



## **GROW GUIDE**

Week of September 11, 2016

### **SERMON NOTES**

“Hope Unseen” — Rev. Dr. R. Brandon Harris  
Part 1 of 5 in the series *Fear Not: Trusting God for Life Unafraid*  
Romans 8:22-25

#### **Our response to fear**

Fear is centered in the amygdala.

An effect of the fear response is that we

think less clearly,

have difficulty receiving and assimilating new information,

make mistakes in perception and interpretation, and

default to risk avoidance.

A future built on fear is not a Christian future.

At the core of the Christian mission is helping people hear the voice of the

Spirit of God promising our adoption as children of God.

The only thing that has a chance of freeing us from the tyranny of fear

and moving us into God's future is hope.

“The believer's vocation...is to bring God's future into the present.... The values and priorities of God's dominion are believed only so far as they are enacted.” —Craig Hill, *In God's Time* (Eerdmans, 2002), 197-198

#### **The Book of Daniel as an encouragement to hope against fear**

The stories in Daniel begin in about 597 B.C. when the Judeans are taken

captive into Babylon. The book was actually written about 400

years later during the ruthless rule of the Seleucid empire.

The author of Daniel writes down these stories to help an oppressed people

learn to choose God's future against one defined by fear.

#### **The significance of enacted hope**

Questions of faith are not abstract. Nearly everything we do in life is

an opportunity for hope in God's future.

In the face of danger and uncertainty we need a strong memory that God is the ruler yet.

## DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Mon. 9/12/2016** Daniel 1 *Daniel and his friends chosen as courtiers*  
Daniel and his friends find their way into the court of the King of Babylon and resolve to remain faithful to God against the command of the terrifying king Nebuchadnezzar.

**Tue. 9/13/2016** Daniel 2:48-3:30 *The fiery furnace*  
Nebuchadnezzar promotes Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be administrators of Babylon, but they refuse to worship a golden statue at the king's command. They are punished by being thrown into a furnace of fire.

**Wed. 9/14/2016** Daniel 5 *King Belshazzar's feast*  
The new ruler of Babylon throws a feast in which mysterious handwriting appears on the walls of the palace. Daniel interprets the handwriting and is rewarded.

**Thu. 9/15/2016** Daniel 6 *The lions' den*  
The new king Darius is tricked by some in his court to impose a law that whomever prays to anyone but the king would be punished by being thrown into a den of lions. Daniel continues to pray to the Lord God and is given the punishment prescribed by the law.

**Fri. 9/16/2016** Daniel 7:1, 9-14 *A vision of the true king*  
Daniel is granted a vision of a great beast being judged by the "Ancient One," who has dominion that is everlasting and shall never pass away. The Beast was a symbol for the Seleucid Empire, which ruled Palestine at the time the stories of Daniel were written down.

**Sat. 9/17/2016** Daniel 12 *The promise to those who persevere*  
Daniel sees a vision of the resurrection of the dead. He learns that this is God's promise to those who persevere in faith through terrible persecution. The first readers of this promise would have been those Jews enduring the persecution of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

### Extra reading for the week of 9/11/2016

If you have a study bible containing the books of the Maccabees, read the terrifying accounts of the oppression endured by the Jews under the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes:

1 Maccabees 1:20-24, 41-64

2 Maccabees 6:1-10, 18-31

You can also read these stories online at this web address: <http://goo.gl/AfCjzx>

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Alexander, Evan - Depression

Phillips, Randy - Praise for recovery

Snead, James - Declining health.

Seale, Joe Ed - Health concerns, praise for a return home from hospital

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## ABOUT THE GROW GUIDE

This is the first of a trial series of study guides that will be published during the *Fear Not* sermon series. The Grow Guide is intended to provide Scripture readings and notes that will help you incorporate the weekly sermon into your own journey in faith. If you find this helpful or have any suggestions for how it might be improved, please contact Pastor Brandon to offer feedback: [brandon@rbcfumc.org](mailto:brandon@rbcfumc.org).