



TOSSING AND TURNING

January 31, 2021

Next Steps: Fear

OPENING PRAYER:

God of Grace, we gather together today carrying with us the fears that kept us tossing and turning through the night. We pray that this time together will help us to know we are not alone. We have you present to walk beside us through the fear, and we have each other to support us on the journey.

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do. Eleanor Roosevelt

BREAKING THE ICE:

We all experience fear. As a child do you remember being afraid of the dark, being alone, clowns, bugs, or the fear of something happening to someone you love? Share a story in which you were fearful as a child. There are so many things we could be afraid of. For example, some people have what is called acerophobia, which is the fear of foods being sour. There's catoptrophobia, which is not the fear of cats, but the fear of mirrors. Still others are afraid of chopsticks, numbers and certain fabrics. These may sound like silly fears to us, but to some people, these fears are real! What are some other things people may be afraid of?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Deuteronomy 31:1-8, Philippians 4:4-9. God promised Moses and the people of Israel the land of Canaan when they left Egypt. Moses sent 12 men from each tribe of Israel to cross the Jordan and explore the land. Although God promised the land and protection from the Canaanites, the people of Israel were too fearful to cross into the land. Now 40 years later only Joshua and Caleb remain to once again be courageous and cross the Jordan. (See Numbers 13 for the account.)

- How does Moses address the past fears of the Israelites?
- What would make this situation different than the original crossing of the Jordan?
- What do you believe is significant about Joshua crossing first?

NEXT STEPS:

How does fear impact our decision making?

The collective fear of the Israelites was contagious. Are you more fearful when you're alone, or does what others think drive your anxiety? Paul exhorts that those who follow Jesus have reason to rejoice in all circumstances. How might the promise that nothing is impossible with God help you face difficult circumstances?

CLOSING PRAYER:

God of promise, help us to see the giants before us and trust that you have a plan. Direct our paths in ways that lead to new life. When fear stirs our emotions, send courageous and caring friends to step into the situation with us. Amen.