



Links Players

8 WHO AM I?: A FEARLESS ONE

The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1, NIV)

THROUGH THE MANY YEARS WHEN I COACHED HIGH SCHOOL, I saw dual commonalities on the fifth tee of our home course. It is a par-3 of about 155 yards, so it's not a particularly testy hole in terms of distance. But two fears arise on this Billy Bell gem.

The first fear is painfully obvious for the new golfer. It is water. While you need to carry the ball just 90 or 100 yards to clear this obstacle, it creates terror for newbies who aren't confident they will put the ball in the air. The second fear is the one recognized only by the accomplished golfer who has played the hole several times. It is the left greenside bunker, a deep pit of a hazard that makes par virtually impossible if the hole is located in the front or middle of the green.

What we know to be true on every occasion, however, is that fear will alter your swing in miserable ways. In fact, I am convinced that the etymology of the expression "self-fulfilling prophecy" is directly traced to first golfer who said, "Don't hit it in the water, don't hit it in the water, don't hit it in the water...!"

Fear almost never wins the day. Not in golf, not in action movies, not in business, and not in our faith. Certainly, there is room for prudence and caution, but on top of these must come our fixed assurance that God is in control.

The book of Acts is in many ways a study in how the apostles set aside common fears of men and took up the bold work of preaching the gospel of Christ among two groups of people who positioned themselves murderously against it: the ruling religious elite and the ruling political powermongers. In an early scene, after several of the apostles had been arrested and jailed, an angel of the Lord freed them to preach again, and they went right back out into the streets to proclaim Christ. No hesitation. And when challenged again by the leaders, the apostles said, "We must obey God rather than men."

This is the essence of being a fearless one in Christ. When we remember that God goes before us into every battle, and that he is our rear guard, we march with confidence—even if we are lying in a hospital bed or are chained to our desk finishing a critical project. Where the enemy would discourage us and strike fear into our hearts, God can bring us peace, strength, and courage.

Opening questions Is there a shot in golf that regularly scares you? How about a hole on a familiar course? What strategies have you employed to combat this fear?

READING 2 Timothy 1:7; Isaiah 41:8-13; Joshua 1:1-9

Fear's opposition (2 Timothy 1)

What fears might a young believer such as Timothy encounter? What does God instill in a believer's spirit to counter fear (or timidity)? How can we depend more on these three gifts of God?

The promise of God's defense (Isaiah 41)

As the people of God, what is the basis for our fearlessness?

Strong and courageous (Joshua 1)

What great endeavor did God task Joshua with? What words of encouragement did God give to Joshua to offset any fear? How would learning these same words of God help you through fearful challenges?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/JYgkoh4Eh4g>.