engulfed you?

How firm would your trust in God have been?

As you will see in coming weeks God showed up!

Now, take that same thought to today.

What are the risks you fear (financial, health, family, our church)? Does fear engulf you? How firm is your trust in Him?

ESV Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

How will a choice to trust God in the face of great risk affect your values, thoughts, and feelings?

I want to end today with a passage that traditionally is quoted at funerals, memorial services, and gravesides. But its main application is for life, not death.

Turn in your Bible to Psalm 23

Read Psalm 23.