

Mark 4: 35-41

35 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 gale 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 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! 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 awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

Commentary: This is a story about faith. The question put to us is: do we have faith (trust) in ourselves or in God? But what does it mean to trust in God? To trust in God is to trust that a larger goodness will find us no matter what we're going through and will go through in life. It's also about a relationship. You trust in something or someone. Trusting in God means we can let go and let be in a relationship of trust, believing that a larger goodness will find us no matter the situation, circumstance or challenge we must face. To let go and let be optimizes how effectively we will deal with a situation and how well we'll come through it. We may be marked by the struggle, yes, but we may also grow strength, beauty and grace in who we become.

The disciples of Jesus are facing a storm. They're understandably scared. Will they survive this? They decide to take matters into their own hands. They wake Jesus up and rebuke him for sleeping while they're in a panic. Jesus, however, turns the tables on them. He rebukes them for their lack of faith. It's one thing to do whatever we can and whatever needs to be done in a situation. It's quite another to worry and panic to the point where we are ineffective and closed to where God is seeking to bring us, even through the tough things that befall us.

In this season of Covid-19, we are being challenged to learn faith in a whole new way. Our faith is not blind. We trust in what medical experts, governments and larger institutions are putting in place to get us through this ordeal. But there is much that is not certain, clear or determined. There is a whole dimension to faith that is internal: learning how to let go and let be, trusting in what God/goodness will accomplish in and through us in terms of who we can become through this. We may change some things on the outside as a result of what's happening in terms of how we will live going forward. But we may also acquire new internal qualities in our humanity – strength, beauty and grace that will shape in a new way our relationships with others and the earth.

Prayer: Lord God, I worry about many things. Many things are not in my control. Many things seem uncertain. Many things are shaky in my life and in the world right now. Teach me in a new and deeper way to trust in you. Help me to feel assured that whatever happens to me and those whom I love, you can bring me to a good place, a peaceful place. Inspire me to claim that promise for myself and within myself. Amen.