

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

June 30, 2024 • 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Mark 5:21–43

Be Not Afraid

Jesus and the disciples have reached the other side of the sea and find another crowd waiting for them. In this Gospel reading Mark records two more miracles, a woman who has been hemorrhaging for twelve years is cured as well as the daughter of a synagogue official. Both are healed because of their faith.

Once more Jesus tells us, “Don’t be afraid; only believe.” Why can’t I get it? I believe, and truly trust God, but I still worry. How can Jesus possibly expect any parent to live without anxiety? I know that with five grown children and seven grandchildren there always seems to be someone to worry about.

Perhaps the fear Jesus is talking about goes beyond the very human feeling of apprehension or anxiety we experience on a regular basis. After all, fear gets the adrenaline going, and we often need that surge to react appropriately. (Picture yourself and a lion in close proximity.) I’d like to suggest that the fear Jesus is talking about is just the opposite kind of fear—a fear that is debilitating—fear that leaves us hopeless and despondent.

Even the very human Jesus was afraid. Remember his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane? Luke tells us Jesus sweat blood when he asked his Father to remove the cross that faced him. Now that’s fear—quite appropriate human fear. But Jesus did not allow his fear to disable him. When Jesus was afraid he prayed. He told his Father exactly what he

wanted and then handed it over to him— “Not my will but yours be done.”

When Jesus prayed in the garden, his burden wasn’t taken away, but obviously he received all he needed to get thorough at it. Since he was fully human, I expect Jesus was probably still afraid when facing death, but he was able to face his accusers and executioners with dignity and courage. What a great lesson on how to handle our worries and anxieties.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Discuss the different fears family members have. Talk about ways of handling this feeling.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What are some of your own greatest personal fears? How do you handle worry and anxiety? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?