**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide. Go at your own pace using the online archive.

**Day 116 Conversation about Elijah Mark 9: 9-13, Matt 17:9-13**

Guided reflection:

After Peter, James and John were on the mountain top and saw Jesus talking to Elijah and Moses, they were rather quiet, wondering what they had just experienced. Jesus calls it a “vision” and to not tell anyone until he has been raised from the dead, but they probably did not get what Jesus said. As a matter of fact, when they ask about Elijah and the prophecy that he was to return, Jesus implies that Elijah already returned. They took that to mean that John the Baptist was Elijah in return. Remember, John the Baptist is heavy on their minds because he had just been beheaded. Can you just imagine what they were thinking? One minute there were miracles, the next, talk about death, the next minute John the Baptist is beheaded. Then, they see a vision with Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah. One minute a high and the next a low. Have you ever been disappointed that your walk with God included times of questions and times of doubt? If our discipleship is to look anything like Peter, James and John, it seems that questions and doubt might come with the territory.

Guided prayer:

*“Holy God, we do not always understand this journey of discipleship. Sometimes I feel full of joy and hope and then I find that following you involves taking up a cross too! Help me to know that questions and doubts are all a part of the disciple making process. But remind me again that you are not anxious. You know and you care and you are with me. Amen”*

**Day 117 Jesus heals a young boy Matt 17: 14-21; Mark 9: 14-29; Luke 9:37-48a**

Guided reflection:

Read the Mark version – it has the full story. A father comes to Jesus distraught over his son with epileptic fits that were so horrible that the boy would fall into the fire in a fit! The Disciples had not been able to free the boy. Jesus set the boy free after a bit of drama. But the Disciples wanted to know why they had not been successful. Jesus answered: “Because you had lack of faith” In Mark, Jesus says, “this kind come out with fasting and prayer.” It seems our effectiveness is related to our faith and spiritual disciplines. Have you ever fasted and prayed?

Guided prayer:

*“Merciful God, thank you for the times when folks are made whole, but I wonder about the times when they are not. I know it is not all up to me, but do I need to grow in my faith? Do you want me to fast and pray? I am open, show me the way. Amen”*

**Day 118 Jesus talks again about the cross and suffering Matt 17:22-23;Mark 9:30-32; Luke: 9:43b-45**

Guided reflection:

The gospels were written well past the time of the cross and empty tomb, so they are writing with some good hindsight, but they remembered that Jesus HAD talked to them about dying and rising again. Later, after the shock of it all wore off, they were able to remember these conversations. Jesus had tried to warn them and give them hope, but they could not grasp it. If Jesus were to tell you about your future, I am sure it would include some tough times (“In this life you will have tribulation”, Jesus says)

and some wonderful moments. Just like the disciples, we need to remember that it is after dying times that resurrection happens!

Guided Prayer:

*“Loving Lord, sometimes I am glad I do not know the end from the beginning. Life is full of surprises and twists and turns and we have lots of questions. Forgive my doubts, forgive my slowness to remember that you are with me, promising new life out of tough times. Thank you! Amen”*

**Day 119 Temple Taxes Matthew 17:24-27**

Guided reflection:

Taxes – ugh! These were temple taxes that everyone was expected to pay…. To be given to God. The tax collectors want their money! Jesus points out the silliness of the Son of God having to pay tax to God but he tells Peter to go catch a fish because there will be money in his mouth. Sure enough, the fish had enough money to pay the taxes. Once again, Jesus points out that His source for resources comes from God, not from his own efforts! But also notice, the Jesus went along with paying the silly tax. The thing that lifts out to me today about this story is Jesus lack of anxiety about money and taxes!

Guided prayer:

*“Giving God, I can get so caught up in the laws and taxes and how to pay for it all. Give my heart a bit of how Jesus looked at things. You are my source, you are my strength, and all that I have comes from your loving heart. I give to you my anxiety over little things. Amen.”*

**Day 120 Power games among disciples Matt 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:40-48**

Guided reflection:

I like it that the gospel writers included stories about real times with the disciples. Here they are fighting over who is the greatest. Now, that seems silly, but do we not play those games of one up man? Jesus reminds them that it is not about being the proud and haughty and “great” but about being like a little, accepting child. Where are you “full of yourself” and grasping at greatness? What would it mean to “humble yourself”?

Guided prayer:

*Loving God, I admit my tendency to want to be better than everyone else. There is a part of me that wants to be more important than anyone else. Help me remember that there is enough love in your heart for me and that I do not have to participate in power games. Remind me again that my strength and my worthiness comes from you, not from myself. Amen!”*