

Fear | Week Two: Protected.

BIG IDEA: God will protect you as you do His work.
LAMENT: I am scared that I'll never know my calling.
SCRIPTURE: Exodus 4:2-5 / Galatians 5:13 / 1 Peter 5:2 / Acts 13:36
TAKEAWAY: Fear leads to a choice: move away or move forward.

Believers are all called to do God's work on earth. Not only do the stories of the Old Testament foreshadow the gospel, they also illustrate God's commitment to include people like you and me in accomplishing his purpose. God works through his people to accomplish his work. Frankly, talk of being on a mission from God takes my mind to the iconic work of cinematic genius, The Blues Brothers: "They'll never get caught. They're on a mission from God." Resident in me is a gnawing fear that responding to God's call will associate me with all the other freaks and crazies who have claimed to be "on a mission from God." If that is true of you as well, then you are in good company with Moses.

Moses communicates a predictable set of objections to God's call:

They will not believe me.
They will not listen to me.

Isn't that consistent with our fear? If we step out in faith and respond to God's call, will we ultimately be left on our own and exposed as delusional frauds? God responds to Moses with an affirming series of illustrations to underscore God's ultimate promise - "I will be with you."

God doesn't equip Moses with supernatural abilities to transform him into a parlor trick entertainer. God's purpose is to affirm to Moses, and to reveal to those that Moses is to lead, that Moses is, in fact, on a mission from God and that God is with him. What an incredible combination! You have been called by God to participate in his work on the earth. And, you have the assurance of God's word that he will be with you. God's presence is experienced in a special way by those who participate in God's purpose. In Exodus 3, God is emphatic with Moses: "Certainly, I will be with you...." God builds on his promise to Moses when he calls Joshua: "As I have been with Moses, I will be with you" (Joshua 3:7). In John 14 Jesus assures his disciples that his departure from them is in their best interest. He is going to ask the Father to give them another helper (the Holy Spirit) "that he may be with you forever" (John 14:6).

God is calling you to himself. God is calling you to participate in his mission. Our fears and self-doubt are addressed by a simple promise - "I will be with you." Your "I can't" objections lead you to the threshold of experiencing the "I will" promises of God.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

- > What do you think of when you hear the phrase "on a mission from God?"
- > Put yourself in Moses's position. What are some expected responses that he would receive when telling people that he was sent by God to deliver them from Egyptian slavery?
- > Why is the promise of God's presence, "I will be with you," such a profound promise? What is embedded in his "with you" promise?
- > What is meant by the statement that "God's presence is experienced in a special way by those who participate in God's purpose?" [NOTE: God is at work accomplishing his redemptive purpose. Those extending aid to orphans in Haiti or reaching out to a cul-de-sac neighbor are uniquely positioned to experience God's presence.]
- > What would you attempt, in line with God's purpose, if you had the assurance that God would be with you in it? And by the way, don't minimize the importance of small beginnings. God's call for Moses was national in scope. But for most of us, God is calling us to community focused things - volunteer in Kidz Warehouse, host a Family Promise night, lead a small group, and share your resources generously, among other community opportunities - to serve the city, engage the culture, and pursue normal people.

