

SERMON FOR SUN. JUNE 20 AND WED. JUNE 23, 2021

Pent 4b 2021 Mark 4:35-41 – I the Lord of Sea and Sky

Dear fellow redeemed of, by, and for Christ, in our Gospel text, St Mark tells us that **the disciples were filled with great fear** and asked, **“Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”**

Who is this Man Who called the disciples to follow Him? The disciples have witnessed Jesus say and do some amazing **things**. They heard Him proclaim, **“The time is fulfilled and Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel.”**

They saw Him rebuke and cast out demons. They saw Him heal those who were sick in crowds that thronged around Him.

Still, the disciples ask after Jesus calms the storm, **“Who is this? Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”**

Sure, it is impressive when someone is healed of their leprosy. It is incredible when a demon is cast out. But God had given prophets the power to do those things for centuries.

This miracle, however, is different because now **“even the wind and the sea obey Him.”** Just Who is in the boat with the disciples?

Who is this Jesus, who speaks to the wind and the waves as though they are in His pets, and they listen, and obey—Who is He?

After a long day Jesus had put His disciples in charge telling them, **“Let’s go to that other side of the sea.”** So, the disciples dismissed the crowd and Jesus came along with them in a boat.

On the way across, this ‘great windstorm’ arose—lit. ‘a cyclone, a great, a windy.’ The Sea of Galilee was and still is famous for these terrible storms. There was a storm in March of 1992 on the Sea of Galilee where waves were measured at 10 ft.

Archeologists have found a boat from around Jesus’ time; its height is just over 4 ft.—considering that about half of that will be under water while the boat is floating, they’re protected by 2 feet of the side. Ten feet waves and two-foot high boats do not mix, so the boat began to fill with water.

Now, the disciples were seasoned fishermen; they grew up on this lake. But this storm had them worried. Jesus had left them in charge, and things were not going well.

The disciples saw Jesus sleeping in the back of the boat. They cry out, **Teacher, do you not care that we’re perishing?** Please don’t misunderstand the disciples’ question.

It sounds as if they were accusing Jesus of being indifferent to their dilemma, but in fact, it’s quite the opposite.

According to the Greek they were expecting a positive answer. i.e., **“Jesus, we are perishing. You care, right?”**

Notice the disciples woke up Jesus to ask this question, and when in v. 39 Jesus ‘awoke from His slumber, He didn’t trim the sails or grab an oar.

He didn’t tell them to change course to head into the waves so they wouldn’t break over the sides. Instead, Jesus spoke to that great tremendous cyclone and to that roiling sea; **Peace, be still!** A more precise translation would be, **“Be quiet, shut up.”**

The disciples had heard Jesus speak those commands before—to demons. When demons had spoken about Him, Jesus told them sternly to **“Shut up.”**

The fact that demons obeyed His commands was amazing, but now Jesus commands the wind and sea. At the words of Jesus, this **‘great storm’ becomes a ‘great calm.’**

Who **is** this man? He’s the Lord of all, including the sea and sky. Then the Lord of Sea and Sky turned to His disciples and asked, **“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”**

Do you get the sense that Jesus is frustrated with His disciples? You should. But don’t get all self-righteous though, remember that you don’t do any better when the storms of life begin to overwhelm you.

Mark tells us the disciples were **filled with a ‘great fear.’**

Notice the ‘greats’ in this text: a **‘great cyclonic windstorm’ (v. 37) silenced by Jesus into a ‘great calm’ (v. 39) which then produces a ‘great fear’ (v. 41).**

Ultimately, it wasn’t the storm that caused this great fear; nor was it the sudden great calm that caused the great fear.

Their great fear stemmed from their realization that they were in the presence of the One Who can speak and create this great calm. This is what is meant by the true fear of God.

The disciples woke Jesus up because they assumed that He would act to save them, but the extent to which He saves them causes them holy fear, standing in awe of God.

Today, we ask along with the disciples, **“Who is this? Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”**

In our Old Testament lesson, God had been silent for the first 37 chapters, and now Job wanted answers to questions like, was there some secret sin that God was punishing him for? If not, why was God allowing him to suffer?

Job cried out for Yahweh, the great I Am, to defend himself in the face of seemingly senseless and endless grief and pain.

Then in our text, God does answer; but He does not tell Job the reasons for his suffering. God didn't say, "**Oh, come on Job. That wasn't me, it was Satan. We're all good, man.**"

Instead, God accuses Job and asks Job to defend his limited knowledge. He said, "**Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me.**"

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Who determined the earth's measurements—surely you know! Who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?

[Who] prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed?'"

Job couldn't answer Yahweh's questions, but Jesus can.

Jesus can answer, "**Yes, I was there. I was the Word which You spoke. I was there in the beginning with Yahweh. All things were made by Me and for me.**"

Jesus is the kind of man Who heals, casts out demons, forgives sins, and even dominates creation, all with His Word. Jesus has the authority that only belongs to God, because Jesus is God with us.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was in control over the waters when the earth was created.

He was in control over the waters that destroyed the earth but saved Noah and his family. And Jesus was in control of the waters that day on the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus didn't stop being in control of the waters, though. He has been given **all authority in heaven and on earth**. He was in control of the waters of the Mississippi when they reached the top step of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis while I attended Seminary. He said to the water, "**This far shall you come, and no farther.**"

"Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" The Greek word here translated obey that the disciples use in their astonishment literally means "**to be under the sound/word of.**"

But a better translation than obey would be "to be subject to" or "follow." As in, "**Who is this, that even the wind and the sea are subject to His Word?"**

He is Jesus, the One Who still speaks to the waters. He puts His Word in the waters of baptism. He tells those waters to flood over you and to wash away sins—and they do. His Word in those waters brings peace and forgiveness.

Jesus is still Lord over creation. His creation still listens to Him. But this text **doesn't give you any promises that Jesus will turn all the storms of your life into a great calm.**

No, the comfort this text offers is much greater, for it points to the fact that Jesus has calmed the greatest storm of all—the eternal wrath of God that you deserve because of your sins. He has taken that upon Himself.

So, remember, when the storms of this life pop up, the Lord of Sea and Sky is in you.

Maybe, though, you think He is sleeping.

Don't misunderstand: we are to pray to God like dear children to their dear Father. Ask Him to heal you, or to provide the solution to your problem and He will hear you for Jesus' sake.

But if healing doesn't come, do not think He doesn't care or can't heal. Do not think if the crisis is not resolved in the way you think it should be, that He hasn't heard your prayer.

God knows you want timely answers, but remember the answer to Jesus' prayer on Good Friday didn't come until Easter morning. God WILL answer your prayers, but according to His will and in His time, not yours.

Yet, because, He is Risen! we know that Jesus, in the glory of the Father with the Holy Spirit, is Lord over all things.

And because He was there at the beginning of Creation, He will be there at the end.

On that great and glorious day, He will calm the chaos of creation and make all things new, including you and me and all the storms caused by sin will be a thing of the past.

Then everything will be brought fully and visibly under God's reign for Jesus' sake.

But don't forget, the new creation has already started. As Paul said, **“if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come.**

And so, the Lord who rose up to silence the chaos wrought in you by sin, will descend from heaven to silence sin and death once and for all. So we pray, Lord, keep us steadfast in your word and grant us the faith to cling to your promises. **AMEN**