

Written Copy: Mark 4:37-41 "Why are You Afraid?"

4th Sunday @ Pentecost-Proper 7

Sunday, June 20th, 2021

Text: Mark 4:37-41

³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

The text's intent

To show Jesus as the One who has perfect faith in His safety in the hands of the Father, as well as the One who has the power and authority of the Father to command and control even the most violent of the elements. He does this because He Himself is God. He moves the disciples to consider who they believe Him to be, and what reason they have to be afraid of anything. They have faith, but they do not yet believe Him to be God in human form. He uses this to show them that He is God who has come to protect and save them from all that would attack their faith and kill it. He has come to grant faith and to strengthen it.

Focus Statement:

Jesus is God the Son who has all the power and authority of the Creator God at His disposal. That being said, even though He could prevent the storms from coming upon us, instead He will use them to build our faith in Him that He will be there with us in complete control at all times. Storms and afflictions are not God punishing us. Jesus came to reconcile us to God and bring us eternal peace. He is with us through our afflictions because of the great love He has for us and will make sure nothing destroys our faith.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

We can see Jesus' power to protect and stop the dangers around us as limited. He can react but not prevent. When the storms of life come upon us we might ask Him whether or not He cares that we could or are perishing.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Knowing Jesus is always with us we can be the ones asleep during the storms knowing that He is in control. We can go about doing the work of being ambassadors of the Gospel no matter what kind of storms arise as we do so.

Subject Sentence: With Jesus there is no reason to fear anything

Introduction: Father's Day Sermons

While I don't remember every Father's Day worship service that I have attended sitting where you are now, I do remember two of them. I don't remember the exact subject of the sermon, but I do remember walking out of the Sanctuary both times feeling awful. I was feeling convicted that I was one of the worst fathers in the Church. The first time I didn't say anything. I thought that it was true, and I didn't want to share that truth with my brothers in Christ. The second time I was walking out with one of my close friends who had begun taking classes with to become a Deacon. He looked as dejected as I did. Privately I asked him "So, how do you feel?" And he responded "Like S.H. I. double hockey sticks". We came to the conclusion that, in our experience, for some reason, Father's Day was the exact opposite of Mother's Day. Mother's Day seemed to be a celebration and thanksgiving to God for the gift that mothers were. Father's Day seemed to be an occasion to expound on all the ways fathers' fail at their task given to them by the Lord. It is with this experience in mind, from where you sit, that I present this Father's Day Sermon.

How Father's fail and the guilt and fear that results

There is Biblical precedence for a severe critic of how we handle the vocation of fatherhood that goes all the way back to Adam. Adam was created to be the spiritual head of the household. He was created first, with Eve as His helpmate. That means she was to work with him on the assignment that God gave to both of them to managing His creation and continue the human race through procreation. She was to work with him but not above him. It was to Adam that God gave the only commandment needed at that time: Do not eat from the tree at the center of the Garden. Eve knew of this commandment, but only because Adam did his job as spiritual head of the household by telling her. But Adam failed at this job when he stood there silently and allowed Eve to first talk with the serpent who was Satan in disguise. Then he let her be talked into questioning God's good gifts to them both as far as the knowledge they had and did not have. And worst of all, he silently watched her break the commandment by first eating of that fruit, and then joining in with her. After the Fall, God came to Adam first, because he had failed in his responsibility as spiritual head of the household. And fathers have been failing ever since.

I know its Father's Day, and I wish that statement wasn't true, but it is. We fathers are to be the spiritual head of the household, and we all fail at this in one way or another. Fathers are to be the driving force when it comes to the family getting up on Sunday and coming to Church. But in many congregations its mom and the kids that come while Dad is somewhere else: working, doing important chores, golfing, or even in bed sleeping. During the week it is the father's job to say the prayers: grace at meals, prayers in the evening with the kids, and to pray with his spouse. It's the father's job to set aside Bible Study and family devotional worship time. It's the father's job to demonstrate the importance of this by his own personal bible study and prayer time. Sadly, if this is done at all it is usually by the mother. The kids see this lack of spiritual leadership by their father. Because it's God's design that fathers are the spiritual leaders, they learn that if worship is not that important for dad, it's surely not the important for them either.

In our Wednesday Night Bible Study, I ran across an interesting statistic: when both Mom and Dad attend worship regularly there is a 33% chance the kids will also attend worship later on in life. When mother attends but father does not, there is only a 2% chance the kids will regularly attend. But when Dad alone attends and mom does not, there is a 44% chance that the kids will attend regularly later in life. Why the difference? Perhaps when Mom and Dad attend, Dad comes along because he has to, but during the week he shows no real vested interest in his role as the spiritual head of the household. But when Dad is the one to get the kids up and get them to Church, perhaps that's a father that also takes his responsibility to be spiritual head of the household serious during the week as well.

And it's not like men don't need what weekly and daily worship provides for them. Most men take upon themselves the responsibility for the temporal welfare of the family. And when things go wrong, they feel it's their job to make it right; to fix it. When that fixing involves tools many men are comfortable in handling things themselves. But when the problem can't be fixed with tools, that's when men experience the deadly combination of fear and guilt. When their kids get into trouble that involves the law, or drugs, or someone getting pregnant. When they go away to college and stop attending Church or begin to show interest in a non-Christian religion. When relational problems grow between them and their spouse. When they lose their job and can't find another. When they or someone they love develop health problems. At these times men feel guilty because they allowed disaster to strike while under their watch, and fear because they don't know how to make it better. They fear what may still come.

