

DRAWN IN: Listening

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Romans 8:19-22,23

19For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 22We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

Mark 8:11-21

11 The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him. 12And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, 'Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation.' 13And he left them, and getting into the boat again, he went across to the other side.

14 Now the disciples* had forgotten to bring any bread; and they had only one

loaf with them in the boat. 15And he cautioned them, saying, 'Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.*' 16They said to one another, 'It is because we have no bread.' 17And becoming aware of it, Jesus said to them, 'Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember? 19When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?' They said to him, 'Twelve.' 20'And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?' And they said to him, 'Seven.' 21Then he said to them, 'Do you not yet understand?'

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly. Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. Perhaps the most familiar form of prayer is "petition" (asking God *for* something). Prayer can also be *holy listening*. Silent meditation, walking a labyrinth, repetitively reading a scripture (*lectio divina*) or observing an image (*imago divina*) are all forms of prayer as *holy listening*. What is your experience with prayer as listening? What difference has it

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made, or might it make, in your life to practice this kind of prayer?

3. What does it mean to listen for and tune into the “groans of creation” that St. Paul speaks about in Romans 8?
4. According to St. Paul, our own bodies “groan inwardly”. How easy or difficult is it for you to “listen to your body”? What practices or principles attune you to the rhythms of your whole self?
5. Jesus points out that the Disciples—once again—are not noticing the deeper significance of what is going on. This isn’t just about catching symbolism, it’s about not letting ideas and expectations get in the way of receiving something else. Does this resonate at all with you? Why or why not?
6. If you’ve ever made art of any kind, have you ever experienced a stage of creation akin to “listening” - that is, paying attention to how the material is taking you in a different direction from what you initially set out to do? What happened, what did you learn?