

THE FIRST 15

Friday, July 5, 2024

Today is Friday, July 5 and we are studying what the Bible says about still waters.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, in the midst of a busy day, I pause to find a place of quiet rest. I calm my scattered thoughts and slow my breath. I seek the green pastures and still waters you promise. Show me what it means to have a Sabbath heart and discover the inner peace you provide. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. John 6:16-21

REFLECTION

It is not uncommon for storms to blow up on the Sea of Galilee. The eastern coast of the normally calm body of water is formed by high mountains and deep gorges. Sudden changes in weather tunnel strong winds through the gorges and quickly create difficult conditions on the lake. After Jesus performed the miracle of feeding five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish, the disciples left to cross over to their homebase of Capernaum. It was late at night. Jesus did not go with them, but went up upon the mountainside to spend some time alone (John 6:15).

The disciples rowed their boat about halfway across the lake when the wind began to blow and the waters became rough. They were stunned to see Jesus walking on the surface of the water coming towards them. He knew exactly where they were and was coming to them. Not only were they afraid of the winds and the waves, they were frightened by his presence. Walking on water? How could this be? Jesus came to them in their time of fear and uncertainty. I can expect Jesus to come to me in my times of fear and uncertainty as well.

I consider the places where there are "rough waters" in my life. Places where the strength of the wind tosses my boat and I feel like I am constantly struggling against the oars, trying to get where I am going, and making little headway. I consider where I am currently worried, uncertain or afraid. As Jesus came to the disciples on the anxious waves of the stormy seas, so Jesus comes to me in the unsettled places of my life. I see him approaching. Crossing time and space in miraculous ways to be with me in the lifeboat of my existence. "It is I," he says, "Don't be afraid." This is a beautiful reminder that I am never alone. No matter what my day holds, what circumstances I am up against or what fears I have for myself or my loved ones, Jesus is there.

Speaking my name. "Don't be afraid. You are not in this boat alone. I am with you. I will get you exactly where you need to be."

Ask: Where is my current place of uncertainty or fear? Have I invited Jesus to join me in my boat for today's journey?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Come, Lord Jesus, join me in the ups and downs and tossings and turnings of my upcoming day. Where there is darkness, bring light. Where there is turmoil, bring peace. Where the forceful winds push me off course, be my anchor in the storm. You are the one who stills the wind and the waves, who treads upon the waters of chaos and calms the fears of my heart. Remind me to trust in you at every moment of the day, with every situation and every relationship, knowing that you are with me and I am not alone. Amen.