

The Disciple's Course

And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side...

– Mark 6:45 –

The disciples had known for some time now that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. They had beheld Him change the water to wine. They had watched in hushed silence as He commanded unclean spirits and they fled in terror. They had seen His power to heal the most impossible sicknesses, and at Nain, they had enjoyed a glimpse of His authority over death itself. They were presently still stunned by His feeding of five thousand with nothing but five loaves of bread and two small fish. But eclipsing the excitement of this miracle was the burgeoning anticipation of the multitude, ready to make Him king. Here it was – the kingdom! Oh, despite all they had seen and heard, how little the disciples understood. The Master was not subject to the whims of this fickle crowd whose god was their bellies. Much yet needed to transpire, and His time was not yet. Jesus must here seek the secret place of the Most High, to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. As He went to the mountain to pray, He gently constrained His disciples to cross over to the other side. In so doing, He quietly shattered their presumptuous plans of an ill-timed reception and kingdom.

Though deflated, their love remained steadfast. Perhaps Mary's words in Cana still lingered in their hearts and minds, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." It really is that simple. No matter the disillusion, disappointment, or difficulty, do what He says. They likely wanted to stay, to leverage the crowd, to persuade the Master to re-think His departure and dismissal. But He bid them to cross over. The true disciple must lovingly obey. And so, they set sail. They are far from land when the storm is so boisterous that these skilled navigators cannot make headway. It would be easier to turn around, for the wind is contrary. But Jesus was clear – cross over.

How much is our journey through this life like that of the disappointed disciples on the Sea of Gennesaret. Jesus has commanded us to cross over. The tempest, though. Yet we must cross over. But – the waves. Yet we must cross over. Our bark is frail and falling apart in the storm. But still, we must cross over. He knows our faltering hearts. He sees us toiling and desires to enter our ship so that He may subdue the tempest's rage and prove Himself yet again to be not just Lord of creation, but Master of our faith and the Lover of our souls. He is so very far above our fears and failures.

Brothers and sisters, let us continue our crossing today.