What Jesus wants us to know during times of guilt and fear

Fear is the natural reaction when things are cruising along smoothly in life and then trouble suddenly finds you. It certainly was the response when the storm came upon the disciples in the boat. They are sailing along on calm seas when all of a sudden, a violent wind comes upon them. The waves are crashing into and over the side of the boat. Before they know it, the boat is beginning to take on water and is in danger of sinking. These are season fishermen who are used to be out on the Sea of Galilee. But this is beyond what their expertise can handle. And look, there is Jesus. And He is asleep of all things. Hey Jesus! Don't You care that we are about to die?

They wake Him up expecting Him to do something. What exactly they want Him to do we are not told. Perhaps they wanted Him to help man the oars, or start baling water, or even pray to the Father for help. But what He does is far beyond what they expected Him to do, and even thought was possible. Now, they've heard Him teach with an authority that is beyond any other Rabbi. They've seen Him heal and cast out demons with the authority that is beyond any other prophet. But when He rebukes/reprimands the wind for its blowing and endangering the boat, and tells the waves to cease and desist, and these natural elements that are out of any normal human's control obey, that is mind blowing! All of a sudden, in response to Jesus words of command there is complete calm. Now notice their response in **Mark 4:31** **And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"** They respond by being more scared at how Jesus saved them than they were when the storm hit. That's because they have just seen Him demonstrate the power and authority that is reserved for God alone. And they fear who they may be in the presence of, someone who, for them at this time, is impossible.

Jesus allowed that storm to come so that these disciples, as well as us today, could see and understand who He really is. And we need to be renewed in that knowledge. We call Him Lord and Savior, but when the storms and trials of life hit, we forget what those titles truly mean. He is the Creator God in human flesh who has all the authority of the God who created all things and maintains that Creation for our benefit. He has the power to stop any sudden affliction from troubling our lives, no matter if its weather related, health related, or relational related. When He says stop, it must obey. He has the power to prevent trouble from ever hitting in the first place. Even though He was asleep on that boat He was still in complete control. The disciples accused Him of not caring in **Mark 4:38** when they say to Him **"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"** The answer is "Yes, I do care, I care very much. I love you very much" He shows this by acting quickly and decisively so that they would not perish.

That is the reason God the Son had come and took on human flesh, to protect them from perishing. Not to keep them from ever dying, because our sin means we each owe the Lord a death in this life. God the Son became the Son of Man so that when we do die in this world we would not die forever separated from our Maker. Eternal separation is what we deserve. Our sin makes us an enemy of God. But God the Father still loves His fallen creation, so He sent His only Son to return His fallen Creation to Himself. **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** ¹⁸ **All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;** ¹⁹ **that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.** God the Son came to earth to bring us back, to reconcile His disobedient Creation back to Him. He came to change our status from being enemies of the Creator to precious and beloved children of the Creator, so that He might become once again our Heavenly Father.

And what is this reconciling ministry all about? **2 Corinthians 5:21** **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.** Jesus had no sin. Yet he willingly took my sin and your sin. He removed it from the permanent record of your life. By the faith that He gives to you, God no longer sees your sin. He no longer sees how fathers have failed in their vocational responsibilities. He no longer sees how mothers, and children, and grandparents have failed in theirs. He sees you as He sees His perfect son, in right standing with Him, with no cause to punish or destroy you in eternal hell. Even though you have let him down in your vocational roles, by faith in Christ you are given credit for a perfect job well done that was Jesus perfect obedience. This is true even when the storms of life role in and you turn to Jesus and say, "Don't You care that I am perishing?" His answer back to you from the cross is, "Yes, I do care. I love you so much I gave my life for you."

Living Out Our Life in the Ark of the Church

Knowing and believing all this how can we as Christian mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles move forward living out our lives? We do so knowing that we live out our lives in the boat, that is the ark, that is the Church. We do so under the protection of our Mighty Creator God who took on flesh to save us. In many Sanctuaries the ceiling overhead with its rafters and beams is designed to look like a boat turned upside down. Just as the Ark kept Noah and his family safe during the awful storm that was the flood, and just as Jesus kept His disciples safe in the boat, the Church is the Ark that keeps us safe throughout all the storms that must come in this world. But as you travel throughout your time in the world in this Ark, know that Jesus is not asleep in the back. He is ever watchful on your behalf. He always has the power to put an immediate end to those things that would serve to harm or kill your faith. But just like in our Gospel lesson there are storms that He allows to blow through our life. And He does so for the same reason He allowed the one that we have in our Gospel reading: to show His almighty power and love as He walks with us through life's storms all he way to eternal life to come.

Conclusion

Today Jesus has the same question for all of us fathers, as well as all the rest of you here today. It is the question He asked His disciples in **Mark 4:40 "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"** Why do you load upon yourself guilt for things from the past that have been forgiven? Why do you try to weather the storm alone and see Jesus asleep on the cushion, or sitting behind the glass case with the break glass only in case of emergency on it? Believe that He is your Lord and Savior. Believe that He is with you no matter what storms come upon your life. Believe He came to reconcile you to the Father so that whatever disaster strikes it is not because God is angry at you. God loves you so much He took your sin and your punishment and gives to you His right standing and eternal life. When troubles strikes, and even when it doesn't, follow the wisdom of God's word from **Psalm 50:15 Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.**" Call upon Him before, during, and after the day of trouble. He is never sleeping; He hasn't forgotten you. He is with now through all the storms of life in order to receive you in the Eternal Life to come. Amen