

Wandering Heart: *"I'm fixed upon it"* Open Hands

We are born with the ability
to wrap our fingers around another,
to hold tight to what we know.
Maybe that's where the instinct comes from—
this clinging,
this sinking,
this holding on.
Maybe that's why Peter cries, "Never!"
when Jesus must leave.
From the very beginning
we've known how to hold tight.
So I pray:
open up my hands.
Uncurl my fingers
one by one.
Loosen the grip
that I hold unyielding.
Remind me that birds must fly
and children must grow
and leaves must fall.
And even though
we are born with the ability
to hold tight,
we can learn how to love
with open hands.

Written by: Rev. Sarah Speed | sanctifiedart.org

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Beseeching

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Matthew 16:21-23

Ink on paper

"God forbid it!" says Peter to Jesus (Matthew 16:22). In this image, Peter beseeches Jesus to avoid the cross, to not let the prophecies become reality.

After ten years in ministry, I work in a church for the first time. In this text, I feel Jesus speaking directly to me: "You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things" (Matthew 16:23). This is exactly where frustration surfaces for me in my amazing church job. It is when I have set my eye on human things. I worry about the budget. I worry about the email. I worry about the building. So why am I so focused on human things? And the negative ones, at that?

Because I'm human. Because these things matter. But not if I miss the grandeur of this incredible organization sharing the expansive love of God!

With every brush stroke in this ink painting, the humanity of Peter's face deepens, his expression clarifies. He cannot let his beloved friend be murdered. He worries about human things. How weighty and legitimate those things feel. Jesus seems free of those human worries. He focuses with confidence on the path ahead, though Peter's concern causes him to falter.

Perhaps we can each be free of human concerns as well... However, that feels like a pipe dream, and Jesus knows it: "Get behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:23). He does not blame Peter. Instead, he calls out Satan from within his friend. In doing so, he offers us a much needed reminder to refocus. Thanks be to God.

—Hannah Garrity