

Finding Healing From Fear, Praying with Art Katie Weiss

Hi, my name is Katie Weiss and today's topic that we're going to be talking about is finding healing from fear, or healing through fear. So, I thought we'd start with the prayer.

Opening Prayer

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Lord, we bring all the fears in our life to You. We bring ourselves and trust that in these spaces, we are loved, that You are with us, whether or not we feel it. We ask for deeper trust and deeper faith in these places. Amen. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Anxiety and Fear in the Scriptures

So, as we begin this talk, the thing I wanted to talk about in particular was how we can often see anxiety or fear in relationship to prayer. I know for myself that I can often see anxiety or fear as something that I cannot come to Jesus with. In particular, I know in the past, I often felt like I would need to like hide it somewhere, or like could only pray when I wasn't feeling anxious. And some of that came from a misunderstanding of really Christian perfection. What it is like to follow the way of Christ and bringing an unhealthy perfectionism into my prayer, feeling like I needed to have all my stuff together before coming to Jesus.

Really, it's the opposite. He desires to be our savior. He wants us to come to Him as we are. He came to come to the sick, not to the healthy. And I find that really encouraging. So, if you look in scripture, Jesus is very present and comes to people in their fear. So, I just thought I'd give a few examples, because it's a really good encouragement, a reminder that when you're feeling fear or anxiety, one, that nothing is wrong with you, that it's actually a very human experience and it's okay to feel those things. And that, yes, there can be a temptation or a struggle to have faith in those places, but there's also an opportunity to live deeper faith and deeper trust.

So, a great example is Mary at the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel says, "**Do not be afraid, Mary.**" And, yes, some of that could have been because she was seeing an angel. There were also a lot of crazy circumstances that she would be in if she said yes at the Annunciation. On a human level, it would be very scary, And yet Mary's yes brought God into the world. Really, really profound.

I love to ponder Jesus on the storm on the sea, right? With the boat with the disciples, that Jesus is with his disciples. And, yes, often He can feel like He's sleeping when we're in the midst of anxiety or fear, but Jesus is there, and He brings peace.

Lastly, I'd like to bring the scenario of Jairus' daughter. So, I don't know if you're familiar with the scripture or not, but Jairus was a man whose daughter had died, come before Jesus, and Jesus's response to her is, "**Do not be afraid,**" to Jairus' daughter. And I find that really profound. He also calls her daughter, which is really beautiful.

A Personal Encounter with Anxiety and Fear

And I found this topic to be something really beautiful to sit with because in my life, I've had ups and downs of struggling with anxiety. It's something that runs my family. And I think it's just a very human experience, something that we all experience in different levels. But I know for myself, it's been really difficult to find what the space is of prayer and faith and anxiety or fear. We can really see anxiety and fear in a negative connotation that it doesn't correspond with our faith, but actually it can be an invitation to lean on the Lord. And I know along with fear and shame, or along with anxiety can come fear and shame, because we can feel like we're not supposed to feel anxiety or fear.

And I know for myself, I experienced that, it made it difficult to really be real with the Lord and to pray. And it made it difficult to just give myself to the Lord as I was. It made prayer immensely challenging when I felt like I needed to be fake before the Lord, or not be real with Him. And I found, especially two years ago, a deeper lean into this space of finding Christ through fear.

At the time, I was engaged to my now husband and I experienced fears that I hadn't before. I know for myself, a constant trap of anxiety is just a fear of making the wrong decision or scrupulosity, just a fear of God not being present if I didn't choose the right choice. And so here I am, getting ready to be engaged, and then eventually engaged to my now husband, and I had the swirl of all these fears of what if he's not the right person? What if God's will is something else? You know, just the constant flow of anxiety. And it was really, really difficult to find Jesus there. I felt alone. I felt isolated. I felt shame and guilt for feeling anxious.

I would sometimes go to friends about it, and oftentimes people trying to help would say you know, "Just pray in act of faith." I think of Job, for example, and his friends giving him advice, but it actually made the stress worse, and his difficulties worse. And I found that with my anxiety where I would share with some friends and they received me so beautifully, and then I had some friends that would give advice like, "Just pray harder," or just, you know, "Say these prayers and it will go away." And while those were well-meaning points, it didn't teach me how to find Jesus by going through the fear. It was really trying to eliminate the fear.

