

What Are You Afraid Of?

When you hear the word fear, what do you think of? My gut reaction is not a positive one. Fear can be scary, paralyzing, and even divisive. As followers of Jesus, we should turn to him with all of our worries and fears. Isaiah 41:10 says, “Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

We see this play out repeatedly in the Bible. Fear and personal failure set the stage for God’s glory to shine through. This ultimately grows the Kingdom of God, reaching new believers and strengthening the faith of all of his followers.

For example, in the book of Daniel, chapter 6, we see this pattern play out for King Darius:

Shortly after becoming King, some of his administrators and high officials convinced him to sign a law that would ultimately condemn his “most capable” administrator, Daniel. After signing the law and learning that Daniel would be implicated, Daniel 6:14 states, “Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament. And after Daniel was placed in the Lion’s den, verse 18 says that “The king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting... and couldn’t sleep at all that night”

King Darius was clearly fearful for Daniel’s life, and feeling a sense of failure, so much so that he couldn’t sleep or eat. But then, we see God’s glory shine through: “Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions’ den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?’ Daniel answered, ‘Long live the king!’”

The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

Finally, after seeing this miracle, the King testified about the power of Daniel’s God to his entire kingdom.

Here are a few questions to discuss in your group:

- Can you find other passages in the Bible where fear sets the stage for God’s glory to break through?
- Have you experienced any moments of fear or failure that led to a stronger faith? Did those moments impact the faith of others around you?
- What current fears or failures do you still need to offer up to God?