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St Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th St. SW
Austin, MN, 55912-1749

Pastor Ted Barthels
June 23, 2024
5th Sunday after Pentecost
(Previously preached on July 1, 2012 revised)

Scripture Lessons: Job 38:1-11; Acts 27:13-26
Hymns: 758; 427:1-4, 7; 428; 644

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Mark 4:35-41

On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them,
“Let us cross over to the other side.”³⁶ Now when they had left
the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And
other little boats were also with Him.³⁷ And a great windstorm
arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already
filling.³⁸ But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they
awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we
are perishing?”

³⁹ Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea,
“Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great
calm.⁴⁰ But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How is it
that you have no faith?”⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and
said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and
the sea obey Him!” (NKJV)

This is the Word of God!

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow Redeemed

INTRO: A child's fear in the midst of a storm.

The lightning flashes in the dark of night and the immediate crack and boom of thunder are enough to give anyone a start, but a young child is likely to cry out in fear. That young child will call for Mom or Dad. The child cries out in fear, but when one of the child's parents enters the bedroom and holds that child in his arms the child feels an immediate sense of reassurance and calm. Children know in their hearts, "Mom and Dad will look out for me. Mom and Dad will keep me safe." Although they may feel this in their hearts, Mom and Dad know that there are limits to what they can do. There are storms that come in the night that are greater than they are able to talk away.

We all face storms that scare us, sometimes more than others. Indeed during this time of year it may very literally be a thunder storm that may threaten us with the possibility of tornado or flood. But there are other storms that assail us as well. We face storms in family lives, in our professional lives, in our personal lives. We face storms that strike to our very hearts as we face the death of a loved one, or a severe sickness that may indeed endanger our own lives. There are spiritual storms when we face trials of faith in persecutions, or the devious undermining of Scripture truth by false teachers.

In fact, any and all of these different situations that arise in life may also be spiritual storms that challenge our faith, that threaten our trust in the Lord. As we face these different storms they may indeed shake us, shake our faith with fear. The comfort and reassurance of Scripture would bring us the truth that we are -

Theme: Safe With Jesus During the Storms of Life.

Sometimes we bring the storms into our lives because we have wandered out into the world. That makes it easy for us to see troubles that people endure as being their own making. But this morning we simply learn from our text -

I. Serious Storms Come into Our Lives.

Storms come even when we are following Jesus. They may even come because we are following Jesus.

On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." ³⁶ Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling."

(Mark 4:35-37)

There is something we need to note in our text. The disciples did not venture out on their own and get themselves into a terrible bind because of a foolish decision. Oh yes, the disciples did do that from time to time, just like we do. Peter talked himself into a deep hole when he tried to be strong and walked into the High Priest's courtyard, when he was in fact weak. When challenged by the world, Peter denied the Lord. We know that on that occasion the Lord looked at Peter and that look was enough to bring shame and repentance into Peter's heart. As storms go, that was a dangerous one that almost cost Peter his soul. We also know that the disciples faced illness in their families. We are told how Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.

So, we also face any number of situations in life because of spiritual pride, but at other times storms come because such trials are a fact of life in a sin corrupted world. We face some serious storms that overwhelm us and cause us to fear and tremble.

The situation described in our text was a little different because it was the Lord's direction that caused the disciples to set sail that evening. Much is written about how suddenly storms can arise on the Sea of Galilee because of the surrounding terrain. The Lord Jesus permitted the storm to come upon them that caught them that night. That they were following Jesus' direction for their lives adds to the point of the lesson we should learn from this. What we need to understand is that **even when we follow Jesus' guidance and direction for our lives, we will encounter dangerous storms.** Jesus warns us that persecutions

will come into our lives if we are faithful in following Jesus. Our Lord tells us that we should expect nothing less, for the disciple is not above his master. If the world hates Jesus and much of the truth which He presents, the world will hate those who abide in Jesus' truth. This starts with the gospel itself. Those who trust in Jesus' righteousness alone for life and salvation will be scoffed by those who trust in the righteousness of man. If we keep ourselves separate from sin, separate from false teachings that endanger the truth of our salvation, we shall find ourselves in a storm of trouble with people who think of us as spiritually arrogant, ignorant, even hateful. And these storms can be troubling and at times even severe.