And so, I really found this journey of finding faith over fear, faith through fear. And it was finding Jesus' presence in the midst of fear, knowing that He's God. And I love, I have this one image that I really just find peace with of Jesus walking on the water, and its turbulent waves, and yet Jesus is walking and there's the sun behind Him. It looks like a halo and it's strangely peaceful. And I hope sitting with that image can just be a really good reflection for you of whatever your fears are, whatever your worries are, that Jesus is the Lord of your life. And it's okay to feel the fear of the anxiety. It's okay to acknowledge these struggles, these parts of being human, yet knowing He has it.

So in this journey of finding Jesus through fear, I found that He desires all of my life, not just the happy moments, but also the sad and stressful moments. And Jesus longs to be my Savior. That's why He came. That's why He died for us and rose for us. And I love the definition of intimacy that I've heard before of intimacy is into me see. It's seeing into me and everything that's going

on in my heart. And when you share your whole heart with the Lord, you experience closeness, you experience presence through those difficult moments.

Praying with Art

So, I thought I'd walk us through praying with art together on a particular message in scripture. So up on the screen, we'll have an image, we'll have scripture, we'll have reflection questions. You will also have a PDF that you can download with this talk, if you want to do it on paper, write notes, whatnot. But I'm going to walk us through praying with art and scripture through a particular scene.

So, let's start with a prayer to the Holy Spirit. *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Come, Holy Spirit. Fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created, and You shall renew the face of the earth. Let us pray. Oh God, Who, by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant us through the same spirit a love and relish for what is right and just, and a constant enjoyment of His consolation through Christ, our Lord. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

So, to start this time of prayer, we're going to start with a Visio portion, or seeing a work of art. So up on the screen, you're going to notice this work of art that is reflecting this Bible passage that I am going to read the scripture for in a little bit. But for the next few minutes, be aware of what is striking you. Whether it's the light in the image or the colors, or the movement, or maybe it's you relate to someone in this scripture. You can place yourself in the scene. You can imagine what it would've sounded like or felt like and take that to prayer for the next few minutes. *(Art piece is Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee by Rembrandt 1633)*

Gospel of Mark

So, at this point, I'm going to read the scripture passage for this image. So, you can sit with just the image if you want, or you can sit with the scripture with us. You can underline, or circle, or highlight words that are striking you. Feel free to go wherever the Spirit leads you. This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark. ***"On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd, they took Him with them just as He was in the boat. And other boats were with Him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat so that the boat was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, 'Teacher, do you not care if we perish?' And He awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still,' and the wind ceased and there was a great calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' And they were filled with awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this that even wind and sea obey Him?'"***

So, at this point, you can sit with whatever words or phrases are striking you. If you need more time, feel free to pause the video as well. At this stage, we're going to ask the Lord *how we can apply this to our own life? So, what is the main theme that the Lord is saying to you during this*

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time? And maybe think of something practical you can do to live out this time of prayer in your day-to-day life. So, an example for this passage could be, when you're experiencing fear, to say, Jesus, I trust in You, or to invoke the Lord's name, to invoke Him over the fear you are experiencing. Or could be something like saying a Hail Mary.

Personal Reflection

I hope this time of praying with art was very helpful for you. I just wanted to share a little reflection, kind of sitting with the scripture myself, was I always find it really powerful that Jesus is asleep, and yet He has such power over the waves. And it would be really easy to rather be on the shore where it's more comfortable, but there is this beauty of being in the boat with Jesus, that even when the waves are crashing and we're afraid, that we know Jesus is with us, even if we don't feel it, that He's there. And so, I find that really consoling, that Jesus is asleep, that it's okay if we don't feel His presence, but we can have faith and we can trust that He's there and know that He loves us.

Closing Prayer

So, I thought we closed with the glory be. *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Thank you so much for praying with me. God bless you.