

come and see

Week 6: Do Not Be Afraid

John 6:16-24

Summary

In John 6:16-24, the disciples, including Peter, are caught in a storm while crossing the Sea of Galilee. These first century fishermen made their living on the water, but culturally water was feared. Water represented chaos and disorder, potential for calamity, associated with death. As they struggle against the winds, Jesus approaches them, walking on water. Initially frightened, they recognize Him, and Peter, filled with faith, asks to join Jesus on the water. When Peter steps out, he walks towards Jesus but begins to sink when he becomes fearful. Jesus uses a phrase that is found 365 times in scripture: “Do not be afraid.” Jesus reaches out, saves him, and addresses his doubt. This passage—found in all four Gospels—highlights Jesus’ call away from fear. Following Jesus means we are not to be distracted by fear or driven by fear. The enormous grace and power of Christ frees us from moving through this world fearful of anything—even what we see as chaos and disorder, potential for calamity, even death. This event on the Sea of Galilee deepens Peter’s relationship with Jesus. It also showcases for us Jesus’ belief in Peter’s ability—in the power of Christ—to overcome challenges through faith.

For you

- Read the story twice. The first time through, imagine you are a disciple in the boat—seeing Jesus, watching Peter’s words and actions, and experiencing the power of Jesus to rise above fear. The second time through, imagine you are Peter himself.
To what parts of this story is God’s Spirit drawing you?
- “Do not fear” can be a process. Some Psychologists discuss the power of “fear-friending”—the idea of developing a healthy relationship with fear, rather than avoiding it. The goal is to learn to view fear as an ally and a part of your emotional make-up, rather than something that drives you.
Keep a journal for a few days and name your fears as they occur to you. Write them down and take some time to let the Holy Spirit give you God’s perspective on those things.
- Spend a few minutes breathing deeply while meditating on this story of the disciples, Peter, and Jesus. Let the Spirit of Christ show you his presence with you and for you. Let God shape your heart.

For your work

- If fear is present in us as individuals, it is certainly present within our teams. Can you identify fears—spoken or unspoken—that affect how you and your coworkers work?
- How do those fears drive your work or your team’s work? What opportunities might you (y’all) be missing by letting those fears drive you?
- Pray for the strength to name your team’s fears, interrogate them, and submit them to the light of Christ. Resolve to move forward and not be ruled by these fears.
- Extra question to ask each other: What personal fears do you have that you’d be willing to share with your coworkers?

For Students (questions to have in your ‘back pocket’)

- Where are you interacting with the Gospel of John (if anywhere)?
- Do you think you’d be more likely to stay in the boat—gripping the sides of the boat—or, like Peter, try to join Jesus walking on water? What do you think that says about you?
- When Jesus says, “Do not be afraid.” what fears come to your mind that you know have a grip on you? How can I pray for you in that? (Advice: Follow-up next week with a question, “How is that going?” Maybe even suggest Pastor Steph O’Brien’s book “Stay Curious”.)

How is this resource working for you? How is God using it to form you? Are there ways we can improve it? How can we pray for you? If you’ve got questions or thoughts, we invite you to be in touch with us.

Send us an email at campus-ministries@bethel.edu

[click here for the week 6 discovery bible study](#)



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