

I am Afraid (part II)



Reflecting on my decision to let go of fear and recapture my 'no bars hold' confidence in God, had me doing a retrospective look on my entire life. Had I only become fearful recently? Was fear limited only to my response to Covid 19 or could I see footprints of that virus stamped in other areas of my life?

The children of Israel who left Egypt did not enter the promise land because of unbelief. Very often as I contemplated this story, I wondered how a people who had experience God's deliverance at the Red Sea could doubt God at this point. Just like the people of God waiting for the promised land; I developed amnesia regarding the power of God to protect, keep, sustain, deliver and heal. My eyes and mind were now being and controlled by this foreign entity that invaded my spirit and it dictated how I should process and react to every byte of information I received regarding the Corona Virus.

I am reminded of the analogy that a lecturer once shared with me; if you want to boil a frog then you must put it in cold water and slowly turn up the heat. The frog will keep adjusting to the heat until its too late for it to react. However, if you put it into a pot of boiling water it will react and jump out.

Fear was my frog. Fear did not rush in and sweep me off my feet. It acted with great stealth, and slowly invaded my being like the virus controlling the land. I did not know when it first began its systematic attack and infiltration of my being. There must have been some loophole in my system, some small gap in that allowed it to enter undetected. I only realised what was happening when it held me captive in its sway. As I reflected, I discovered in my life many missed moments. There have been areas of my life where it feels as if I have been wandering around the wilderness because of fear. Missed blessings, missed opportunities all because of fear.

As I reflect and look at my visceral response to the Covid 19 pandemic gripping the world and more so the country in which I live I began to numerate the many missed opportunities due to fear. I began to understand why God was upset with the ten spies who brought back negative news regarding God's people ability to possess the promised land. scout the land of Canaan.

Any battle that is won must first be won in the mind and so I was already living a defeated life even though I had not contracted the virus. It's been said that stress affects the immune system and makes it difficult to fight anything invading the body. The Covid 19 attacks the immune system. Therefore, if the walls of the immune system are torn down by the effects of stress caused by fear the body would have very little resistance if the virus attacks and hence the battle would be lost.

God knew that the Children of Israel could not fight the inhabitants of Canaan if in their mind the task was already deemed impossible. He did not want them relying on themselves and maybe that is where they made the mistake. Instead of realising that the battle was not theirs, and that they would not be fighting the battle in their small and feeble power but that His strength would be magnified through their weakness, they focused their energies on how small and like grasshoppers they were. How could they doubt God after what God did for them at the Red Sea? Did they forget so quickly?

I too have experienced first-hand God's healing powers. I too have experienced first-hand God's delivering power. Yes, I too have experienced first-hand God's keeping power. So why am I now paralysed with fear?

The Israelites were given the news by several men being led by their senses. They had seen the land and its inhabitants. They were giants, big men inspiring fear in these unseasoned and inexperienced warriors. These men were gripped by fear and they transmitted that fear to the rest of the people. Fear seeped into the hearts of the audience, holding them tight in its grip and as fear grew and multiply hysteria joined in. I grew up with the mantra; knowledge is power, but I know realised that statement is not wholly true. Knowledge is not power. The ability to use knowledge is power. Knowing about the virus did not empower me, what it really did was disempowered me. It crippled my ability to function normally and to think rationally.

David understood the importance of resting in God. He declared that he would remain still before God knowing that God was his refuge and strength and a very present help in times of trouble. He further declares that he had no need to fear. He knew he had two choices. He could either allow the circumstances he faced to be magnified in his mind and

mushroomed to the point where he could not see God, or he could trust in his God and be at peace. This of course was the self-same God that delivered him in past battles, whether there were beasts of the field, nature or mankind. He knew the truth regarding God, he had a knowledge of God and he used it to comfort himself.

Today I have decided to follow the example of David. The power that fear had on me is beginning to recede as I speak to myself and remind me of what my God can do.

- He is the same God that protected me when I lived in Jamaica.
- He is the same God that delivered me when I was held up by a gunman
- He is the same God that has healed me times and times again
- He is the same God... Yes, he is the same God.

What have I learned from this process is that nobody is immune to the darts of the enemy on our soul! Fear is not of God and while psychologists will tell you that fear can be healthy, I don't want my life-decisions to be guided by fear but rather trust in God.

Trusting in God does not mean that I will become irresponsible or reckless. It does not mean that I will test God to prove how big and mighty He is. What it means is that I will take every precaution I need to take so that I do not contract this deadly virus or pass it on to others. While doing this I will once again begin to function psychologically and emotionally as I normally do - trust God to do what I cannot do.

I am God's child and fear no longer has control over me.

