**Sermon Pentecost 4B – Mark 4:35-41 20 June 2021**

**Youtube Video Link:** [**https://youtu.be/sQi4WaL9xpE**](https://youtu.be/sQi4WaL9xpE)

The roughest seas I have ever experienced was many years ago on the ferry to Kangaroo Island. It wasn’t life-threatening but a few passengers became seasick. I can only imagine how scary it would be to find yourself on a small fishing boat in a severe storm. This is what happened to Jesus and his disciples in the evening as they crossed the Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Tiberius.

**Many scholars believe the Gospel according to Mark was written at about the same time** that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Romans. The inhabitants of the city and surrounding countryside were scattered and many of them became refugees and exiles from their land. Among them would have been the Christians, who were at that time mostly Jewish converts. As their lives, their community and their church were being torn apart by the Roman storm, they needed some assurance that God was still with them and that God would take care of them.

**You can imagine Mark** amid a storm of death, destruction and exile, remembering that there was another storm when the disciples nearly drowned. In that storm even though Jesus was present with the disciples on the boat, he was asleep and they were all scared.

**Mark remembers that having Jesus present in your life is not a guarantee against storms in your life.** Some people think that if Jesus is in your life you will not experience any storms. When they do experience storms they begin to doubt Jesus’ presence. They begin to think that maybe God has abandoned them. This is not true. Even if Jesus is in your life even if he is right there with you, you can still experience the worst storms in your life. The most faithful disciple can experience troubles in their life.

Storms can be scary. **Have you ever had a storm in your life? Maybe it was a relationship breakdown.** Maybe you lost a job or had money troubles. Maybe it was the illness or death of a loved one. Maybe you are experiencing a storm now. Sometimes when we experience storms we call out to God and God answers us, but often God can seem to be silent? Have you ever called out to God and wondered if God cared or if he had fallen asleep?

On the lake that day the disciples were stuck in a storm. We don’t know for how long, but we know that even though several of them were experienced fishermen, they were at the end of their tether, and they were scared for their lives. Jesus was with them, God was with them, wrapped in human flesh. God had not abandoned them, but there was one big problem. God was asleep, Jesus was asleep peacefully resting his head on a pillow. He had been preaching for hours on the lakeshore and as any pastor can tell you a ten or twenty-minute sermon can leave you feeling tired let alone several hours of preaching. Jesus may have been exhausted but he also had a close relationship with God the Father. He knew he could trust God with his life, even to the point of death, and no storm was going to worry him, even if the waves were breaking over the boat

**The disciples eventually wake up Jesus and when he awakes the first thing they say is,** “Teacher don’t you care if we drown?” They are asking the one who has personally chosen them, who loves them, who calls them his friends, who will eventually die for them, whether he cares about them? They still haven’t got it!

**But then quite often we don’t get it either do we?** Even though we know that God is the one who cares so deeply for human beings that he became one of us. Even though we know that God loves us so much that he died for us. Even though we know that God has chosen us to be his dearly beloved children, just as he chose Henry today, a choice he made before we were even a twinkling in our parent’s eyes. Even though we know all this, how often when something goes wrong in our lives, do we begin to wonder if God does love us and does care about us? Like the very first disciples in the boat, we still don’t get it.

**Yes of course God cares if you drown**, of course, God cares if you experience pain and loss and grief. God cares and he is right there with you all the time, going through all the storms in your life with you.

**Jesus wakes up and he says, “Quiet! Be still!”** Miraculously, immediately the wind dies down and it is completely calm. Jesus demonstrates his awesome power. Jesus shows us the power of God’s word that created the universe in the first place. ‘Let there be light!’ and there was, “Quiet! Be still! And it was.

**Then Jesus says, “Why are you so afraid? Don’t you have any faith at all yet?”** The disciples are amazed that Jesus is sleeping through the storm and Jesus is amazed that they don’t have any faith. That is the problem! The disciples should have trusted that Jesus does care and that Jesus has the power to do what is necessary but only when he in his love, compassion and wisdom deems it necessary. The disciples should have trusted that Jesus will be with them in this life and the next.

Eventually they would get it, but only after Jesus died for them on the cross and three days later they saw him, touched him, ate and drank with him when he had been raised back to life. Then they did get it. **After all who is this man who even the wind and waves obey?** This is Jesus the Christ the Son of God. God veiled in human flesh. Immanuel, who came for us, died for us, lives forever for us, and will remain with us always even to the very end of time.

**Amen.**

*Pastor Rolf Lungwitz*