

5 Reasons Not to Fear

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. So great to see you all this morning. Well, just this past week, I was out and about, I He said, I hate earthworms.

He said, I'm afraid of earthworms. Well, the other little fella looked at him and said, what is wrong with you?

Why are you afraid of earthworms? Well, the little three or four-year-old looked at him and in a real West Cork kind of accent, he said in response, sure, we're all afraid of something.

How true this little fella was. We're all at times afraid of something, no matter our age.

And you know what? It might not be earthworms for us all, but as humans, deep in our hearts, we're all afraid of something at times.

[1 : 27] We can fear failure. You know, what if this thing that I am trying, what if it fails? What if I don't succeed with this thing I'm trying to get up and running, or this thing I'm trying to do?

We can fear rejection. You know, what if I get left out of this group, or what if I'm kind of by myself in the end?

We can fear what people think. You know, do people really like me, or are they just sort of pretending to like me? Other people are a lot more likable than I am.

Or we can fear work, or school, or college. You know, what if I'm not able for this? What if I can't do this?

We can fear a decision ahead. You know, is it going to turn out this way? Is it going to turn out that way? We can fear illness. What if we get something?

[2 : 33] You know, I can admit, looking at my own life, I can find it so, so easy to get caught up in times, at times fearing this and fearing that.

You know, how will this turn out? How will that turn out? How's this going to go? How's that going to go? It can be so easy to feel afraid.

Well, in the book of Isaiah, God's people found themselves in a situation that made them very, very afraid. God's people at this time had been conquered by different rulers.

And this meant that thousands and thousands of God's people have been driven out of their land and had to go to a place called Babylon.

Well, in Babylon, God's people all of a sudden found themselves in a different land that was not their own. They had to leave much of their possessions behind. They were under pagan rule.

[3 : 35] And their future was pretty uncertain at this time. I was just thinking about this, you know. Imagine that. And I was just wondering if each one of us, just for a few moments, could picture all the things that we own.

You know, some of us might own land. Some of us might own a house. A lot of us don't own any of those two things.

But we might own a car or we might own some possessions. We might own some books or toys, whatever it is. Whatever it is that you own, just picture that for a moment in your mind.

Just picture what you own. And now imagine if some foreign rulers came and took over West Cork and you had to leave much of what you owned, only what you could carry in your hands.

You had to leave it behind and you had to go to a different place that you did not know what was going to happen next. I mean, for one, that would be very upsetting. And for two, it would be very uncertain.

[4 : 47] And all of that, I think, would cause us to be pretty afraid of what's going to happen next. Well, to encourage his people at this time of great fear, the Lord, through the book of Isaiah, spoke many different words of encouragement to his people.

Well, one of the most well-known lines of word of encouragement that the Lord spoke to his people in the book of Isaiah is Isaiah chapter 41, verse 10.

The Lord said to his people, Do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you.

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. The word for fear that is used in this verse can also mean to be anxious or to dread something.

So in this one verse, the Lord gives the instruction or the command not to be anxious, not to fear, not to dread. And then the Lord goes on to give five reasons in this one verse, not to fear, not to dread, or not to be anxious.

[6 : 14] And the five reasons are, I am your God. Sorry, I am with you. I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. And I will uphold you.

Any one of these reasons in this verse would be enough. But the Lord gives us five reasons in this one verse, not to be afraid.

Any one of these promises in Isaiah 41.10 is enough. But putting them all in together, they kind of form a flood of grace and mercy and assurance that are there for us just to kind of soak up.

Someone said about these words, may we as believers often just bask and soak in these wonderful words. This verse is not a one-tier cake of encouragement.

It's a five-tier cake. You know, this verse is not a one-story building of encouragement. It's a five-story building. This verse is not one wonderful flavor of ice cream in a bowl.

[7 : 27] It's five wonderful flavors of ice cream in a bowl. You know, whatever way we look at it, in this one verse, we're given these five wonderful encouragements of why we do not have to be afraid.

And you know, we all fear things at times. The Lord knows that. He knows our hearts. He knows our minds. We can all fear things at times.

