

PEACE BE STILL

Ken, the minister of the church we attend, preached on Mark 4:35-41 recently. This passage recounts the time when the disciples were in the boat with Jesus and there was a big storm. Jesus calmed the storm with the words 'Peace, be still'

Two points he made which struck me were that

- 1) We will be afraid. We're in an unprecedented situation and it would be unnatural if we were not afraid,
- 2) Jesus is with us in the boat. He hasn't abandoned us. It's to him we cry out for help and ask for faith to cope

It helps us to acknowledge (rather than deny) that we are going to be afraid, that we're in an unprecedented situation and have real fears for family, friends, health, livelihoods.

I have been meditating on the phrase 'Peace be Still'. I have been thinking about that peace of God and the need to have my anxious heart stilled. It is only by stilling myself in God's presence that I find that peace. It is so immensely reassuring that Jesus offers his peace to us.

Psalm 56 vs 3 says "When (not if!) I am afraid I will trust in you"

Isaiah 26:3 'You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!'

John 14:27 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'

I am attaching a breath meditation exercise on 'Peace be Still' that I discovered. It is written by a couple called Bill and Christi Gaultiere. I have found it extremely helpful

(They have more resources on their website at soulshepherding.org)

PEACE, BE STILL

Breath Prayer Guides by Bill Gaultiere

Introduction to Breath Prayers

There are many challenges to prayer like distractions, restlessness, and engaging our mind and heart with God. Repeatedly breathing in and out a phrase of Scripture is an ancient Christian practice that can help us to pray with focus, depth, and persistence. It is a simple way of using our bodies in our discipleship to Jesus, much like kneeling in prayer or raising our hands in worship. Training with Breath Prayers from the Bible fosters intimacy with God, practicing God's presence, emotional health, and fruitful intercession for yourself and others.

Bible Verse

"[Jesus] awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!'" (Mark 4:39, ESV).

Meditation / Application

Jesus and his disciples were in their little fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee when suddenly a fierce storm threatened their lives. The disciples panicked, but Jesus took a nap! How was Jesus able to sleep? How could his body be at peace when gale winds blew freezing rain on him? He had trained himself to be submitted to the Father in all things. He wasn't just in the storm he was in the Kingdom of the Heavens resting in the arms of Abba Father. He trusted his Father to keep them safe—whether they survived or were thrown into the sea! When his disciples woke him he spoke the peace from his body into the storm (Mark 4:35-41).

Consider a storm that you're going through... Normally maybe your temptation is to row hard to get out of trouble? Complain? Or blame someone? Instead, place yourself with Jesus in the boat at sea and in the larger reality of God's kingdom. Then use Jesus' words as a Breath Prayer of the heart. (You can pray this for a loved one too.)

Breath Prayer

Peace... Be still...

Breathing Rhythm

Use your rhythm of breathing to help you pray:

- Breathe in slowly and deeply as you appreciate God's peace...
- Hold your breath to help you hold onto your sense of God's peace...
- Breathe out slowly and completely to help you release stress and fear...
- Breathe in, filling your lungs as you whisper, "Peace..."
- Feel the word "peace" echo inside you as you hold your breath awhile...
- Breathe out as you whisper, "Be still..."
- Let distractions slip away by re-focusing on breathing your prayer over and over...

Prayer / Journaling / Soul Talk Prompts

What feelings or needs arose? What was your experience of God? Share and pray in your journal or with a friend.

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