

Discussion Questions



God's Presence in Scary Places

Based on Daniel 6

This session explores the story of Daniel in the lion's den, focusing not just on the dramatic rescue but on the two "scary places" every believer faces: the place of anticipation and the place of trust. Daniel, a man of about 80 years old with a lifetime of faithful discipline, shows us what it looks like to remain anchored to God when circumstances feel overwhelming and outcomes are uncertain.

Opening Question

Take a few minutes to ease into the conversation with this question. There are no wrong answers.

- What is something that genuinely frightens you that others might find surprising or even funny? What is something others find scary that does not bother you at all?
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Key Takeaways

Use these points to ground your discussion in the core ideas from the sermon.

1. Scary places are universal. Every person, at some point in life, will face a moment or season that is genuinely frightening. The question is not whether we will face those places, but how we will respond when we do.

2. The first scary place is anticipation. Anticipation can be healthy or unhealthy. Healthy anticipation sharpens focus and helps us prepare. Unhealthy anticipation pulls us into worst-case scenarios that loop repeatedly in our minds, often before anything has even happened. Daniel knew the decree had been published and knew what was coming. He still chose to pray.

3. The second scary place is trust. Trust requires vulnerability. Daniel did not know whether God would stop the lions. He chose to make himself completely vulnerable before God anyway. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, he trusted God even with the possibility that things might not turn out the way he hoped.

4. God does not always rescue us the way Daniel was rescued. This is an honest and important truth. Trusting God in hard times is not forced positivity or denying reality. It means being honest with God about your pain, trusting His character even when you do not fully understand His plan, and anchoring yourself in what He has already done.

5. Trust is not the absence of fear. It is a choice made in spite of it. Daniel's faithfulness was not the result of having no fear. It was the result of a lifetime of cultivated discipline and relationship with God that carried him through the moment when everything was on the line.

Discussion Questions

Work through as many of these as time allows. Do not feel pressure to cover every question. Let the conversation breathe.

On Anticipation

1. Can you think of a time when your anticipation of something turned out to be far worse than the actual event itself? What did that experience teach you?
2. The sermon described unhealthy anticipation as spiraling into worst-case scenarios that loop repeatedly. Do you recognize that pattern in your own life? What tends to trigger it for you?
3. Daniel learned about the decree and then went home and prayed, just as he had always done. What does that tell you about the role of consistent spiritual habits when a crisis hits?
4. The sermon encouraged people not to try to reason their way out of unhealthy anticipation, but to invite God into it. What does that practically look like for you? What has helped you in the past?

On Trust

5. The sermon pointed out that trust requires vulnerability, and that vulnerability is especially difficult for people who have been hurt repeatedly. How has past hurt shaped the way you trust, either in relationships or in your relationship with God?
6. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said to Nebuchadnezzar that God was able to deliver them, but that even if He did not, they would not bow. Daniel 3:17-18 captures this posture. How do you personally wrestle with trusting God when you are not sure He will intervene the way you are hoping?

7. The sermon acknowledged honestly that God does not always rescue people the way He rescued Daniel. Has there been a time in your life when you felt like you were not rescued from the lions? How did that affect your faith, and where are you with it now?
8. C.S. Lewis wrote in "The Problem of Pain" that pain removes the veil of self-sufficiency and can lead us toward God in ways that comfort cannot. Do you agree with that? Has suffering ever drawn you closer to God in a way that ease did not?
9. The sermon mentioned anchoring ourselves in what God has already done, particularly the cross, as a foundation for trust in uncertain times. How do you personally return to that anchor when fear is loud?

Bringing It Together

10. Of the two scary places discussed in the sermon, anticipation and trust, which one is more difficult for you right now, and why?

Practical Applications

Choose one or two of these to take with you into the coming week.

1. Name your scary place. Take some time this week to write down what your current scary place actually is. Is it anticipation of something unknown? Is it a situation that requires you to trust God with an uncertain outcome? Naming it honestly is the first step toward bringing it to God.

2. Practice inviting God in rather than reasoning your way out. If you struggle with unhealthy anticipation, try replacing the habit of

analyzing worst-case scenarios with a simple, honest prayer. Tell God exactly what your mind is doing and ask Him to bring peace into that specific space.

3. Reflect on a moment when God came through. Spend time this week remembering a specific time when God was faithful to you. Write it down. Share it with someone. Anchoring yourself in what God has already done is not a small thing. It is a spiritual discipline.

4. Have an honest conversation with God. You do not have to pretend things are fine. The Psalms model brutal honesty before God. This week, try writing or praying through exactly how you feel about your current situation, including the fear, the doubt, and the uncertainty, and then sit quietly and wait.

5. Reach out to someone in your group. If someone in your group shared something today that resonated with you, follow up with them this week. Trust is built in community, not just in private devotion.

Closing Reflection

Read this portion of the closing prayer from the sermon aloud together, or have one person read it over the group:

"God, I want to pray for each of us here today. If there's someone here today that's in a season of anticipation of just negative things and their minds are racing and their hearts are troubled... I pray, Lord, I pray your peace on them. I pray that they would experience your peace and that their minds would be at rest... I pray for those in this room that are maybe in a place where they have to trust you with a very difficult situation... They're in that place right now, and this is scary for them because they know they can trust you, but they have to choose to be vulnerable and to trust you without knowing what the

outcome will be. I pray, Lord, that you would instill in them boldness, that you would instill in them confidence in you, and that no matter what they experience here on earth, that it does not change who you are."

Key Verse for the Week

Proverbs 3:5-6 describes the call to trust God completely rather than relying on our own understanding, with the promise that He will direct our path.

Write it down. Carry it with you. Return to it when anticipation or the weight of trust feels heavy this week.