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Sermon 23/2/25 - Tidenham Chase

Luke 8: 22-25

The Message

²²⁻²⁴ One day he and his disciples got in a boat. "Let's cross the lake," he said. And off they went. It was smooth sailing, and he fell asleep. A terrific storm came up suddenly on the lake. Water poured in, and they were about to capsize. They woke Jesus: "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

Getting to his feet, he told the wind, "Silence!" and the waves, "Quiet down!" They did it. The lake became smooth as glass.

²⁵ Then he said to his disciples, "Why can't you trust me?"

They were in absolute awe, staggered and stammering, "Who is this, anyway? He calls out to the winds and sea, and they do what he tells them!"

Good News Translation

²² One day Jesus got into a boat with his disciples and said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they started out. ²³ As they were sailing, Jesus fell asleep. Suddenly a strong wind blew down on the lake, and the boat began to fill with water, so that they were all in great danger. ²⁴ The disciples went to Jesus and woke him up, saying, "Master, Master! We are about to die!"

Jesus got up and gave an order to the wind and to the stormy water; they quieted down, and there was a great calm. ²⁵ Then he said to the disciples, "Where is your faith?"

But they were amazed and afraid, and said to one another, "Who is this man? He gives orders to the winds and waves, and they obey him!"

Where is your faith when life gets stormy?

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock, and our redeemer. AMEN

Today's Gospel reading is taken from Luke. It is the first in a series of 4 miracles and also features in the books of Matthew 8:23-27 and Mark 4:26-31. The subsequent miracles focus on Jesus' power and authority over demons, disease, and death. But in this passage, it is His power over nature which is made known. Luke has already revealed who Jesus is to us as the reader – He is Lord, Son of God, Son of man, He is God incarnate – but the disciples are still working it out for themselves.

Picture the scene, Jesus has been travelling with his disciples, teaching and preaching the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He educates not only the people they meet along the way, but also his disciples.

Standing on the shore, he had been explaining the purpose of the parables and then He invites his disciples to get onto the boat and cross to the other side to continue their teaching. The lake Jesus refers to is the Sea of Galilee. Sudden storms are common in this region, which is a well-known fact especially amongst fishermen (and there were a few of these amongst the disciples), who would be quite wary about the unpredictability of the lake. But the waters were calm and so the disciples got on board.

Jesus is exhausted after such a busy day and before long, He falls asleep. Imagine the Lord sleeping as the water gently rocks the boat – a lovely human touch. But then ...the winds blow, the storm rages and huge waves toss the boat about relentlessly. A terrifying situation and the disciples must have feared for their lives as they tried helplessly to empty out the water that was rapidly being taken on board.

The disciples must have felt like Jesus had left them alone to deal with the awful predicament they found themselves in. Perhaps they had forgotten that he was there with them, asleep, as they battled on trying to tackle the effects of the violent storm alone? And then, their focus changes and they go to him crying out for help – Master, we are about to die! A seemingly unaware, let alone concerned Jesus is woken from his slumbers. He must have seen the sheer terror on their faces and heard the desperate nature of their cries for help. Jesus is there alongside them as they try to navigate the disaster they are living. God does not distance himself from us humans. He sent his Son to live as a human on Earth – he laughed, he wept, he suffered – He experienced life as we experience life. And because of this He understands, He knows.

But Jesus does NOT panic. Rather than help them to scoop out the water, He takes control of the wind and waves, ordering them to become quiet. Calming the storm and at the same time allaying the disciples' fear of the dangerous situation. Such authority, such power! Surely reminding those present of God's actions in the Old Testament – only God can control the weather. Has their fear of the storm become fear of the man who has power over it?

After he rebukes the storm, Jesus then similarly rebuked the disciples, asking them "Where is your faith?" or in The Message translation "Why can't you trust me?". The disciples were so amazed and awestruck by Jesus' actions but they seem to have forgotten what He had been teaching them about faith previously. In their state of debilitating fear, their faith disappeared when they needed it most. But Jesus did not leave them. "Who is this man? He gives orders to the winds and waves and they obey him!". We can almost see their minds working it out as they stand there. After all, only God has authority over nature.

Lessons from these 4 verses:

22 – Jesus expects us to follow wherever he leads us

23 – He expects us to understand that he may lead us into overwhelming situations

24a – He expects us to remember that he is with us and he hears us when we cry out

24b – He has power to overwhelm any overwhelming power in this world

25 – He expects us to believe the fact that he is truly the God of all creation – even the winds and the waves obey him

So, how does this passage relate to us?

Life gets stormy! Storms are not nice in real life or at sea. They can affect believers, even obedient believers who serve Christ. By spending time with God when the lake is calm, we will know how to trust him better when the water is rough. And if the boat sinks, trust the Lord as you go down.

Faith leads us to Heaven after death and it also teaches us to live through the storms on the way.

The final verse poses 2 unanswered questions – “Where is your faith?” and “Who is this man?”

These questions are important for us too. Take some time to ponder over your response and how your answer will shape your life. Do you know God? He promises to receive you, bless you and give you peace and He will never abandon you. Don't wait for the storm. Trust God now in all you do and you will know His peace every day. AMEN