

September 8, 2024

# Letting Go of Fear

Esther 4:10-17; Psalm 56

My sweet little prince, my best buddy of 13 years, Stanley the dog, died on Monday. I am distraught and grief-stricken. Stanley leaves behind his brother (littermate, actually), Smokey, who is struggling with health problems of his own. I haven't let Smokey out of my sight since Stanley's death. He has mobility issues, so I won't let him climb up or down stairs. I cover him with blankets if he shivers. I give him too many treats between meals. Smokey, while thankful for the treats, seems mostly confused. He's no different than he was a few days ago, but I am. Stanley and Smokey were my constant companions for 13 years, and losing one of them shook me to my core. The thought of losing them both terrifies the living daylights out of me.

Life is full of terrors, and as Esther shows us, no one escapes them. "When they told Mordecai Esther's words, he had them respond to Esther: 'Don't think for one minute that, unlike all the other Jews, you'll come out of this alive simply because you are in the palace' " (Esther 4:12-13). No matter how gilded your cage or how well you prepare, fear will find you. It's what you do when it does that makes the difference.

When fear grabs us, it's easy to act irrationally or withdraw. The Bible tells us, however, that there is a better way. When we're afraid, God is always there, ready to hold our fears and steady us. I'm sure Esther felt safer staying out of sight, but she knew she had to speak up, so she trusted in God. I certainly feel less fearful handling Smokey with kid gloves, but he's a dog, and it's not fair to him. He deserves to live the rest of his life romping and rooting, so I must adopt this new mantra: "I trust in God; I won't be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" (Psalm 56).

1. When has fear prevented you from doing something?
2. Esther asked her fellow Jews to fast with her to help her be brave. How can your spiritual community give you strength when you need it?
3. How can putting your trust in God help you accomplish something you're afraid to do? Give a specific example.

Rachel Mullen lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband and daughter. She makes soap for [musiccitysuds.com](http://musiccitysuds.com) and is still mom to the world's worst-behaved dachshund.