

Mark 4:35-41
Peace: Our Inheritance
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Many of you don't know this, but from birth, I have not been able to sleep. My parents often tell the story that I did not sleep through the night for the first two-and-a-half years I was born. God bless my mom and dad. I can't believe they had more children after me. By the time I was eleven years old, I had to see a doctor and be put on medication to sleep. My problem was not only biological, but it seemed that I had been born plagued with anxiety.

Here are some of the things I worried about throughout the years:

That I was not good enough and would disappoint my parents.

I still remember the first "B" I ever received. It was a fifth grade science test on protons, neutrons and electrons. I missed four, asked to be excused, and went to the bathroom and had a mini-nervous breakdown at the age of eleven.

That I wouldn't get into a good college. When I got into college, I worried that I wouldn't find a job. When I found a job, I worried I would never get married. When I finally got married, I worried that I couldn't have children. When I got pregnant, I worried my child wouldn't be healthy. When our son was born healthy, I worried that I would do something wrong and our son would die.

Then I got cancer. I worried I would die. When the cancer was out of my body, I worried I wouldn't have any more children. When I got pregnant with Annie, I worried whether I could parent more than one child. When I started working at White's after Annie, I worried that I would fail at mothering and fail the kids at White's. When I got pregnant with our third baby, I worried that our house wasn't big enough, that I could not handle a third child, and I would have to quit my job. Each and every day, I HAVE to..

Can you see how exhausting it is to carry all of the load of this on your shoulders???

There is a story in the Bible about a time when the disciples were crazy worried. As I read the words, I want you to focus on Jesus' actions and reactions compared to these men he so deeply loves.

Mark 4:35-41 The Message (MSG)
The Wind Ran Out of Breath

Late that day he said to them, "Let's go across to the other side." They took him in the boat as he was. Other boats came along. A huge storm came up. Waves poured

into the boat, threatening to sink it. And Jesus was in the stern, head on a pillow, sleeping! They roused him, saying, "Teacher, is it nothing to you that we're going down?"

Awake now, he told the wind to pipe down and said to the sea, "Quiet! Settle down!" The wind ran out of breath; the sea became smooth as glass. Jesus reprimanded the disciples: "Why are you such cowards? Don't you have any faith at all?"

They were in absolute awe, staggered. "Who is this, anyway?" they asked. "Wind and sea at his beck and call!"

Do you see here that Jesus in no way is affected by the storm? He actually is asleep while the whole storm is going on. I want you to look at when Jesus wakes up. Was it when the storm was rousing him? No. It was when the disciples woke him. He was moved to action when those he loved were gripped in fear. **The ONLY time Jesus was moved in the Bible, when he cried or was in distress, was when one of the people he so deeply loved was afraid or in need.** That gives me such incredible comfort.

The night Jesus was betrayed – the night he would enter into his passion – has so much to share. One of the last things the disciples hear from Jesus is about the greatest gift he wants to leave us behind: peace. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace.

Jesus, even at the time of his death, was always in control. This is what I want you to get: all through Jesus' life, there were times where people would threaten to kill him, and he would calmly meander through the crowd and escape. Jesus would encounter demons, and he would speak to them boldly without fear. Jesus was never, ever, *ever* moved or worried about the things of this earth or even the things of heaven and hell. Storms, crowds, threats, demons did not faze him at all. His mind was stayed on the Father. The devil tempts him – nothing phases him. Jesus is always in control. Even his death – he LAID down his life as our sin sacrifice. We can learn from this. Jesus always walked in the peace of God – this peace in Hebrew is called SHALOM. It means wellness, wholeness, completeness, peace of mind. Shalom means every part of you is well.

So when Jesus says MY PEACE he leaves us – he's saying, "I'm leaving you with the same control, the same wholeness as you saw me have in my thirty-three years on earth." Not a worldly peace that comes through meditation, yoga, from smoking something, from medication. This peace has got to work in the midst of ANY circumstance.

I ask all the time, if Jesus left me the peace, how come I don't have it? We have a part to play. Jesus says – LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED. You are in control of the condition of your heart. Your friends, your medications, your circumstances, cannot affect your heart. Don't guard all the other things – finances, children,

friends, just your heart. Jesus says, "If you guard your heart, I will take care of the other stuff." People make foolish decisions because of a troubled heart.

Matthew 6 33 says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you."

What does that mean – when we seek God first – he will take care of all the other details?

When I have trouble in any area – with my finances, with my friends, with my husband – I know where the root is: I need to seek first the kingdom. My relationship with God is off. I have let my heart be troubled. My heart condition has waned toward God. My relationship with Jesus is the axis of everything. When I seek Him, he takes care of it. I do not go and try to fix things first, I get on my knees and watch God fix it.

I want you to take a moment and think about what you are worrying about – what is causing your heart trouble. That thing you have struggled to gain peace and just cannot.

So how do you keep your heart from being troubled? We find the answer in the beginning of John 14:1. The first thing Jesus says to his disciples is, "Don't let your hearts be troubled." And then He tells them how to not let their hearts be troubled: "Trust in God, and trust also in me."

How do we not let our hearts be troubled? We trust in the Lord with all our heart. We lean not on our own understanding. We let Christ direct our paths.

And so, now, when I worry and fret, I claim the peace that was left to me as an inheritance over 2,000 years ago by my Savior. I rest in the promise that I can trust Him with my life because He cares more for me and my family and the kids at White's more than I ever could. When I begin to fret, I center myself on the promise that the man who was poured out like a drink offering for my sake is still on the throne. I recite the words of Psalm 116:7: "Be at rest once again, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you."

And so, today:

Are you worried about the future? You can trust Him.

Are you worried about your marriage? You can trust Him.

Are you worried about your finances? You can trust Him.

Are you worried about getting older, and what will happen? You can trust Him.

Are you worried that you will be alone forever? You can trust Him.

Are you worried about your kids, whether they're grown or young? You can trust Him.

Are you worried that God has forgotten you? He hasn't. You can trust Him.

Are you worried things will never get better? You can trust Him.

Whatever you are worried about, whatever has your heart troubled, give it to Jesus. He knows your every need. He knows how many hairs are on your head. He knows your silent cries in the night. As Isaiah 26:3 says... He will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in God.

Amen.