**Sunday, 6/20/21, Sermon**

**For Gospel Reading**

**Mark 4:35-41**

Today is Father's Day.

It is a day of remembering our Fathers,

          or those whose showed a Father-like care to us.

Some time ago a company took a survey of children shortly before Father's Day. The surveyors asked what the most important things about a father were.

The answers included:

          Dad plays catch with me;

          He lets me help when he does odd jobs around the house;

          When he asks me a question, he really listens to my answer;

          He takes me on errands with him.

Every single answer in the top ten

          had to do with a father spending time with his children.

It was all about being together.

It didn't matter whether they went for a walk or to the Car Parts store.

What matter was that Dad cared and spent time with them.

It mattered that they were together.

And it made a difference in the lives of the children.

One night a family was sound asleep when they were suddenly awakened

          by the frightening screech of their smoke detector.

Their house was on fire.

The smoke was already filling the upstairs bedrooms.

Mom quickly ran into the bedroom of the 6 year old twin girls

          and guided them down the stairs and outside.

Dad grabbed the 9 month old baby from his crib,

          and took his 4 year old son by the hand, and raced for the stairs.

They were halfway down the stairs when the little boy

          remembered that he had left his teddy bear in the bedroom.

He broke free from his father's hand and ran back to the bedroom to retrieve it.

Unable to see his son in all the smoke, struggling to catch his breath,

          Dad raced down the stairs and out the front door.

Handing the baby to his wife,

          he ran around the house to his son's bedroom window.

By now the little boy was trapped by the flames and smoke.

Coughing, he opened the window and cried out in the dark:

“Daddy, Daddy! Help me!”

From below his father yelled, "Jump out of the window. I will catch you!"

The child called back, "But, Daddy! I can't see you!"

Daddy shouted to the boy: "That's OK, son. I can see you! Jump! Jump now!"

Terrified, but trusting his Daddy, the boy jumped blindly into the swirling smoke.

And Dad caught him.

And he was safe.

The disciples faced a similar danger in this morning's reading.

Even a very calm sea can suddenly become dangerous.

When a great windstorm arose, the waves beat into the boat swamping it.

Terrified, they woke up Jesus who had been sound asleep.

And his followers asked the question we have all asked at one time or another:

“God, don't you care?”

Such an honest, a painful cry.

I am certain almost every one of us has asked that question.

It is a cry which has been screamed countless times:

          A mother weeps over a stillborn child.

          A husband is torn from his wife by a tragic accident.

          The tears of an eight-year-old fall on a daddy's casket.

God, don't you care?

Why me?

Why my friend?

Why my business?

Don't you care?

It is the timeless question.

The question asked by literally every person that has stalked this globe.

There has never been a soul who hasn't wrestled with this aching question.

Does our God care?

Or is our pain God's little mistake, or error?

As the winds howled and the sea raged,

          the impatient and frightened disciples

          cried out in fear and woke the sleeping Jesus.

“Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?”

Jesus could have kept on sleeping.

          He could have told them to stop making all that noise.

          He could have impatiently jumped up and angrily dismissed the storm.

          He could have pointed out their lack of faith.

But he didn't.

With all the patience that only one who cares can have,

          he answered the question.

He hushed the storm so the shivering disciples would not miss his response.

Jesus answered once and for all the aching dilemma of humans:

“Where is God when we hurt?”

“When we are lost and confused?”

“When we cannot see Him acting in our lives?”

He is listening and healing.

That is where He is.

Because He does care.

Even in the middle of a dangerous sea, when Jesus patiently calmed the storm,

          he showed the fearful disciples he truly cared for them.

Sometimes even those close to Jesus

          were slow to realize how much he loved them.

Storms will come.

          Troubles will spring up.

          Problems will overwhelm us.

          Doubts will hinder us.

But we are never beyond the reach of God.

He sees and hears us as if we were His only child in the world.

Like the young boy blinded by the smoke of the house fire,

          we may not be able to see God.

But God can see us.

He knows where we are.

And He cares about us.

We are never beyond the reach of God.

A missionary in Africa experienced great difficulty

          in trying to translate the Gospel of John into the local dialect.

He faced the problem of finding a word for "believe".

The tribe simply had no word for "believe".

The missionary continued to do his best,

          but he always had to leave a blank space

          when he came to that particular word.

Then one day a runner came panting into the camp,

          having traveled a great distance with a very important message.

After blurting out his story,

          he fell completely exhausted into a nearby hammock.

He muttered a brief phrase which seemed

          to express both his great weariness

          and his contentment at finding such a delightful place of relaxation.

The missionary, never having heard these words before,

          asked a bystander what the runner had said.

The bystander replied: "Oh, he just is saying,

          'I am at the end of myself, therefore I am resting all of my weight here!'"

The missionary exclaimed, "Praise God! That is the very expression I need

          for the word believe!"

And so he was able to complete his translation.

When we find we are at the end of ourselves

          – when we can't go any further,

          or do any more,

          then it is good to trust and rest in God.

He knows where we are, and the trouble we are experiencing.

Believing He cares about us and is watching over us,

          we can find rest and peace.

AMEN