



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

16 Days of Activism against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Awareness, Action, Accountability

Contextual Bible studies

Introducing the Bible Studies:

These bible studies are meant to be theological and pastoral tools to encourage reflection and action among LWF member churches on the issue of sexual and gender-based violence. They are shaped to bridge biblical texts and contemporary contexts, by inviting reflection on some of the major challenges that churches face in responding to sexual and gender-based violence. The selection of texts offers not only a lens to analyze various dimensions of sexual and gender-based violence, but also to stimulate thinking on meaningful action. Member churches can adapt these bible studies at any point in the 16 days of activism, in response to the questions, challenges and needs they face, and use them as tools of advocacy and accompaniment, which can move communities towards action for gender justice and prevention of violence.

BIBLE VERSE: Mark 6, 45–56

Theme: “GET RID OF FEAR AND HAVE FAITH”

A greeting of peace and good, for everyone.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we ask you to guide us in this small study, based on the reading of the Gospel of Mark 6: 45–56.

“Take courage! It is I” (v 50)

Reading of the Gospel:

⁴⁵ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. ⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before

dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they **saw** him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Reflection:

The fear the disciples felt was because Jesus had left them, according to them "alone" in the boat, because they still did not understand that, although he was not physically among them, he had not left them. That feeling is what we experience in difficult situations, such as today.

And as women we live very difficult situations, it is when we feel that we can't row more against the current and the strong wind.

Our bodies react when we feel attacked, rejected, alone, discriminated against by this prevailing "machismo". And that fear can cause disorders in our body, such as Anxiety, and other types of physical disorders, which we often ignore and over time, wreak havoc on our physical and mental health.

Many times we go alone in that boat, when we face harassment, family and work violence, because like the disciples, we forget that Jesus has not left us and presents himself in many ways, but our despair does not allow us to see him.

Also, today we face, all of humanity, a pandemic, which scares us, we have seen relatives, friends, neighbors, etc. leave, we experience that fear again, which overwhelms us.

This is when our FAITH comes in, when everything drowns us, we must rest securely in the power of Jesus Christ, not grieve but rather leave all our fears to God in prayer, and He will respond, whether He calms the waves or gives us forces to face them, will give us your peace, which passes all understanding. (Philippians 4: 7)

And how do we get rid of fear?

1. Take time to Pray and Reflect.

2. Recognize what is causing the problem (violence, harassment, discrimination, etc.)
3. Seek for help (Church, Family, Psychologist, Friends, Human Rights, Support Groups)
4. Talk, do not keep quiet (so as not to feed fear)
5. Report (also be the voice of those without a voice)
6. And, above all, seek God our Savior Jesus Christ, having Faith, to be healed and freed. Because we remember that we ARE FREE by the GRACE OF GOD, AMEN!

May the blessing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, Amen.

*Pastora Pésida Gudiel de Solórzano
Iglesia Luterana Guatemalteca, ILUGUA*