

“Dead Calm”

Mark 4:35-41

Proper 10, Year B, 25 June 2006

The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church

Mark 4:35-41

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.”

³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Prayer.

I. Gospel Lesson: Mark 4:35-41 reminded me of Mutual Aid. The storm was more than his disciples could handle, so they had to call for help.

1. Jesus had been preaching & teaching all day long. Evening. Began with Mark 2:1, ends with Jesus leaving by boat.
2. Today's miracle is the first of many: Jesus healing the Gerasene Demoniac, restoring a girl to life, healing a bleeding woman, feeding the 5,000, walking on water, and many others.
3. Jesus uses miracles to focus attention on what he was preaching, not for show.
4. Jesus was tired. His desire: to cross the lake, away from the crowds.
5. (v.36) "*Other boats were with him.*" Jesus couldn't get away! [By the way, what happens to these people?]
6. Jesus falls asleep, in the stern, on a pillow. He wanted to sleep!
7. Windstorm quickly arose. Common on Sea of Galilee. Waves began to swamp the boat.
8. Visualize this: disciples bailing! Throwing over cargo! Nothing helps. Reminds us of Jonah.
9. Some problems in life are so difficult that you have to call for help.
10. “They woke him up.” Frantic: "*Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?*”
11. Jesus *speaks* to the elements as if they were a person- or a demon. He “rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’” (v.39)
12. The storm quiets; “a dead calm.”
Not a quiet calm, a still calm, but a “*dead calm.*”
Unless you are prepared to row, a dead calm brings with it its own complications.
13. The disciples remain frightened. “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

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Just like at the resurrection, the predominate emotion is fear.

14. "... they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

15. What is to be learned:

Jesus is more powerful than the destructive order!

Jesus' power is the same creative power as Yahweh.

Jesus is God!

God's creative order heals, relieves, saves.

Disciples are participants in salvation!

II. Some problems in life are so difficult that you have to call for help.

1. That's why God sent us a Savior- because we can't save ourselves.

2. Jesus does not promise us a life free from storms, pain, backsliding, difficulties.

Jesus does promise to see us through them.

When Jesus guides us through, the purpose is to build our faith, not to be wowed by the miracle. Isn't God creating the earth, wow enough?!

III. Some problems in life are so difficult that you have to call for help. For example:

1. Somehow, we've gotten ourselves tied up and involved in a war – in Iraq, Afghanistan, against insurgents, terrorists, Taliban, Al-Qata – and now, even against home grown terrorists.

It appears a cut and run strategy will only make things worse.

At the same time, we are peaceable people, and as Christians, opposed to violence and injustice.

What is the solution?

- Yes, keep trying to solve the problem. Solutions may come with diplomacy, taking a different posture, employing different strategies.

- At the same time, let us turn to Jesus, as the disciples in the boat, *"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"*

Take faith, the hand of God will move. A dead calm will come.

2. Somehow, we've allowed public displays of bullying, aggression, even violence become an acceptable means of solving disputes.

I stood in lunch line this past week at a McDonalds only to witness a disgruntled customer blow and belittle an apologizing, tearful manager, right in front of a large crowd of bystanders.

A wrong glance or look appears all it takes to offend, and to have a hand gun pulled and fired indiscriminately.

I don't know what happened, but to have a city woman shot and left for dead in a ditch in Williamson, obviously a violent course appears to be the only solution for a certain lost element in today's world.

What is the solution?

- Yes, keep trying to solve the problem. Solutions may come programs that teach people skills that can be used as alternatives to violence. We can work to address issues of drug addiction, prostitution, crime, and

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poverty in our community.

- At the same time, let us turn to Jesus, as the disciples in the boat, "*Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?*"

Take faith, the hand of God will move. A dead calm will come.

3. Through my work with the Alzheimer's Association and the Mercy Resource Center, I am very sensitive to the issues of caregivers in today's world.

Caregiving for an aging or infirmed loved one is a heroic task. One that goes on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, month after month, sometimes year after year.

When it endures too long, even with the best of intentions, many times caregivers become overwhelmed. "It takes too much help; I'm growing too tired; I'm starting to feel like I'm just going out of my mind."

Caregiving can become that out-of-control storm that makes us cry out for help.

What is the solution?

- Yes, keep trying to solve the problem. Solutions may come with that quiet offer of respite, the surprising new aid who is assigned to your case, or through a gracious tone of voice on the other end of a telephone or in a support group.
- At the same time, let us turn to Jesus, as the disciples in the boat, "*Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?*"
- Take faith, the hand of God will move. A dead calm will come.

IV. Some problems in life are so difficult that you have to call for help.

1. This is why God sends us a Savior, and now His Spirit.
2. Jesus does not promise us a life free from storms, pain, backsliding, difficulties.

Jesus does promise to see us through them.

When Jesus guides us through, the purpose is to build our faith.

So take faith, dearly beloved, work hard at solving the problem, and don't be afraid to turn to Christ to find that "dead calm" only he can provide.

The Word of the Lord, as it has come to me this day. Amen.

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