



1

“Let us go across to the other side.”

- In the world of Jesus and his disciples distance between places that we in our world of fast transportation consider to be nearby would for them be far off places, with foreign cultures.
- Travelling from the lake shore town of Capernaum across the waters to the other side of the Gerasenes, was considered to be foreign cultures with strange habits. It is “the world of the Others”
- Gerasenes was the last place that the disciples expected Jesus to visit. Jesus surprisingly told them to sail to towards the unfamiliar, uncomfortable environment for engagement in risk-taking mission

2

RISKING MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH PEOPLE ON THE OTHERSIDE

- Jesus invited his disciples to go to the other side to journey with him to the margins of society, into new and unfamiliar environments where people are demonized, stigmatized and marginalized
- The disciples' journey entered into the world of the *invisible people*, those who have been made mentally and psychologically unwell,
- They were thrown into the deep end to experience the world of the “non-people” de-humanized, shackled and chained by political, socio-economic and religious system. (Mark 5:4)
- They lived in the sub-world close to the world of the dead

3

THE WORLD OF THE OTHER EXPOSES OUR BLIND SPOTS OF STIGMA & PREJUDICES

- Entering and knowing the world of “the other” is indispensable to understanding God’s “Fullness of life” salvation (John 10:10)
- Only by entering the world of the other will our faith be rescued from bigotry, false sense of racial, social and religious superiority,
- Socially created blind spots about “other people” weakens our faith and we need to cross over to other shores to cope with differences that challenge our values, our morals and our constructed absolutes.
- Failure to journey imprisons and stifles our spiritual development and maturation. Missional discipleship requires **moving feet, open minds, and growing hearts** to learn from contexts of uncertainty and hostility

4

RISKY JOURNEY TO THE OTHER SIDE

- To be formed as missional disciples of Jesus carries inherent risk. You can’t be sure what will happen along the way. The only thing sure is that it will never be dull but full of surprises that will result in new learning.
- The first disciples of Jesus, were ordinary working class people familiar with the risks of travelling on the Sea of Galilee. They knew many stories of persons who perished because of its deadly storms.
- Unpredictable storms on the lake led the people to fear the water and wind as symbols of chaos and disorder in life. The unpredictable weather system that whipped up a terrible storm put them into deep panic,

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Coping with life-threatening storm while Jesus is sleeping

- From dry land of safety they moved into a context of uncontrollable fear of sinking and death. Their future look precarious as water began filling up the boat. Frantically they tried bailing water from filling up the boat.
- They threw un-necessary articles and extra cargo weighing down the boat overboard, They did everything necessary to survive but their hopes seem lost, the water was entering faster than their efforts of bailing out.
- In this life threatening storm, Jesus was asleep seemingly unperturbed. They needed help with the getting rid of the water threatening sink them

6

“Teacher, do you not care that we are dying?”

- Their desperate appeal to Jesus: **Teacher, do you not care that we are dying?** (4:38) suggest that they were afraid and angry with Jesus for not waking up to help remove water from the boat to reduce the risk of sinking.
- The last thing that they expected being with Jesus was to be in a situation in which they were vulnerable to life threatening storms
- On land they had to deal with socio-political chaos of Empire that occupied their lands, unleashing oppression, and even on lake of Galilee chaos of the uncontrollable climatic conditions threatened their lives

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Jesus converses with Life’s chaotic Challenges

- When Jesus awoke from his sleep in the midst of the storm with strong waves pouring water into the boat he asked his terrified disciples: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” (4:40)
- The question left them dumbstruck. How could he ask such a stupid question? Can’t he see the rising water threatening to overturn the boat?
- Instead of joining them in bailing out the water he addressed the life threatening winds filling his disciples lives with immobilizing fear
- Jesus commanded the storm: “Peace! Be Still!” (4:39) This is a very tame translation that weakens the strength of Jesus’ rebuke. His authoritative command was: Shut up! Stop what you are doing now!

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“Why are you afraid?” “Have you still no faith?”

- The disciples’ experience of the storm with Jesus raised questions in their mind about the power of his authority. Also Jesus had questions about the maturity of their faith to cope with chaos of life
- “Have you still no faith?” (8:40) suggest shallow depth weak foundations
- Paralyzing fear and doubting faith took over their lives when they faced environmental storms that brought chaos?
- If the disciples acted so immaturely coping in an environmental storm how then will they cope with life’s storms that they will face on the other side...the Gadarenes and beyond their familiar world?

9

Embrace Faith that Overcomes Fear in order to cope with Life's storms

- Our world possess amoral leaders implementing policies that destroys democratic governance. They dehumanize others making them into nonbeing. Fear is weaponized and used to control others.
- How can the followers of Jesus today embrace faith that overcomes fear to resist the evil forces that thrive on deception, lies and chaos
- Jesus invites us to put faith in him that he has the authority to shut up the storms created by the leaders of the evil empires of this world.
- Our faith must grow and mature to resist the storm surge winds that bring water into our boats threatening to overwhelm our lives. With Jesus in the boat with us we can overcome the storms of life. He has the last word on everything and everyone!

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MISSIONAL QUESTIONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION

1. Who are and where are the *invisible people, those on the other side*, within our society and what challenges do they pose to the understanding and practice of contemporary disciples of Jesus?
2. After Jesus commanded the storm to stop he posed a challenging question about the depth of their faith: "Have you still no faith?" What is our answer in response to the contemporary challenges affecting your faith?

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