

# Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 7) – June 23, 2024

*“<sup>39</sup>And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’  
And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup>He said to them,  
‘Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?’”*

*–Mark 4:39-40–*

Be still! So much of our lives are filled with various trials and distractions that threaten to become so chaotic and noisy that we lose sight of what’s right in front of us. The disciples are on a boat with Jesus, and Jesus sleeping away peacefully. The boat eventually meets up with a terrible storm. The disciples are scared, and who wouldn’t be? Out on the water in a boat, you are vulnerable to whatever comes your way. These disciples are seasoned fisherman. They know a bad storm when they see one. Certainly, they’ve even witness other fellow fisherman die at the hands of such storms. Fear only begins to scratch the surface of what these men felt. Meanwhile, Jesus is snoozing away. The disciples, filled with terror, call out to Jesus to save them. And he does. He rebukes the winds and calls out, “Peace! Be still!” The wind and the waves obey Jesus’ command.

We might expect Jesus to go over to his disciples and calm them down, much like a parent does with a child in the middle of the night when said child is awoken by a storm or maybe a nightmare. But that’s not what Jesus does. Instead, he asks them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”

Huh? C’mon, Jesus, I’m shaking in my boots right now! Why wouldn’t I be afraid? We can relate at some level. We’ve had moments in our lives as kids and as adults, where we’ve become so afraid of current circumstances, we beg God to have mercy. We might become so paralyzed by fear that it threatens us to lose trust in God that he will get us through whatever it is we’re dealing with. Those trials that come our way can become so overwhelming and loud like the wind and crashing waves the disciples experienced that we begin to lose sight of who has the ultimate authority in this life. Jesus can call out with one word and the trials of this life will obey his command. So often we forget that, or we doubt that Jesus has that kind of power. Even though we’ve witnessed it time and again, we wonder if Jesus is sleeping while we’re struggling to survive.

Jesus wasn’t trying to be mean to his disciples. This was his way of reassuring them of who he is, that they don’t need to be afraid because no matter what storm might come our way, Jesus will be there to get us through. And Jesus will get us through the trials and difficulties of our lives.

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