

Even if My Greatest Fears Are Realized

Total Time: 20 min

Note: This prayer guide would be appropriate for politically mixed groups before the election, and for groups that are united in disappointment after the election. It can also be used in a personal devotional time.

OPENING | 3 min

PSALM 112:6-7 (NIV)

*Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.
They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.*

JOHN 16:33 (NIV)

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

COLOSSIANS 1:15-17 (NIV)

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Many of us try to calm our fears by dismissing worst case scenarios as highly unlikely. We say things like, "I don't have to be afraid of flying because plane crashes are extremely rare." That might help, but then we're reminded that sometimes planes do crash, and the anxiety comes rushing forward again.

We try to push back fear through logic, but anxious thoughts are not easily stopped. This is especially true with the influence of social media, the news cycle, and our anxious, fractured culture.

Scripture gives us a different approach. We can pray "Even If" prayers to ground ourselves in Christ and trust that he holds all things together and we will not be overcome.

For example:

"Even if I get a scary diagnosis, Jesus, I know you will be with me every step of the way."

“Even if I fail this class, God, I know I will always be loved by you and that you will never leave me or forsake me.”

“Even at the moment of my death, I will not be afraid because God, your presence will be there.”

So, when it comes to election season we can pray:

“Even if my greatest fears come to pass, even if the candidates whom I believe will destroy our country are put into power, I will trust in you, Lord. You are unchanging. You are sovereign. You hold all things together. You are the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (1 Timothy 6:15). And Lord, I bring before you all those who would be most negatively impacted by the aftermath of those results. I trust that you will show me how you want me and my community to serve our neighbors nearby and worldwide by your grace and for your glory. Amen.”

BREATH PRAYER | 2 min

Find a comfortable, quiet space for you and/or your small group to rest.

A breath prayer is one that that can be said silently or out loud in a single breath while breathing in or out.

We begin our prayer time with one minute of silence. Invite everyone to practice a breath prayer during this silence, saying the first line in their minds as they breathe in, and the second line as they breathe out. It may be helpful to sit with both feet flat on the floor and with hands open in a posture of opening ourselves to the Spirit and releasing our anxieties to God.

(as you inhale) “Holy Spirit, fill me.”
(as you exhale) “I release my fears to You.”

RESPONSIVE PRAYER | 1 min

One: God of the ages, you are unchanging.

Many: Give us eyes to behold your majesty.

One: Loving Savior, you are sovereign.

Many: We confess that our understanding is limited. We confess that too often we put our hope in a particular political outcome.

One: Ruler of all nations, you are holy.

Many: We pledge our allegiance to you and you alone.

All: Our hope is in you, Lord. You are our deliverer. You are our refuge. You are the only one who is worthy of our worship.

SCRIPTURE READING | 2 min

PSALM 46 (NIV)

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."
The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

SILENT REFLECTION | 5 min

Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your reflection on the following questions and allow emotions to surface. You might want to record your thoughts in a journal.

1. Where have you felt fear or anxiety around election outcomes this season? In what ways have your thoughts, feelings, words, and actions come from fear and mirrored the world's ways instead of embodying the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)?
2. How can the Psalmist say, "We will not fear, though the earth gives way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea" (verse 2)? What is the basis for that confidence?
3. Write your own version of Psalm 46:1-3 as your prayer and affirmation of faith in the midst of the current political situation.

For example: "God, you are the one I can run to when I need help. You will always be there. So I will not fear, even if we lose everything that I hold dear in this country, even if my greatest fears are realized."

COMMUNITY PRAYER | 5 min

We invite you into a time of corporate prayers of repentance and affirmation of our allegiance to Christ alone. Reflect silently for 3 minutes, then confess aloud any personal sin or the sins of your communities or people groups. After each prayer, the community responds, "Lord have mercy."

You may want to pray along the lines of the prompts below.

"Almighty God, Your Scriptures warn us about expecting a political leader to save us from the messes we have made. Yet we so easily fall into the same trap that ensnared the ancient Israelites when they demanded a human king like the other nations. We confess our quickness to put our hope in a political leader or election outcome instead of in you. Forgive us, Lord."

"Sovereign and gracious God, in your word you repeatedly told your people, 'Do not be afraid.' We humbly acknowledge that your instruction to your people not to be afraid implies that we have agency in this matter. Yet we confess that at times we have fed our anxieties instead of actively resisting fear in your name. Forgive us, Lord."

"Holy God, you have clearly taught us to walk in your ways in everything we do, but we confess that in our fear we have yielded to the temptation to abandon the fruit of the Spirit in the name of political expediency. Acting out of fear, we have shared half-truths or unverified statements about the opposition. Too often we

have been willing to use straw man arguments in the service of winning. We have sacrificed our integrity because of our fears. Forgive us, Lord."

"Gracious God, your word warns us about the use of our tongues. James 3:9-10 (NIV) says: 'With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.' We confess the times that our words have not reflected you, the times when we have not been 'quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry' (James 1:19 NIV). We confess that in our fears and frustrations, too often our words to others and about others have been cruel. In all these things, we have surely grieved you deeply. Forgive us, Lord."

CLOSING PRAYER | 1 min

One person prays aloud:

Righteous and holy God, we confess
that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed.
We have sinned through what we have done
and through what we have left undone,
through what we have said
and through what we have left unsaid.
We choose today to reaffirm our trust in you
as the only king on the throne of our hearts
We choose today to say, "Even if our greatest fears are realized,
we will trust in you because you are unshakeable."
We also ask you to show us how to stand in solidarity
with those who are most vulnerable in our world.
Give us the grace and courage to submit our lives and resources
as we follow you in showing your loving care to them.

AFFIRMATION AND BENEDICTION | 1 min

The Affirmation is an excerpt from the Confession of Evangelical Conviction --
<https://www.evangelicalconfession2024.com>.

The Benediction is from Scripture, Jude 1:24-25 (NIV)

Read aloud together:

We stand united in our confession of faith in Jesus Christ, resolved to uphold the truth of the Gospel in the face of political pressure and cultural shifts. We commit to being a light in the world (Matthew 5:14-16), and faithful witnesses to the transforming power of Christ's love. We pray that God's Spirit will revive our Church and strengthen Christ's people to be agents of his presence and blessing in this turbulent age.

"To him who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen."

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