

Devotional—5

by Tessa Afshar

I have been studying the Gospel of Matthew for several weeks, and as you might guess, Matthew, the tax-collector-turned-disciple, spent a lot of time with Jesus. So he picks up a certain phrase that Jesus must have liked to use. The other writers of the gospels have it too (check out John 16:33, for ex.). But Matthew uses it multiple times. It's a powerful phrase that pours strength into me every time I read it:

"Take heart."

Jesus said "take heart" to the woman with the issue of blood (Matt. 9:22), to the paralytic (Matt. 9:2), and to the disciples (Matt. 14:27). In different situations, whether facing fear, discouragement, or the power of sin, Jesus said, "Take heart."

My beloved friends, today, let us receive Jesus's whispered words for our world and for our lives: "Take heart". To the part of you that is becoming obsessive about germs, the part of you that feels a constant feeling of anxiety, the part of you that has become hyper vigilant and cannot rest, the part of you that is terrified of financial ruin, Jesus whispers: Take heart. Take heart beloved. Take heart.

And pray as one who has the strength of the Lord poured into a fragile frame.