

Calming the Storm

Mark 4:31-44

HUMC June 13, 2021

Pastor Paul O'Neil

Once there were two painters who challenged each other to see if one could paint the best picture of peace. So, one artist painted a sunset with the sun going down over the calm water. It looked very nice and the picture had a very calming effect on all who looked at it.

The other artist painted a picture of a thunderstorm with the waves of the sea that crashed against the rocks.

In the bottom corner of the picture were two large rocks that shielded a singing bird. Both paintings depicted peace, but the second showed how God's calm and his tranquility overrides our concerns.

My scripture text is about the important time Jesus and his disciples were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. And if

anyone of us were to find ourselves in one of the storms of life, I think we would want Jesus to be in our boat.

My text is Mark 4:35-41. Neil will read for us.

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" This is the Word of God.

In our gospel text, we believe there were at least four of the disciples in the boat were experienced fishermen. But this particular storm on the Sea of Galilee, there was fear they were going to lose their lives and they all cried out for help.

So let me ask, right now, is there a storm in your life? If so, it does not necessarily mean that God does not loves you or he is angry or paying you back for something that you did years ago.

Sometimes the storms just happen randomly or they are self-made. If we sinned, confess it and move on. If we can improve a negative situation that we created, then do so.

Long ago in the days of sailing ships, a terrible storm arose and a ship was lost in a remote area in the Pacific Ocean. Only one crewman survived, who found himself washed up on a small uninhabited island. In his desperation, the castaway he prayed to God for deliverance from his lonely existence.

Each day he looked for a passing ship but saw nothing. In the course of time, he built a crude hut, in which he stored the few things he had recovered from the wreck. But one day as returned from his daily search for food, he saw a column of smoke.

His hut was in flames and all was lost. Overcome with grief and despair, he fell into depression and questioned whether life itself was even worth the effort.

The next morning, when he woke up and saw a ship anchored offshore and a small boat rowing towards him. When the cast away finally met the ship's captain, he asked how he had known to send help.

The captain replied, "When we saw your smoke signal, we tried to rescue you, but the tide was against us. And we had to wait until now to come get you".

When difficulties come our way, it is easy to look on the negative side, we need to remind ourselves that God is able to bring good out of any difficulty. As people of faith, we need to believe that doors will open and sometimes they will close. But we need to be open to all possibilities and not limit the means to which God works.

Romans 8:28 applies in all circumstances of life for the believer. **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**

If we react to the storms of life with worry, our faith can be crippled. On the internet, there are many research studies on worry and the common denominator is that around 90 % of the things that we worry about do not happen. Certainly, great odds in our favor.

Recently a person that I know of sustained an orthopedic injury and her reaction prior to surgery and rehabilitation was "Praise the Lord. There must be a reason for this." This person thanked God for the people who were around to help. This woman approached her injury with faith and joy in her heart and we can all learn from it.

The Lord truly cares for what we go through. Peter's epistle, chapter 5 verse 7 says: **Cast all your care on Him because He cares for you.**

Let me share these quotes:

"Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow." Swedish Proverb

“If you want to test your memory, try to recall what you were worrying about one year ago today.” E. Joseph Cossman

Think about the fears we had about COVID-19 one year ago and where we are today. A lot of concern and worry but the restrictions are now lifted.

Eileen Egan, who worked with Mother Teresa and with the Missionaries of Charity for thirty years, once described Mother Teresa’s outlook like this. “Life was filled with problems, so instead of fretting and complaining, think of them as a gift.

Thus began a shift in Sister Eileen’s thinking and she now referred to problems as a “small gift or a big gift.”

What a great attitude. I can’t say that I am at that point, but it is worth considering. We need to remember that Jesus is in the same boat with us. He calls us to turn our eyes for a moment from the storm to himself and we need to take to heart his words, “Peace. Be still”.

Let me close. Sometimes the Lord calms the storm. Other times he lets the storm rage, but calms us, and he is always with us in the storm.

Let me close.

We trust in a God who hears our prayers.

We trust in a God who can do ANYTHING.

We trust in a God who loves us always.

We trust in a God who has everything pass through His hands first.

We trust in a God who is working for our good.

We trust in a God who will right all wrongs someday.