

## Daily Devotional, May 6, 2021 Do Not Fear, For I am With You

*He (Jesus) replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Matthew 8:26 (NIV)*

A favorite Bible story for many of us, is found in the first three gospels. It is the story of Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee. Storms frequently occur and often without much notice on the Sea of Galilee, which is really the size of a large lake. The cool air swoops down over the mountain range along the Golan Heights and collides with the warmer air of the lake that can create fierce storms at a moment's notice. That is what happened one day when Jesus and the disciples were sailing across the Sea of Galilee and a storm threatened to swamp the boat.

The disciples were bailing water as fast as they could when they noticed that Jesus had fallen asleep. They wake him up in a panic shouting, "Lord save us, we're going to drown!" Jesus wakes up, stretches, yawns and looks out over the water. The scripture then says, "Then He got up and rebuked the wind and the waves and it was completely calm." He then asked His disciples, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"

You may be thinking, that's easy for Jesus to say, right? He's the Son of God who holds the power of His Father. For the rest of us mortals...well, we all have fears. I know people who won't venture out onto the water even with a life jacket, because of their fear of drowning. What is it that you might be afraid of? Could it be spiders, tornadoes, lightning, Covid? Maybe it's a fear of heights. Does your stomach get a bit queasy just looking out the window of a tall building?

Some years ago, I rode the elevator to the 103<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Sears Tower, one of the biggest tourist destinations in the Windy City, and it was at that time the tallest building in the world. Of course, this was long before the name was changed to Willis Tower.

There is a Skydeck observation area on that floor, and I can still feel the building sway in the wind as I looked out over Lake Michigan. Back then, I can remember feeling a moment of trepidation, as an uneasy feeling crept over my stomach. Sometime later I worked in roofing sales and being high in the air became second nature, but I must say, that took some time and conditioning to work up the nerve.

As a side note, in 2009, they added to the skydeck a glass box called the "Ledge". It extends four feet out from the building overlooking Wacker Drive and you can stand on it and look down through the clear glass and see the people and the cars below. I have yet to make the trip back, but it is still on my list of things to do before I die. Today when I find myself on a narrow path or bridge overlooking a deep ravine, I am no longer unnerved. Instead, I am in awe of God's wonders.

Do you ever find yourself completely overwhelmed when confronted with your fears? Maybe you can't move or maybe you can hardly breathe. Christ came to set us free from our fears. I am not saying you won't be afraid the next time a rattlesnake crosses your path. The fears I am thinking about include the fear of living or the fear of tomorrow. We are living in perilous times and the fear of the unknown can be paralyzing. Jesus calls to us through the ages and says, "Be encouraged, it is I, you don't have to be afraid." Christ will walk with us into tomorrow with all that it brings and that is good news. In fact, what better news is there?

***Prayer: Dear Lord, You know that we live in a crazy and chaotic world. You also know my struggles in my daily life. When life gets to be too much, please help me come to you. Calm my thoughts and emotions and open my heart to your peace, comfort, and wisdom. Help me not to live in fear. Please reduce the feelings of fear and anxiety that plague me. Help me rest in You and trust You as I navigate through this broken world. In Your name I pray, Jesus. Amen.***