

A Journey to the Other Side

Mark 4:35-41

KEY VERSES

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." ³⁶ And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷ A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And waking up, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be silent! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

This familiar story of Jesus and his disciples encountering a storm on the Sea of Galilee reminds us that following Jesus is not always easy and can sometimes be scary. At this particular moment in time, Jesus has become the most popular character in Galilee, which would have left his disciples even more confused about why He wants to take the boat to the other side. After all, in the lands where they were headed lived non-Jews who mostly worshipped other gods. **When have you gone from a comfortable place to an unknown place—either by choice or forced -- where you might have felt in danger or like an outsider?**

As they endured this terrible storm, the disciples understandably ask Jesus if "He did not care that they were perishing" (v. 38). The disciples initially experience the kind of fear we are all equipped with--a fear of natural dangers--that we can't control and actually helps us as human beings. Jesus' reply, "have you still no faith?" speaks to their second layer of fear - a fear of the unknown. This uncourageous type of fear has a tendency to exaggerate itself, especially in the middle of the night when we feel the most vulnerable. **How have you experienced this second type of fear?**

This fear of the unknown is also the type of fear with which we have a choice of how to address it. This kind of fear keeps us from talking to people who disagree with us, which is more prevalent than usual given this election year. Whatever unknowns we fear the most, we have a choice not just in how we handle them, but in whom we place our trust. Jesus chides them for lingering in their fear and not trusting the One in the boat. The disciples had a choice, and so do we when this type of fear overcomes us. **How can you reassure yourself and your faith that the One in the boat with you is stronger and greater than any storm you can ever face?**