



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

Did you know that over 75% of the earth's surface is covered by water? Our neighboring state has the nickname, Land of 10,000 lakes. Just 50 miles north of here at our border is Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world. With all that water around us and across the globe, we still really cannot control or have real power over oceans, lakes, seas, or rivers. Who of us could control the waves of a body of water? Who could redirect the flow or path of water with ease? Who can stop the destructive power and force when the wind and water get together? Try as we might, even with great engineering feats, we find it difficult to control water and wind.

In our Gospel reading for today, Jesus is doing what man cannot. We see Him control the water and the waves. And Jesus does this with two little words: "Be still!" And this is the first lesson that I hear clearly in our text for today. Jesus is the Lord of the wind and the waves. He speaks and the water and wind respond. Jesus has the power over nature, over a creation that was a void before He created it.

On Monday at our pastor's text study, we talked about the other boat or boats that were present. We are not told how many or who they were, just that there were others on the lake. Interesting how Jesus decided to save them too even though he was not in their boat. Calming the wind and waves would surely take care of them as well as those in his boat. Yes, it is good to be in the boat with Jesus, but important too, to be in His presence. Today we try to make assumptions that Jesus will always be in the boat with us or near to us

and will always calm our fears and save us. Realistically, we know this not to be true.

We all have storms in our lives. God does not calm all of them, even if we try to believe harder or to pray harder. Try as we might, we cannot wake Jesus up to rescue us in whatever boat, whatever circumstance, we find ourselves, even ones that find us at our most vulnerable moments.

I cannot tell you how many times people have uttered these questions in my presence; Why did God let that happen? Why did God not save that person in crisis? Where is God when I need him? To me this lesson does not speak directly to these issues, because stuff just happens. The winds whip up, the waters become rocky, and we get caught in terrifying situations. Stuff just happens, our God does not make things like this happen. Nor did the Father set the storm on the boats crossing the seas that day with Jesus sleeping in the stern on a pillow.

Simply, Jesus spoke, and the wind stopped. Jesus spoke and the waters stilled. Jesus has authority over the wind and the waves because Jesus is God. In the beginning He was there and created them. He still has control. God spoke and it happened. Jesus spoke and it happened too. His creation preformed as He asked when Jesus said, "Be Still". No doubt that Jesus is the Lord of the wind and the waves. Jesus is Lord of all creation.

The second lesson I see in this reading is that Jesus calls us to get into the boat. Jesus said to them, the disciples, "Let us go across to the other side". The disciples like Jesus were probably anxious to have some rest, to get away from the crowds that were always closing in on them. To be able to breathe, to renew and to restore seemed a good option. After all, Jesus was already asleep in the boat. Martin Luther has a great quote about boarding. It is his definition about faith. He said that the person who does not have faith, "is like someone who has to cross the sea, but is so frightened that he does not trust the ship. And so, he stays where he is, and is never saved, because he will not get on board and cross over." Faith to Luther was like getting on board.

Believe it or not we begin life as risk takers, by getting on board. We all have to take our first step, so no wonder we celebrate that step with our children. And as a church we should be no different. We need to celebrate each of our steps in response to taking the risk of sharing the Gospel with others. Much easier to stay comfortable instead of going out and following Jesus to spread His good news. But we would lose the joy of taking our worship to

FlambeauRama this summer. We would squander the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community, if we don't go work at the food pantry. Because we are called by Christ to go out and make a difference, to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we need to get in the boat with Jesus and set sail.

I hear our third lesson in this Markian text as a rather congratulatory one from Jesus. Jesus asks the disciples why they were afraid. Was it because they had so little faith? I think they were afraid because they were human, because they forgot that the Lord of the universe was right there in their midst. They had been following him for quite a while and had seen the miracles or signs He had done. Yet they were overcome with fear, fear of perishing in the storm.

After Jesus calms the storm, they are shown again that Jesus is the Almighty God. Soon they will witness that He will fulfill His Father's will and die on the cross for them and for us. Jesus will give his life so we can have ours back, with no fear of the future. Sacrificing all, so they could have forgiveness, abundant and eternal life. Our text tells us that, "and they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'"

The disciples were filled with awe. They were beginning to understand what had just happened. They saw Jesus speak two words and the wind subsided. Their storm was calmed. And now they had one more showing of God, that He sent his only Son to save them. I cannot help but believe that in that awe, in those moments after the storm was quieted, their faith grew stronger. And that happens to us too. When we are in the midst of a storm in our lives, we fear, we forget to whom we belong. But when the tide levels out we can look back and see that our faith was weak in that circumstance, but now we can calmly proclaim that Jesus was there with us. Somehow it is easier to believe that He is our Savior, after the storm leaves our lives. Faith is restored and grows, in the only One who can make all things right, all things new.

I am not sure if any of you have heard of my experience on the Mediterranean Sea. Many years ago, I earned a free trip to Spain for two for selling thousands of bottles of Watkins vanilla. I took my sister on the journey as Rodney had

no interest in going, so he stayed home with the kids. We spent a week in Spain and one of the day trips turned out to be an experience of a lifetime.

The day trip was to board a ferry and go across the Sea to Morocco. We left in the morning and planned to return late afternoon. Morocco was amazing, the culture, the buildings, the people were all fascinating. Gail and I made it back to the ferry just in time to board and make the trip home. The captain on the ferry said we were lucky to be the last boarding for the day, as there was bad weather coming in. Not long after leaving shore, the wind whipped up and the boat started rocking. I was fine on the way over so didn't take the suggested anti-nausea meds. Wrong decision. The wind made the water so chopping it was actually going over the top of the ferry. We hunkered down in the inside cabin, hanging on to each other and the seats below us. We were so scared we could not even talk, couldn't even pray. About halfway across the water, I did get the nerve to look out the window and I saw the Rock of Gibraltar. There was just something about seeing the Rock. Maybe I foolishly thought I could swim that far, even in those huge waves. I don't know, but somehow the Rock settled me. And I am here to tell the story so of course the ferry finished the trip just fine.

As I reflect on that event, it is so very much like our story today. Those worries for the disciples became my reality in those harrowing minutes. Jesus was in that boat with us all along the way. Being in that boat was where we were supposed to be at that time and in that place. The Rock I saw was clearly Jesus himself welcoming us to shore. And even though I was too scared to pray, I now can give Him praise and thanks for a safe return. And in the years since then I have ventured out to share what I know about the Lord to others, in hope that they too can see Him as a solid rock on which they can stand all the days of their lives.

So those are the lessons that today, I have lived, and I can see in this wonderful Gospel text. Jesus is the Lord of all creation. Jesus calls us to board the boat with Him. And when the storms of life are over, our faith will be

stronger. We just need to do as the Psalmist says in Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.’

AMEN