

‘Do Not Be Afraid’

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CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: No matter what our challenges are, Jesus has the power and the desire to quell our fears, to give us courage. As we pray together today, let us consider the message for ourselves personally and for our organization, that, as Christians have done over the centuries, we may find comfort and hope in Jesus’s words, “Do not be afraid.”

READER: Here is the narrative as it is found in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.

Jesus had just fed the 5,000. Then he told his disciples to precede him to the other side of the lake toward Bethsaida. Then he dismissed the crowd. He was very tired, and he went off to the mountain to pray.

That evening, Jesus was alone on shore and the disciples’ boat was far out on the water. He saw that the boat was being tossed about while the disciples were rowing and struggling. The wind was against them. They were not making any progress. Seeing their struggle, deep in the night, he came walking toward them. But they saw him and thought he was a ghost. They were terrified. When he saw their fear, he spoke to them at once: “Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!”

Peter replied to Jesus, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” It was a test. Jesus responded, “Come.” Peter climbed out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. He became frightened when he felt how strong the wind was. Beginning to sink, he reached out to Jesus and cried, “Lord, save me!” Jesus did not keep him waiting. He stretched out his hand and caught Peter. He admonished him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Jesus climbed into the boat with them. Then the wind died down and they were astounded.

LEADER: *Let us join together in reading the joyful Psalm 150.*

ALL: Hallelujah!

Praise God in his holy sanctuary; give praise in the mighty dome of heaven.

Give praise for his mighty deeds, praise him for his great majesty.

Give praise with blasts upon the horn, praise him with harp and lyre.

Give praise with tambourines and dance, praise him with flutes and strings.

Give praise with crashing cymbals, praise him with sounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath give praise to the Lord!

Hallelujah!

REFLECTION

LEADER: Take a moment to reflect: What would we do if we had no fear?

(Silence)

In our mission and our ministries, how are faith and courage connected?

(Silence)

Jesus commands us to take courage. The Lord is with us; there is nothing to fear.

With a holy fearlessness, we must follow the Lord with our eyes fixed firmly on him.

Confident in God’s almighty power, we pray.

ALL: Lord Jesus, you command us not to fear. By the power of your word, cast out all worries and concerns from our minds and hearts so that we may seek to love and serve only you, who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN:

Suggested: “Be Not Afraid” (1975, Robert J. Dufford, SJ)

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