

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, June 19-25 (B) – Mark 4:35-41

The Choices of Discipleship: *Trust or Fear?*

Focus Question: *Do we trust Jesus to calm our storms?*

word of life

“[Jesus] said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’” Mark 4:40 (NRSV)

Read Mark 4: 35-41

Jesus was teaching from a boat as the crowd gathered along the shore. (Mark 4:1) Primarily, he taught parables to the crowds, but afterwards Jesus nurtured the faith of the disciples as he further explained the meaning of the parables. (Mark 4:34)

When evening came, Jesus asked to go to the other side of the sea, away from the crowd. As they sailed across the lake, he fell asleep in the stern. That night a storm developed, swamping the boat with high waves.

1. *How do you picture this scene? Describe it.*

The disciples reacted with panic and despair, believing themselves to be drowning. Jesus remained asleep. Finally, the disciples could not bear it any longer. They woke Jesus, crying out “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38) The disciples revealed no underlying hint of hope of Jesus rescuing them from the storm. Nor was there a glimmer of expectation of Jesus stilling the storm.

2. *Why do you think they woke Jesus?*

3. *What is surprising about this part of the story?*

4. *Is the behavior of the disciples predictable or warranted?*

5. *How would you expect Jesus to react?*

Jesus woke up and rebuked the wind, calming the sea with the words, “Peace! Be Still!” (Mark 4: 39) With these words, the winds ceased and the waters were calm. Yet, what about the chaos and panic in the hearts of the disciples? Internally, they were still in the storm. Jesus seemed amazed that the disciples were so scared. Where was their faith? Jesus directly challenged them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” (Mark 4: 40 NRSV)

6. *How sympathetic are you to the disciples?*

7. *Imagine the reaction of the disciples as they heard those words.*

Jesus had been with the disciples for some time, teaching and training them. Yet, their faith seemed like that of beginners. After the calming of the storm, the disciples were filled with awe. They said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:41 NRSV) As much as they had seen Jesus heal others and perform miracles, they simply did not grasp his power to impact their lives when they were in a time of trial or in need. The power of Jesus was not just for others who were in need, but also for them. Jesus has the power to calm both the storms over the sea and inside each of the disciples.

8. *What is important to hear in this story?*

word *among us*

Carlos had just completed the last set of medical tests. All he could do was wait for the results. His heart pounded as he left the hospital. Fear swept over him. He could barely walk to his car. Carlos drove cautiously from the hospital, but he found himself not heading directly home.

Instead, he turned off a side street. It had been a long time since he had worshipped, but he decided to stop by his church. He was a bit surprised when his church key still worked. There were a few cars in the parking lot, but he went directly to the sanctuary and sat down on a front pew. He chuckled to himself and shook his head. Finally, he was back in church. It felt good.

Carlos didn't really know how long he had been sitting in the sanctuary when he felt someone join him. It was the pastor. Slowly, they began a conversation, but quickly they moved to the heart of his fears. As they prayed together, he felt his fears lessen and a peace descend on his heart.

1. *Describe a time when you were afraid.*
2. *What do you do when you find yourself full of fear?*

Storms come in all kinds of shapes and sizes. For the disciples, their storm was a raging wind, rain and chaos. The disciples thought they were going to perish. It must have been aggravating for them to see Jesus sleeping through the storm and their pending death.

3. *Who do you know who stays calm in the midst of a storm?*
4. *What is their secret?*

Jesus reprimanded the disciples for not trusting him to calm the storm and their spirits. Had they not been paying attention during the previous days, weeks and months? Jesus confronts the disciples on their lack of trust.

5. *What might Jesus say to us about our level of trust in him?*
6. *How might we trust Christ with our own fears?*

The theme of Daily Discipleship during this summer is "Choices of Discipleship". When it comes to trust, take a moment to ponder the relationship between choice, trust, and fear. Is trusting Jesus a matter of choice? What about those times when fear takes over our lives and chaos mounts? Imagine Jesus saying to you, "Peace! Be still!" Take a moment in silence to imagine those words from Jesus to you.

7. *What part of your life needs to be calmed by Jesus?*
8. *Are fear and trust opposite? How so?*
9. *What would it mean for you to choose to trust Jesus?*

Prayer

Creator of the universe, create in me a trusting heart, and cast out fear. Amen

Dig Deeper

Psalm 131

last word

Find a quiet place for prayer.
Open your hands and hold your palms upward.
Pray and trust God
to hear your concerns and fears.



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