

Thursday, April 2

Scripture reading: 1 Peter 5:7

The disciples needed to have as their own slogan, "No Fear," that is plastered on T-shirts and billboards around the country. They needed the message it gives, because they certainly were afraid. Easter day was almost over and they were still wondering what to make of the reports that Jesus was raised. They were hiding out because of their fear of the Jewish leaders. I imagine we would be frightened and hiding too.

Just what are *we* afraid of? We fear losses of jobs, relationships, health, freedom, control, or our comfortable routines. We fear failure, confrontation, or the unknown, or any one of a number of conditions or things, but why?

The disciples' fear was very rational and understandable. It was based on experience. They witnessed the very real execution of Jesus and they knew that they would be recognized from having traveled around the country with him. So they were hiding behind closed doors.

Jesus came to them as well as working with us right where we are. God knows our human faults and frailties and loves us anyway. God knows that fear is not good for us. It imprisons us. It makes us sick. It demoralizes us and keeps us from doing the things we need to do. It makes us useless in the Kingdom of God. Fear promotes the lie of the hopelessness of life and tries to keep our focus there.

We don't have to fear anything. Romans 8:15 reminds us that we did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but we have received that spirit of adoption. We are sons and daughters of the living God. Children trust their loving parents. He invites us, "Cast all your cares upon him, for he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7). There is nothing in life that can come upon us that God can't handle.

My mother always had this old piece of paper tucked under a broken refrigerator magnet on the fridge, that I have to this day, that says, "God is greater than any problem I have." I find it ironic now that the magnet was broken and I have certainly found that to be true in my own life. There is nothing I can't trust to God even when things are broken. God will give the grace we need to face what we are facing at the time we are facing it and not a moment before. Because of this we live in confidence and with power. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us in chapter 13: God said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with certainty, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us and being bigger than any problem we have. Send us your Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds. We need your wisdom and guidance, dear Lord. Comfort us when we are afraid and stuck in our fear. Remind us of Your purpose for us and the work that needs to be done. In Jesus Christ alone, Amen

Written by Pam O'Neill