

Y'all know I love me a good Disney movie. I mean, I love me a bad Disney movie if I'm being honest, but I particularly love me a Disney movie with rock solid, repeating over and over in your head music, and no...we are not going to talk about Bruno this morning for those of you who have seen Encanto, today we're going with my favorite Disney franchise...Frozen. I know, many of you are probably like, "If I have to hear 'Let it Go' one more time, I'm going to happily let my radio go promptly out the window," but Frozen hits home for me deeply, particularly because at its heart is a story about sisters, the intense, unbreakable, unrelenting, unconditional bond between sisters who will do anything, go anywhere for each other. It also helps that Idina Menzel voices Elsa, but that's neither here nor there.

This week was one of those gospels that between my own thoughts and the amazing insights from Bible study I was like, where do I go? There are too many directions! And then a little ear worm snuck into my brain, and no, it is not Let it Go, I promise. It's actually Elsa's self-empowerment ballad from Frozen 2, "Into the Unknown." Listening to it actually felt a little bit how I've felt all week, because you see, in the movie, Elsa keeps hearing this echoing, calling voice to her that will not relent. She doesn't know where it's coming from, who it is, or what it wants, but it will not stop. This is how I felt this week with just the little smidge of this song, Elsa

belting out the words, “Into the unknowooownnnn” in my head. I didn’t know why it was there, until..I did. I listened to the song with the lyrics and the Holy Spirit was like, “Oh hello, that ear worm was from me. You’re welcome,” which she is wont to do at times so there ya go.

Anyway, the heart of this song is that Elsa *knows* she needs to listen to this voice that is calling her, but she’s afraid, because she doesn’t know where it will lead, why it has chosen her, what it will call her to do. She has zero assurance that this voice echoing is a *good* voice, daring to ask it, “Are you here to distract me so I make a big mistake?” but then wondering... What if it isn’t bad, what if... “Or are you someone out there who’s a little like me, who knows deep down I’m not where I’m meant to be?” She feels herself being pulled, wanting to see where this leads, her feet start moving in the direction the voice is calling her to, but before she rushes headlong into seeing where it goes, she declares, boldly, bravely, worriedly, “I’m afraid of what I’m risking if I follow you...” Will she have to give up her powers? Will she have to leave her sister? Will she have to go some place she’s never known and doesn’t necessarily want to be? What will this take away from her? What will it give to her? She’s afraid and yet...she eventually speeds towards the voice, crying out that she, “longs to go into the unknown,” daring to follow though she has no idea where it will lead.

With a moment like that, with lyrics like that, is it any wonder that this song kept circling my head in light of this gospel? Because what else is Jesus doing here, but asking the first disciples to go into the unknown? And like Elsa, Peter seems to have a little bit of hesitant back and forth before finally stepping out of his boat and stepping towards the unknown in hopes that this, with Jesus, is where he's meant to be, even though he has absolutely no guarantees that this won't end up being a big mistake, that he won't end up regretting all of the risks that he is taking by deciding to exchange fish for people in his catching vocation.

One thing I want to point out as we dive into our gospel this morning is that Luke's timeline of events is a smidge different from the other gospel writers. We sometimes hear this story and we're like why on earth did these guys just chuck it all in and follow this complete stranger after just meeting him? Well, in Luke, this isn't their first meeting...in Luke, there is already a well established relationship between Jesus and Peter in particular and I think that adds an interesting layer of context to what happens on the shore of the Sea of Galilee this morning. You see, prior to this event, Jesus had already been moving around Capernum where Peter, Andrew, James, and John lived. He had been teaching and healing and you can imagine the first tendrils of his reputation have already begun to spread. Part of that

reputation, of the stories being passed along would have been the story of Jesus entering into Jesus' house and healing Peter's mother in law.

In the early days of his ministry, after teaching one day, Jesus was invited to Peter's home where his mother in law was sick with a fever. Jesus healed her and you can imagine that story didn't just stay with Peter, but would have been heard by his brother, Andrew and their fishing partners James and John, so when Jesus shows up on the shore near their boats to teach as they're coming in from a night of fishing, it isn't a question of who is this guy with this crowd? It's a matter of fact reality, there is Jesus, the man who heals. The relationship of their foundation is already laid so now it's just a question of what bricks get built upon that foundation.

