

## Mid-Storm Peace

Ken Wilson 1.2.19

***“These things I have spoken to you while remaining with you; But the advocate, the Spirit, the Holy One, which the Father will send in my name, he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. Peace I leave you, my peace I give to you; I give to you not as the cosmos gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”***

Long discourse on night Jesus handed over to authorities. DaVinci: cozy feel. But perilous times. Usual population 100K; at Passover 2 million. Under brutal occupation, crowds are tinder-box. Protest could break out at any moment triggering crushing response. Jesus & disciples under intense scrutiny as security threat.

Have you ever found yourself in an emotional double-bind: circumstances are pressing you to make some kind of move—the current situation feels intolerable, but your only alternatives feel like they will only make things worse in different ways. During the day, you obsess over your dilemma whenever you have moment of quiet; at night, the fear goblins have a field day as soon as you turn out lights. Such was the double-bind these disciples were in.

And Jesus says, ***“Peace I leave you, my peace I give to you”***

Reminds me of an earlier scene: ***“And a great windstorm arose, and the waves, and the waves broke into the boat, so that now the boat was filling. And he was asleep on the pillow in the stern. And they rouse him and say to him, “Teacher, does it not matter to you that we are perishing?” And being woken, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Be silent, quell yourself!” And the wind fell and great calm came about. And he said to them, “Why are you so afraid? How is it you do not have faith?” And they were afraid, enormously afraid, and said to one another, “Who then is this man, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”***

In gospels, violence of nature breaking out in storms is paired with violence of crowds breaking out in mobs. Storm on lake happens as Jesus is drawing big crowds. In Lk 4 he speaks in hometown where admiring crowd morphs into a mob that nearly throws him off cliff. Occupation forces everywhere—young men with weapons—add to tension (Trip to Belfast 1990—camera]

Anyone feel uneasy in crowds? I used to love crowds (Tiger game/stadium concert) arrive early to sit there feel like a **bee** in a bee-hive. Then I went through a difficult period with my “religious crowd” and developed **claustrophobia** —felt panic-ky in crowds.

(If you were upset by 2016 election, may be dealing with a form of crowd anxiety—what kind of country do I live in?)

Two pictures, side by side: 1. Anxious disciples at dinner in the powder-keg of Jerusalem at Passover: Jesus, says ***Peace I leave you, my peace I give to you. ...*** And, 2. Disciples in a boat at night when a storm sweeps over lake: Jesus is asleep on a pillow in stern ... so they wake him angry & terrified ....

We have a pattern here: Disciples freaking out: Jesus unperturbed.

Should add: disciples have legitimate reasons to be distressed. (Not upset iPhone battery died just before they needed to get an Uber) Good reason to fear for their lives ... **in both cases, calm of Jesus seems out of place.**

When someone is **super calm** when you are really upset, it can be **infuriating**. If we sense they don't have any stake in our distress. [changing Comcast account 4 years after Richard died]

Jesus is in possession of a different kind of calm than that. He was literally in the same boat as disciples when storm hit—so his calm was not for **lack of empathy**. He was in graver danger than disciples in Upper Room ... he ended up crucified, they unscathed.

Can see this when people are dying. Everyone around them is distraught ... but person dying is at peace, the calm in the middle of that storm [dad/sister, *even though I walk...*]

**Sometimes we need a peace that feels like it comes from another place.**

***“Peace I leave you, my peace I give to you; I give to you not as the cosmos gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”***

Cosmos: universe as an **ordered** entity [opposite of **chaos**]; Gen 1 presents a cosmos out of the chaos ... science assumes a cosmos [inherent – discoverable order to things]

**The peace Jesus gives, he gives not as the cosmos gives.**

Maybe it means the **source** of the peace is **beyond** the normal order of things.

Headspace: dealing with stream of distracting thoughts – see the thoughts as clouds passing, put your focus on blue sky that always exists beyond the clouds [first airplane flight, pop above clouds]

Or ... could mean he gives peace, not as the cosmos does, **after the** storm, but **in the middle** of the storm

Just to cut ourselves some slack for being lousy peace receivers ... the disciples in boat didn't exactly shift into instant chill mode ... Their terror shifted from the storm to "who is this!?" ... fear often shifts from one focal point to another

So there **must be a learning curve on receiving mid-storm peace**

**"my peace"** I give you ... So what's his source of peace?

Throughout his life, Jesus fostered a child-like connection to God. He imagined -experienced God as a loving parent holding him.

His name for this, Abba—in his culture, a child's earliest sound for father. In many languages, Amma is mother equivalent.

To strip away the religious-sounding language: Jesus had a conviction-shaped experience—or an experience-shaped conviction—that everything that exists derives from a benevolent-loving power ... and is moving toward a justice-shaped future that we have a hand in bringing about. This power is ultimate source of all being, including ours. In relation to this power, we are like a child in its mother's arms. This faith: **his secret super power**

Jesus had practices that nurtured this faith/intuition/hope: observed Sabbath, meditated on Torah-Prophets-Psalms-Wisdom writings (Sophia tradition) prayer

Even a 10-minute daily meditation practice ... put us in touch with that feeling of peace ... so when storm comes we can remember it, access it in moments

One last thing: Ordinary religion is **sin focused**. Like Santa Claus, "He knows when you've been sleeping, he knows when you're awake, he knows when you've been bad or good so be good for goodness sake"

But Jesus saw fear as our primary opponent. "Don't be afraid" his mantra

We know we can **catch fear** from other people due to our mirroring system.

Jesus acted as though peace is also a contagion, something we can catch from others.

What if the primary emotional effect that emerges from the Jesus vision of God ... is peace?  
Not guilt, shame, or sin worry ... but reassurance in the storm, calm, peace.

In the game of “My religion is better than your religion” people who like Jesus tend to interpret him as an **amazing innovator**.

Like he came up with all of his stuff from scratch

But Jesus was imbedded in a tradition. A Jewish rabbi.

He **intensified** things in his tradition more than he innovated.

Hebrew greeting: ***Shalom*** or **“Peace be with you”**

Arabic version: ***A-salam, alaykom***

When Jesus was giving his disciples about spreading his message, he told them, “When you enter a home, extend your peace”

**In our text today from Upper Room, he’s modeling something that we humans can do for one another ... extend peace.**

[Communion: Peace greeters to extend a greeting of peace]

PEACE MEDITATION: SCENE/MESSAGE

Scene: Expansive View of Nature like Sunset

Earliest surviving book in English written by a woman, *Revelations of Divine Love* by **Julian of Norwich**. Anchorite: lived in seclusion attached to a church in middle of urban setting

During her lifetime city ravaged by plague, peasant revolt crushed by authorities ... Julian suffered a near fatal illness

Most well known of the revelations: “All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well” [Bob Marley song]