

Introduction:

1. Of the various issues going on in current events today which tempts you the most to be fearful? Why?
2. Give an example of a frightening thing you thought was going to happen, but never came to pass.

Understanding:

3. Read 2 Chronicles 28:16-21. This passage tells us some of the history behind today's passage. Who was Ahaz terrified of? Who did Ahaz turn to for help? How did that work out? Have you ever been tempted to make the kind of unwise alliance that Ahaz did?
4. Pastor Dave gave several examples of where fear might be driving leaders' decisions in current events. How can we make wise decisions that are not driven by fear? See both Matthew 10:16 and Isaiah 8:11-13.
5. In Isaiah 7:9a Isaiah addresses Ahaz's fear by saying: "The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son". Read Luke 12:4-7 to see how Jesus addresses fears. How does that connect to what Isaiah told Ahaz? How do these scriptures affect how you deal with your own fears?
6. In Isaiah 7:9b it says "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all." Compare this to James 1:5-8. How do these scriptures say we should exercise faith? Does it have anything to do with false advice that is not really biblical? How does it affect you?
7. In Isaiah 7:12 Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." He was referring to Deuteronomy 6:16. Jesus also referred to Deuteronomy 6:16 in Matthew 4:5-7. What was the difference between how Jesus and Ahaz applied the verse? And what is the meaning of that for you?
8. Ahaz got a sign in Isaiah 7:14 which was part of a prophetic promise of safety that came true for him. But in Matthew 1:22-23 the same prophecy is applied to Jesus. How can these BOTH be true?
9. Read Psalm 2. What does this Psalm say about how God views political plans and plots? Is taking refuge in Jesus merely a nice option? Why?

Application:

10. The most powerful way to handle fear is to develop a deeper fear of God. Look again at Isaiah 8:11-13. What are some of your first instincts when you are overwhelmed by fear? Take a specific fear you have of something bad that might happen and bring it to the Lord in the light of the truth here.
11. In Isaiah 7:14 Immanuel means "God is with us." See Exodus 3:12; Deuteronomy. 2:7; Joshua 1:5; and Isaiah 41:10. What do these verses have in common? What do these ancient verses say to you about God at work in your life in 2015?