

Richard Feynman, a theoretical physicist who worked on developing the theory of quantum electrodynamics, once said, "I think nature's imagination is so much greater than man's, she's never going to let us relax." The disciples certainly were not relaxed during the storm in the night, but Jesus, in our gospel lesson today, is totally relaxed. He is in the stern, the back of the boat where he too would be soaking wet from the wind and the waves, yet he sleeps.

Most of the disciples are used to being on the Sea of Galilee at night; fishermen in the time of Jesus went out at night. Remember the story of the resurrected Jesus cooking fish for their breakfast while the disciples were coming in from a night of fishing and had caught no fish? He told them to throw their net on the right side of the boat and they captured so many fish in the net the boat almost capsized. They recognized Jesus through his miracle. Yet, they are looking for no miracles in the midst of this storm... they most likely are looking for someone to help bail the water out of the boat. I mean, wouldn't you be angry if someone ordered you to take the boat across the sea, then fell asleep, not even to awaken to help bail during the worst storm you've ever experienced?

Jesus said to the disciples, "Let us go to the other side." No explanation is given, Jesus just wants to cross the Galilean Sea. The sea is only feet deep, feet less than Lake Erie which is feet deep. If you've spent any time on the lake, you know how quickly a storm can come up. I told you not too long ago about being on the lake with my dad when a storm came up. I can remember sitting in the boat with my life preserver on and looking at the wave towering over us. My dad was a skilled boatman and the wave didn't crash over us, but it was frightening! I can just imagine how scared those disciples were, with waves crashing over them they'd need someone to bail the water out of the boat. Jesus must have been extremely tired. Remember, the reading told us they took Jesus in the boat "just as he was"?

And what about the other boats, the passage said, "other boats were with him." Why aren't we told how those boats fared the storm? We can only speculate the other boats also witnessed the miracle of Jesus calming the storm.

Some commentators have said this is a storm of cosmic proportions. This is an apocalyptic story. That only Satan could have produced a storm of this epic proportion. Perhaps Satan was baiting Jesus... or trying to eliminate him. He failed. God always overcomes evil. Maybe not in the timeframe we are looking for, because, remember, God's time is not our time... but God overcomes evil. We know the end of the story.

Jesus doesn't waste time fretting about how this terrible storm has suddenly disrupted the night. Jesus wakes from a sleep that is almost as sound as death, and he simply speaks. With his voice a miracle occurs. The storm of the century has been calmed, the storm that Satan stirred up, has been calmed. Immediately. Gone. And the sudden stillness is just as frightening as the storm. The kingdom of God surrounds us, yet we don't often get a glimpse of it. The kingdom of God is glimpsed through the miracle of a word spoken, a storm stilled.

Yet we know that God doesn't choose to still every storm we face; if we want to look at this as an analogy of God saving us from the storms of life. Charles Albert Tindley wrote a hymn about the storms of life. His father was a slave, his mother a free woman, therefore he was born a free black man. His mother died young. In order to keep his freedom, his mother's sister took him in and raised him. However, even at his young age he was expected to help with expenses, so he was "hired out." Tindley was self-taught, and in adulthood was able to become a Methodist minister by taking correspondence courses while working as a church caretaker. His hymn, "When the storms of life are raging, stand by me" isn't in the United Methodist hymnal... it's in what I always referred to as "the

brown book", one that was used by many United Methodist congregations. "When the storms of life are raging, stand by me. when the storms of life are raging, stand by me. (stand by me) When the world is tossing me like a ship upon the sea, thou who rulest wind and water, stand by me (stand by me). Tindley is talking about having a trusting faith, he is talking about knowing that no matter what happens in life, God will be there. God will not desert you. There's a saying, "Sometimes he calms the storm, sometimes he calms his child." God never promises to take away the difficulties. God only promises to never desert you or leave you abandoned.

Look at the story of Job. Everything he owned, everything he loved, was ripped from him. His wife and his friends accuse him of sinning against God, because, why else would all this sadness, all this difficulty, be happening in his life? Job stands firm in the truth, knowing he done nothing wrong. When Job feels as though he is left totally alone, his body just about consumed by sores, his children gone, his wife seemingly deserted him, his friends turned on him, then Job cries out to God, and God answers out of the whirlwind. The whirlwind. The storm. Out of the storm God lets Job know that bad things do happen to good people, but God has not deserted him. God is still there.

Jesus asks his disciples, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" Have you no faith, do you not trust that I am with you through everything? Where have you seen a person with such trust that they accept what is happening and glorify God in the midst of it? Not glorifying God for the difficulties, but glorifying God despite the difficulty?

Today is Father's Day. Many of you may be here because of your father. I know my father is a huge part of the reason I am here. Even though he may not have lived a flawless life, my father was in church every Sunday, the : worship service at Messiah Lutheran, and I was at his side. Every Sunday until I was old enough to drive, and spent the weekends at my friend Lori's house, that is. I have the old offertory, the one using Psalm ... create in me a clean heart, O God..., imbedded in my very being. Only because my father took the time to sit with me in church, no matter what. And he was there because his father had an amazing conversion. But he might not have been there, perhaps neither would you or I would be in this church, if it weren't for one worldly father. Joseph... Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. You might say Joseph really had nothing to do with Jesus, but that isn't so... At Christmas we hear a lot about Mary, how she was chosen to be Jesus' mother, even though she was not nobility, or someone who stood out in the crowd. Even though she wasn't anything the world would consider important, she was humble and willing to do God's will. Now, Joseph, the poor man, had all this dumped in his lap. He and Mary were betrothed, a contract as legal as being married. He would have to divorce her. He did decide to divorce her quietly so as to bring no shame upon her. But, she would have been shamed. An unwed mother most likely would have been stoned to death under the Jewish law. Had Joseph not trusted what the angel said to him in a dream, that Mary's son was going to save his people from their sins, had Joseph not trusted and had faith that God was behind all this, it is possible Mary would never have lived to birth Jesus. But that wasn't God's plan. God's plan was for Jesus to have an earthly mother and father. Even though Joseph fades silently into oblivion his trusting faith is an example of a person who glorified God in the midst of the difficulty by doing what God asked of him.

Perhaps we, as Richard Feynman said, do not have an imagination as great as nature, perhaps we cannot control the winds and the waves, perhaps we feel as though our lives storms are drowning us. Perhaps you have given up on God because God doesn't seem to be answering your prayers. Believe me when I say, God has not given up on you. God has not deserted you. Jesus got in that boat just as he was. He invites you to come to him just as you are, let the rescue begin. Have faith that if God isn't going to take away the storm, God is going to give you the strength to endure it. All glory be to God. Amen.