

SERMON FOR JUNE 20, 2021

TEXT: MARK 4: 35-41

THEME: WHAT DO YOU FEAR?

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." **36** And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. **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?"

In the name of Jesus:

Today's sermon starts with a test. I want you to think about what was just read. I have a simple question, let's see how you do. In our Gospel lesson Jesus calms the storm on the Sea of Galilee. The question is when were the disciples the most afraid? During the storm where there were hurricane force winds and the boat was rocking and rolling and taking on water? Or after the storm, when Jesus calmed the storm and everything was at peace? Let's see a show of hands, how many of you think that they were most afraid during the storm? And how many after?

The answer isn't what you may normally think is right, for the disciples were actually more afraid after the storm. During the storm, Jesus certainly

calmed their fears. Just like our teachers in the preschool quiet the children in the classroom by clapping their hands. Clap, clap, clap clap clap. So too Jesus quieted the storm. He spoke two words, and the storm obeyed. Now, this is where things get a little scary, for when Jesus did this, thereby showing that He had absolute control over all of creation the Gospel writer Mark tells us that the disciples had "a great fear." They were more afraid after the storm, when they realized whose presence they were in.

So what are you most afraid of? Are you afraid of heights? Do you have a fear of flying? A fear of spiders or snakes? Maybe you have a fear of failing, or a fear of public speaking, a lurking fear that someone you know will find out a deep dark secret about you. All of us have some type of fear, a fear of getting ill, a fear of growing old, a fear of not having enough money saved in retirement. So, what are you most afraid of?

The first commandment reads: Do not have any other gods. Luther writes in the explanation that we are to fear, love and trust in God above all things. So if you love anything more than God, you have broken the first commandment. If you trust in anything more than God, you have broken the first commandment. And what this Gospel lesson addresses is this: if you fear anything more than God, you are breaking the first commandment.

The disciples certainly were afraid when they were out on that lake with hurricane force winds howling in their face, with their little boat taking on water and about to sink. Who wouldn't be? But note what the Bible says, all during this time Jesus wasn't afraid. Why not? Because He was God and He was able to keep the First Commandment. His will was to do the will of His Father in heaven, and that meant trusting in Him for all things. So when nature was in a temper tantrum, Jesus was asleep in the boat, not having a care in the world. The disciples note this and they ask Jesus: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" **39** And he awoke and as a parent might speak to a child, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. **40** Jesus 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 disciples were filled with great fear. Note, you have your normal run of the mill fears, all those that I have mentioned a moment before, and when I say run of the mill, I am not dismissing them, they are real and they are fear worthy. But there is a special type of fear, the "great fear" that Mark records the disciples having, that awe, that wonder, and yes that fear that makes you quake in your boots, that the disciples had once they had realized whose

presence they were in. For when the disciples understood who Jesus was and is, it turns out that they were afraid of all of the wrong things. The great fear they now possessed was that they were in the presence of the Living Son of God in human flesh.

Do you have such a fear? I think that modern Christianity misses the mark here in that, we often talk about Jesus being our Friend, and He most certainly is that! He is indeed the Friend of Sinners. He came down from heaven to embrace sinners, to eat with them, to live with them, to heal them, and to love them. Jesus said “those who are well have no need of a doctor, but the sick do, I came not to call the righteous but the sinner.” (Mark 2: 17). Jesus loves you. He is your Friend, your Savior. He lived for you, He died for you, He rose for you, He ascended into heaven for you and He is with you now and forever, nothing will ever be able to separate you from His love.

Jesus calls you to believe in Him, and you do. You have been called by God the Holy Spirit, you have a saving faith in Jesus. Jesus watches out for you. So why then are you and I still afraid? Jesus rebukes us by saying: “Do you fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul? Instead, fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in Hell.” (Matthew 10:28).

Yes, you and I have our share of fears. There is indeed trials, and troubles and tribulations in the world, all with their own assortment of

legitimately scary things. But there is Someone much more worthy of fear than all of these. The Lord God who made heaven and earth, the One who has power over everything, and the One who is able to quiet all the storms in our lives.

Whenever you read the Scriptures, you can't help running into people who encountered God and when they did they had a healthy dose of the fear of God in their lives. Both in Old Testament and New, God's people encounter a God who loves them, but also a God who is worthy to be feared. Moses, David, Job, Isaiah, Peter, and Paul, all are examples of children of the Living Lord who had a healthy dose of the fear of the Lord in their lives. They all had their problems and issues in life, they had their own shares of trials and tribulations, but in the end, they came to realize that the only One truly worthy of such fear was the One who loved them enough to die and rise again for them, their Lord Jesus Christ.

So when the trials and tribulations of life come your way, and they most certainly will, remember this: You are not alone! The Lord Jesus has come to quiet the storm you are in and to take upon Himself all of your anxieties and cares. Cast your cares upon Him, for He cares for you. He is your ever present Help in times of trouble. Trust in Him who saves your soul and body from Hell. And then when He delivers you from the trials and tribulations in life,

worship Him in love and wondrous awe. For we do not receive God's grace in vain. We receive the love of Jesus in unlimited fullness, all so that we can go about our lives in thanks and praise of Him, serving Him in all we do. Amen.