

### Disturb Us, Lord

*“Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.” (Luke 1:29 NLT)*

*Disturb us, Lord, when  
We are too pleased with ourselves,  
When our dreams have come true  
Because we dreamed too little,  
When we arrived safely  
Because we sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when  
With the abundance of things we possess  
We have lost our thirst  
For the waters of life;  
Having fallen in love with life,  
We have ceased to dream of eternity  
And in our efforts to build a new earth,  
We have allowed our vision  
Of the new Heaven to dim.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,  
To venture on wilder seas  
Where storms will show Your mastery;  
Where losing sight of land,  
We shall find the stars.*

These words are the beginning of a prayer attributed to Sir Francis Drake, sixteenth-century English sea captain, explorer and privateer (some say pirate), but its provenance is unsure. It was supposedly written before a long ocean voyage. This is not a prayer that as a sailor I would want to hear at the beginning of a voyage. And no, I am not a descendent of Sir Francis.

The word *disturb* is rarely found in Scripture, either describing a physical movement of something (2 Kings 23:18), or interference (Ezra 6:7), or a person or persons to be angered or upset (Job 20:2; Mark 6:20). It is mostly negative and not something to be sought. *The Cambridge Dictionary Online* provides a lesser variant definition of the word *disturb* as “to move or change something from its usual position, arrangement, condition, or shape” that brings us to Luke 1:29.

Interestingly enough there is one translation that presents the word *disturb* in this different meaning. The New Living Translation says that when Mary was addressed by the angel of the Lord before her conception, Mary was “confused and disturbed” and then she tried to discern what the angel meant. She was taken into the unknown, out of her usual frame of mind, perplexed or troubled (according to other translations). She didn’t shut herself off but considered something different in her life. She responded by being open to the leading of the Lord.

Sir Francis Drake and I pray to be disturbed: not to be made angry or upset, but to “dare more boldly,” to get out of my ordinary, and to dream bigger. That is a strong desire that God would get my attention and use me more, encourage me more. Just as Mary responded to God’s leading, so would I.



—Paul Drake  
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