And he has given us verses like this, not to condemn us, but to encourage us, to help us in our fears. So very briefly, I just want to touch over these five things that the Lord has given us that encourages us not to fear.

So the first reason why we do not need to be afraid is the Lord's promise, I am with you. One of the most wonderful promises that we have in Scripture is that the Lord is always with us.

You know, as believers, wherever we go, no matter what we face, we never face it alone because the Lord is with us. We never walk alone because the Lord is with us.

[8 : 44] He is our ever-present help in times of need. He's ever-present with us. Whatever it is we face, the Lord is with us, and his constant presence and companionship with us is such a comfort in times of need.

In times of need. Well, second, to build on God's promise that he is always with us, another reason why we do not have to fear is the Lord's promise, I am your God.

The Lord reminding his people that he is our God is a reminder that he will look after us. The Lord saying, I am your God, carries the implication that we are his people.

Well, the Lord will look after his people. So we do not need to fear because the Lord is our God and he will look after us, his people.

Third, another reason why we do not need to fear is the Lord's promise, I will strengthen you. You know, often when we're afraid and when we're anxious, you know, that's when we're at our weakest in a sense.

[10 : 00] Well, when we are at our weakness, we have one, the creator of the universe, who promises to strengthen us. We do not need to fear.

The Lord will strengthen us to face whatever it is that we need to face. And fourth, not only is the Lord always with us, not only is he our God who will look after us, not only will he strengthen us to add to these things, we do not need to fear because of the Lord's promise to help us.

Now this word to help also kind of means to surround and to protect and to aid. What a wonderful reality. You know, whatever it is we face, the Lord promises to help us, to protect us, to aid us.

And fifth, to kind of cap it all off, a final reason in this verse that can help us not to fear is the Lord's promise, I will uphold you.

Something needs to be upheld when it cannot uphold itself. And I think looking at these five, for me maybe, you know, for you, a different one might resonate with you at different times.

[11 : 24] I think for me this one kind of resonates with me largely because we've got this house plant at home and it has kind of grown away mad. You know, it's gone very, very tall, but it's got one problem, it cannot hold itself up.

So we have sort of, you know, we've done what everyone does, the old brush handles, and we try to kind of tie it up, see if it will stand by itself. But the only thing that really works is leaning it against the wall.

That's the only thing that keeps the thing standing. Well, you know what? When we are afraid, when we're anxious, when we're dreading something, when there's a sense that we can't even really uphold ourselves, the Lord promises to uphold us.

He promises to stand us up straight, that's better than any wall. He is the one who upholds us. And he upholds us with his righteous right hand.

And that's the ultimate symbol of power and strength. When we are weak, he is strong. The Lord, in this one verse, gives us five wonderful reasons why we do not need to fear.

[12 : 44] I am with you. I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you. You know, this verse shows us that we have a God a God who is with us, a God who is for us, a God who will help us, a God who will strengthen us, a God who will sustain us, a God who will carry us through.

And of course, this does not mean that the challenges will go away. We are not promised that for a second. I think what this means is, in and through the challenges, in and through the difficulties, the Lord will sustain us, the Lord will carry us, and he will bring us through.

You know, these words must have been such an encouragement to God's people at that time, in the day of Isaiah, when they were in exile. They must have been such an encouragement to them. Well, these words, you know, they still ring true today for us. So with whatever it is that we might be afraid of, whatever it is that's ahead of us, you know, whatever it is that's going on in our lives, I think we could all probably think of something.

These words remind us that we have a God who knows what's going on in our lives, we have a God who cares, and we have a God who will bring us through. And I think that that can really encourage us, and that can give us comfort with whatever it is that we are facing.

[14 : 25] Our God is with us, he is for us. And when he is with us and for us, who or what can be against us? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for your word, and we thank you that your word just highlights so much of your care for us, how you look after us, And Lord, I just pray that whatever it is that we might be fearing at this time, that you would help us to bring it to you.

You would help us to cast it over to you. You would help us to throw off that burden to you, Lord. And I just pray that we would be encouraged to trust you, to know that you'll bring us through, to know that you're in control.

that you're in control. And we can just look to you in confidence, knowing that whatever happens, that you have a great way of working all things out for good. And we thank you for this, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.