

FEAR NOT

By Ian Menzies

The Bible is packed with references urging us to 'fear not'. Why?

Perhaps those who lived in biblical times were continually afraid?

I would be, if I had to live in those times. Everything was edgy. Subsistence living made even the weather terrifying and health was an ongoing concern.

Dangers abounded, from lions and adders, through plague and pestilence, to famine and warfare. The unknowns were many.

Psalms 91 is sometimes cited as 'the most powerful prayer in the Bible', when it declares safety, protection and a long life were given to those who "abide in the shadow of the Almighty".

I was surprised then when recently I came across a discussion of another facet of fear: self-consciousness.

This trait was described as a "cruel thief in the night who robs us of success" that, if overcome, enabled one to "evolve from a person into a personality".

No abiding in shadows here, then.

This new perspective seemed to me to be putting forward a challenge for openness in our faith: a sharing with others of God's role in our lives, not just keeping it quietly to ourselves.

A challenge, indeed, to 'fear not.'

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