

## Reflections on February 2013 Readings

- \* The Book of Mark is great for Biblical Storytelling (which is sharing the stories orally, as people originally did). It's fun and very rewarding to learn stories and Scriptures exactly as recorded and then tell them directly to others. *Go and tell the Good News!*

Give it a try, with something short, like this little mustard seed story told by Jesus in Chapter 4:

*What is God's kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it?*

*It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground.*

*It is the smallest seed in all the world.*

*But once it is planted it grows larger than any garden plant.*

*It even puts out branches that are big enough for birds to nest in its shade.*

Learn it one line at a time by saying it out loud until you know it well. Then add the next line and practice both together. Keep adding more and building on what you already know. Natural movements and emotions ease the learning and enhance the telling of the thoughts and words you've committed to memory.

The story that I first heard told this way (and "hooked" me on storytelling) is also in Mark 4:

*Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the east side."*

*So they left the crowd and his disciples started across the lake with him in the boat.*

*Several other boats followed along. Suddenly, a windstorm struck the lake.*

*Waves started splashing into the boat and it was about to sink.*

*Jesus was in the back of the boat with his head on a pillow, and he was asleep.*

*His disciples woke him and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we're about to drown?"*

*Jesus got up and ordered the wind and the waves to be quiet.*

*The wind stopped and everything was calm.*

*Jesus said to his disciples, "Why were you afraid? Don't you have any faith?"*

*Now they were more afraid than ever and said to each other,*

*"Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him."*

- \* Don't forget to continually ask yourself what can be learned and applied to your life as you read God's Word. For example, the 2 stories above offer lessons such as:
  - Just the smallest thing (word, thought, action, seed, etc.), when blessed by God results in amazing, life-changing surprises.
  - When we do as Jesus says, He is with us and will get us through our "rough waters."
  - It's hard to trust and obey God/Jesus/Spirit when we don't know what's ahead. But when we step out in faith we know where to turn for guidance, assurance and help.
  - There's always room for improvement.

- \* I enjoyed reading Leviticus in Eugene Peterson's "Message" Bible (and seeing once again its stress on living the Holy life: *Be ye holy as I am Holy*).

*Do not live like the nations I'm driving out before you (note: this follows verses filled with sexual and other sins). They did all of these things and I hated every moment of it. I have distinguished you from these nations to be my very own.*

I don't like all the animal sacrifice and blood rituals, but they're good reminders (as is the sacrament of communion) of how blessed we are that Jesus' brutal death is once and for all. Now, thanks to Jesus, we can look forward to freedom from all these rules and rituals with a lion-laying-with-lamb future.

- \* One verse that spoke to me this month is from Leviticus 19:

*Don't show favoritism to either the poor or the great. Judge on the basis of what is right.*