The disciples were with Jesus, and they found themselves in a severe storm. Some of them were experienced sailors, professional fishermen, so it is not as if they would panic when a bit of a storm blew. But this one became severe so that the waves beat over the boat, and the boat was filling up. They were swamped. Once swamped a small boat is unstable, and the disciples knew they were in trouble. In fact, they saw that it was a desperate situation that these fisherman knew had cost others their lives, even experienced fishermen like them. But they were with Jesus!

So it is sometimes. We face severe tests of our faith, even though we are attentive to the Word and follow the guidance of the Lord from Holy Scripture. We may recognize from our life experience that we are in a dangerous situation, a distressing situation. **But we are with Jesus.** Even as the disciples took Jesus along with them in the boat, so Jesus is with us in our daily walk in life. So why is it that we are -

II. Feeling Alone in Our Weakness.

It is because of our weakness. Look at how it came down in that boat with Jesus.

“But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38)

The disciples knew what they knew! They knew they were in trouble. By all appearances the boat was about to sink! Jesus was in the back of the boat asleep. Their conclusion was false. Their conclusion was that Jesus didn't care. Their conclusion was that even though Jesus was there **with** them, Jesus wasn't there **for** them. Their charge as they woke Jesus in a panic was, **"Do You not care that we are perishing?"**

How often don't we also fall victim, not to the storms of life, but to the false conclusion that He who is **with us always** even to the end of the age, is not there **for us when we need** Him? How often are we not tempted to panic, feeling that the Lord is not paying attention to us in our plight? Our sinful flesh would lead us into misbelief, into thinking that we are dependent upon our own devices to get us out of trouble. Our flesh would lead us to doubt that the Lord can pay attention to everything that is going on in the world, and then think, "I've been in this storm too long already!" We feel alone in our weakness.

That is what we learn all too often in the storms of life. We are weak. **We are weak, but He is strong!** That couldn't be more apparent than when we learn of --

III. The Saving Power of Jesus' Word.

This isn't a matter of Jesus **taking** charge of the situation. We must recognize that Jesus **IS** in charge of the situation.

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" ⁴¹ And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" (Mark 4:39-41)

The Spirit tells us that Jesus arose and addressed both the wind and the sea. His command, **"Peace, be still!"** was directed to both the wind and the waves. Nature must submit to the Creating Word. Jesus is the Word made flesh. His Word brought all that there is into being. His command must be obeyed even by the wild forces of nature. Jesus **WAS** most certainly in

charge. He spoke the word and the winds stopped. He spoke the command and the sea was calm. Normally the winds die down somewhat gradually. Normally it takes some time for the waves to calm down after the wind dies down. Not that day! Jesus commanded and the wind and the waves obeyed. All was calm, and the disciples who had cried out to the Lord in a panic, were now amazed that He was able to deliver them from the danger of the storm.

This **is** the **power** of **our** Savior! Christ Jesus came into the world to save us from the threat of sin and death. Christ came into the world to bring us life. Christ Jesus came into the world that we might put our trust in Him for life and salvation. Jesus is in charge. All things have been put under His authority, who died for us and rose again, and is even now at the right hand of God the Father. He is in **the** position of authority. **He** ascended up on high that He might be with each of us no matter where we might be. He is with us every bit as much as He was with the disciples out on the Sea of Galilee that night in the storm. He is in control, so don't panic.

Jesus was not in a panic. We are the ones who are given to panic. We are the ones who fail to trust. But Jesus, who is the all-powerful Son of God, He is not in a panic. He knows all things, and even as we turn to Him in prayer, trusting Him who is powerful to save, whose Word is the final authority, He shall deliver us according to His will.

Conclusion: We are called upon to trust the Lord.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Lessons in trust are a spiritual benefit that we receive through facing the storms of life. God is faithful. Our Savior is with us and attends to us in our time of need. We learn to trust even as the Scriptures encourage us to do.

“The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble. 10 And those who know Your name will put

their trust in You; For You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.” (Psalm 9:9-10)

AMEN

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.