This explains why when Jesus asks to teach from Peter's boat and when Jesus tells him to put down his nets, Peter doesn't balk, but calls Jesus "Master" and lets the moment play out in front of him. Peter isn't hesitant until that echoing voice of Jesus hits his ears beckoning him into the unknown. Peter watches that massive haul of fish come into his boat and he knows that from this moment on, his life could change, if he was willing to listen to the voice, take that step, dare to go with Jesus. Peter's inner thoughts probably echoed Elsa's...is this a magical distraction? Is this a mistake? What am I risking? What if this is where I was meant to be?

There's that tug in the back of Peter's mind...even if this is where I'm meant to be, I am not *who* should be here. He is wracked by his own sinfulness, his own perception of his unworthiness, and he can't get past it. All of those voices are too loud at first to truly hear and head what Jesus is calling him to. But then...Jesus speaks the words that have echoed through the Bible to every prophet, every person called to go where God is calling...do not be afraid. Jesus knows all the questions and fears that Peter is facing, and he tells him, don't...don't listen to those. Listen to me. Follow me into the unknown and I will keep you safe.

There's a reason I love Peter so much, and that reason is because he is us. His reactions are our reactions. We have seen the things Jesus is capable of, the things Jesus does in our lives, the impact he has, the faith he calls us to, but when that call to follow comes, when the siren call beckons us into the unknown...we hesitate. Immediately into our minds spring all of the reasons why we are not worthy of this calling. We aren't capable, our faith isn't strong enough, we aren't brave enough, bold enough, any kind of enough. We make mistakes and we sin left, right, and center, and who are we that Jesus would call us into discipleship? We can barely fish for goldfish, let alone people.

If that voice isn't loud enough on its own, then there's the worry that plagues Elsa too, I'm afraid of what I'm risking if I follow you. Faith and discipleship are no cake walk, they aren't readily accepted in this world, not when done boldly and authentically. It's a risk to love our neighbor. It's a risk to care for creation. It's a risk to say that we steward our gifts in more ways than filling our Amazon cart over and over. It's a risk to accept our siblings for who they are. It's a risk to say that weakness is actually strength, that death isn't the victory, that love is the most powerful thing we do, and grace is the greatest gift we can receive. It's a risk to say that there are people in this world more important than us. It's a risk that ushers in the potential for hurt, isolation, weird looks, and living in total opposition to the world around us.

So we hear Jesus calling sometimes faintly, sometimes loudly, saying, follow me...and we don't know if we should go. We don't know if that's a voice we should listen to, if that's an unknown that we should dare to go into. What if it's a mistake? What if we fail? What if this is all a bunch of bologna? What if, what if, what if? All those what ifs are simply a failure of our imaginations to picture who Jesus not only believes we are capable of being, but knows deep down that we are. All of those what ifs are a failure of our imagination to hear the words do not be afraid and believe them.

Peter was bold enough to shove his fear aside, because Lord knows there's no way that it disappeared completely, and say, I will go. I will dare to go into the unknown with you, Jesus, because you believe in who I am, in where I'm meant to be. Bring on the unknown, I'm ready.

I'm going to shift us here from Disney to the other side of the pop culture galaxy. Star Trek. The mission given to the members of the Starship Enterprise was to "boldly go where no man has gone before." Well, discipleship is a place plenty of people have gone before, so we're just going to focus on those first two words. Boldly go. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly go into those places we're afraid to wander. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly fish for our siblings and remind them how very much they are loved. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly step forward saying, I'm sinful but I know who I am in your eyes. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly push aside our fear and claim our calling. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly let our imaginations run wild for who we could be in this world, how we can serve, how we can love. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly step out of the safety of our boats and onto a path that leads us who knows where. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly trust who he believes we are. May today we hear Jesus' calling and boldly go into the unknown. **AMEN!!!**