

In the Storm with Us

King of Glory Lutheran Church

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Pentecost 4: Mark 4:35-41

³⁵When evening had come, [Jesus said to the disciples,] “Let us go across to the other side.” ³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Jesus calming of the storm reveals His identity as the Lord of creation and of the coming Kingdom. The disciples get to the correct question, but Jesus question to them is just as important.

God’s grace and peace to you this day as we gather to worship the Almighty, all-powerful, ever present God. Amen.

Has there been a time in your life when it felt like a storm descended upon you? You know the old saying, “When it rains, it pours!” That’s what I mean. Life throws it’s darndest at you and it is overwhelming with no end in sight. One trouble here and another comes right on the first one’s heels.

Or maybe it was literally a storm. Here in the Rockies, storm clouds can gather without warning. We cannot be too careful about lightening in the mountains. Many of us have other real life experiences where we thought it might be our last moments, caught in a blizzard or tornado.

Well the Sea of Galilee was one of those places. The wind could whip up in no time and fishermen’s boats were like toys on those waves. People in Jesus’ time couldn’t swim well and left being out on the water to those who made their living off of it.

This was because water represented darkness and chaos, even Evil. Think back to the story of Jonah. A storm came upon the boat because he was running from God and the only thing to calm the waters was when the sailors threw Jonah overboard.

Remember the Israelites fleeing their captors – Pharaoh and his army – while the seas opened up for the Israelites, those waters drowned the army.

Even farther back in creation, God created the earth from the primal waters and seas. In the book of Daniel it is sea monsters dwell in the waters and only take flight when one like the son of man come down from heaven.

Jesus' disciples knew these stories. It's no wonder they get frightened when the water is flowing into their boat faster than they can dump it over the sides. "Wake up, Jesus, don't you care about us? We're going to die out here!"

Ever been laying in the Emergency Room scared, I mean really scared? What about in a rain storm and the hail is making all the cars and the trucks hydroplane. "Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy. Please God don't leave me now."

Where is Jesus? Asleep in the back of the boat with His head on a pillow. Jesus was taking a well-deserved nap. His closed eyelids show us the very human side of this divine man. He was tired after ministering to people all day long. Maybe He's snoring....

But what happens next is not of the ordinary human realm. The disciples wake Jesus up and he rebukes the wind and silences the storm. Rebuke and silence are actually exorcism verbs. The God of all creation puts the evil darkness of the sea back into its realm. "Peace, be still!"

Ever seen on tv the inside of a hurricane? Still. Calm. Dead quiet. Unnerving perhaps. Jesus is the real deal. Last week Jesus painted word pictures of God's kingdom like a mustard seed creeping and crawling. Now? Right now, the disciples all just experienced God's kingdom. Holy Goodness!

Remember in Mark's Gospel, the demons and evil spirits recognize Jesus when the disciples are clueless. The spirit world knows Jesus identity, and usually plead with Him not to harm them. Meanwhile the disciples don't recognize Jesus as divine.

Today, they get the question right. "Who is this that He can even calm the storms?"

Who is this God that saved my life? Who is this God that hears my every prayer? Who is this Jesus that truly forgives my worst failures? Who is this God?

We've all been through a horrific storm lately. The pandemic seemed to keep coming like waves upon the beach. Just when we might have thought we could stand on dry sand, another disheartening report came rolling up the beach. More dead. Another variant. Wear your masks.

Jesus are in you in the boat, here? Are you going to throw us a life-jacket or what?

What's fascinating to me is the exchange between the Lord and the disciples.

"Wake up! Don't you care we are going to die?"

"When are you going to get some faith? Why do you fear this storm?"

Hmm.

Whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's, says Paul.

Whether we get cancer or whether we don't, God is with us.

Whether we lose the job or keep it, God will go ahead.

Whether our government survives or falls apart....why do you fear this storm?

Jesus says, "Have you still no faith? I am the God of all creation. I am the Lord. I am the Great I AM."

We're going to take a moment of silence. Think about a storm that is brewing inside your soul. Or perhaps a storm of the past. Think about your response. Maybe we are afraid. Maybe God gave us the ability to trust.

Either way, ponder for a moment, the Lord of all Creation and pray that storm into the calm of Jesus' power.

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