

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

An Answer In The Wind

By Ken Woodley

Oh, how often have I seen the wind.

Just like Peter.

Especially during this pandemic. Sometimes it feels like my anxieties have anxieties.

Jesus, remember, had been working hard, teaching the people that they are the light of the world, that they are blessed and sons and daughters of God, no matter how worthless or powerless they feel to do anything about their own lives or the world around them, with or without COVID-19.

When he finished for the day, Jesus pointed the crowd back toward their homes and neighborhoods—their daily lives—and told the disciples to travel by boat across the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus sent them on their way, explaining that he was going up one of the mountains embroidering the sea and pray. “I’ll meet you on the other side,” he told the disciples.

The boat, however, began being battered by the waves. A storm came out of nowhere—which does still happen rather frequently because of the surrounding weather conditions in Galilee.

The boat was far from land, the Gospel of Matthew tells us, “and the wind was against them.”

Oh, how often has the wind felt like it was against me.

But always, somehow, I feel the spirit of Jesus walking across the water toward me, over the water and through the wind.

The wind of my fears.

The wind of the world whispering dread and doom.

The wind whispering and then howling that love will never overcome hate, that every sword will never be turned into a plowshare, that there will also be one sword left to defeat the last person standing, plowshare in hand, believing in the Gospel of Jesus that God is love.

But always Jesus walks through all of the winds that are whispering and howling, and over the battering waves that make me afraid that all is lost and that my boat will sink.

Jesus keeps coming through the surrounding storms that make me certain that I will never, ever get to the other side of whatever fear and doubt I happen to be trying to cross in my boat at the time.

I am so like Peter, the most human of the disciples. Impulsive. Out there. Let me be the one!!! But so susceptible to my human foibles.

“Lord, if it’s you, command me to come to you on the water,” Peter shouts after Jesus pointedly tells the disciples to “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid (and there’s that fearful word—afraid).

Peter is desperate to conquer his fear by walking over the storming waves he’s afraid will drown them. And, Jesus says, sure, come right ahead.

Just as Jesus tells each of us to leave our fears behind and walk on, over and away from them.

But, Peter is Peter. Peter is human. Peter is you and I.

Peter gets half way to Jesus and then he “sees the wind” and begins to drown.

Peter gives so much power to what he fears that he actually sees the wind. Gives shape and form to something that is invisible.

Just like all of us do from time to time. We believe that what we fear is so strong, stronger than we are, stronger than Jesus.

And so we begin to drown in our fear.

But Jesus is still there, always there, reaching out his hand, lifting us up and away from our fears until, just when we think it could never happen, we reach the other side and hear a voice:

Don’t see the wind, Jesus tells us. Instead, let the wind see you, and who stands by your side, no matter what storms life blows your way.