



### “The Fear Means I’ve Forgotten”

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

#### Devotion and Discussion Questions

**Key Texts (TLV):** **Is 51:9-16;** *Is. 35:3-10; Is. 30:7; Ps. 74:12-14; Ps. 87:4; Exod. 6:6; Ezek. 29:3; Is. 43:1; Is. 44:1-2; Rom. 8:31; Phil. 4:6-7*

Isaiah 51 is a tender and powerful passage for those who are pursuing righteousness and waiting on the LORD in the middle of pressure, delay, and fear. The title, “The Fear Means I’ve Forgotten,” is not meant as condemnation. It is a gracious diagnosis. In the moment fear overtakes the heart, something has slipped from view. We have forgotten who God really is, and we have forgotten whose we are. Isaiah shows us that comfort comes not by pretending the threat is unreal, but by fixing our eyes on a greater reality. The LORD is the One who comforts, the One who acts with His mighty arm, the One who made heaven and earth, and the One who will not fail His people. That is the ground beneath every anxious heart.

#### **1. REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE (Is. 51:9-11)**

In verses 9-10, Isaiah and those who are pursuing righteousness respond to God’s promises with a passionate prayer: *“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of ADONAI”* (Is. 51:9). The LORD had just spoken about His righteousness and His salvation, and now His people respond by saying, in essence, “Then do it again.” They remember the Exodus, when God defeated Egypt and opened a path through the sea for His people. The language even speaks of God defeating the “dragon” or sea monster beneath the waters. In other words, God didn’t just part the sea—He dealt with the hidden powers that stood against His people.

This is how faith works. It remembers what God has already done. The LORD had told them to look back to Abraham and Sarah, to remember His faithfulness through the long wait. Now the people take that idea further and remember Egypt and the Red Sea. The God who redeemed them with an outstretched arm once can do it again. That is why they also declare the promise of the future: *“Now the ransomed of ADONAI will return, and come to Zion with singing”* (Is. 51:11). Faith remembers the past so it can trust God with the present and the future.

#### **2. FEAR COMES WHEN WE FORGET (Is. 51:12-13)**

In verse 12 the LORD answers their prayer with strong and comforting words: *“I, I am the One who comforts you”* (Is. 51:12). He begins by reminding them who He is. Then He asks a question that goes straight to the heart: why are you afraid of mortal people who die and fade like grass? Human beings can threaten, oppress, and cause real pain, but they are not ultimate. They are temporary. When we let fear take over, it is often because the problem in front of us begins to look bigger than the God above us.

Verse 13 explains what is really happening: *“But you forgot ADONAI your Maker”* (Is. 51:13). The problem is not that the danger is imaginary—the problem is that we forget who God is. We forget that He stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. We forget that He is the One who called us by name and said, *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you... you are Mine”* (Is. 43:1). When the oppressor fills our vision, fear grows. But when God fills our vision again, fear begins to shrink. As Scripture reminds us, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom. 8:31).

### **3. GOD PROMISES FREEDOM AND COMFORT (Is. 51:14–16)**

In verse 14 the LORD speaks hope into the situation: *“Soon one bowed down will be released. He will not die and go to the Pit, nor will his bread be lacking”* (Is. 51:14). The picture is of someone trapped and cowering under pressure. But God says that will not be the end of the story. Freedom is coming. Life will overcome death. Provision will overcome lack. The LORD is reminding His people that the power of oppression will not ultimately win.

Then in verses 15–16 the LORD reminds them again who He is. He is the One who controls the sea and its roaring waves. Nothing is outside His authority. Finally, He turns to the Servant and says, *“I have put My words in your mouth, and covered you with the shadow of My hand”* (Is. 51:16). God protects and equips the Servant until the time comes for His mission to be revealed. Through Him, God speaks life to Zion and declares once again, *“You are My people.”* Even in the middle of fear, God’s covenant promise has not changed.

### **CONCLUSION**

The message of this passage is both simple and powerful. When fear takes over, it often means we have lost sight of something true. We have forgotten who God is and who we are to Him. The answer is not to pretend the struggle isn’t real. The answer is to remember the bigger reality. The LORD is the One who comforts. He is the One who redeemed His people before. He is the One who rules over heaven and earth. And He is the One who keeps His promises. So when fear rises, let it become a reminder to turn your eyes back to Him. Remember what He has done. Remember what He has promised. Remember that the oppressor does not have the final word—God does. His salvation endures. His righteousness never fades. And the redeemed of the LORD will indeed come with singing.

If anxiety or pressure has been weighing on your heart, do not hide it from Him. Instead, let it become a moment of returning. When fear shows up, it is often a signal that our focus has shifted away from who God is. So take this moment to lift your eyes again. Remember His faithfulness. Remember that He has redeemed you and called you His own. Ask the LORD to help you trust Him again in the places where you feel overwhelmed. Ask Him to steady your heart and fill you with His peace. He is still the One who comforts, and His promises have not failed.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think Isaiah calls people to remember God’s past actions before asking Him to act again?
2. What are some ways remembering God’s faithfulness can strengthen your faith today?
3. How does fear reveal that we may have forgotten something about God?
4. What does it mean in daily life to “fix your eyes” on God rather than the problem?
5. How does the promise *“You are My people”* change the way we face fear?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

ADONAI, thank You for reminding us that You are the One who comforts us. When fear rises in our hearts, help us remember who You are and who we are to You. Forgive us for the moments when we forget Your power, Your presence, and Your promises. Teach us to look back at Your faithfulness and trust You again today. Strengthen our hearts, calm our fears, and fill us with Your shalom. Help us walk forward in confidence, knowing that You hold our lives in Your hands. Guard our hearts and our minds in Messiah Yeshua.

*B’Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.*