

June 25, 2017
Third Sunday After Pentecost

“The Bluster of the World”

Matthew 10:5a, 21-33

“A storm is coming! A storm is coming! Baton down the hatches! Flee for the hills!” Okay, maybe the TV meteorologist weren’t that panicked, but they sure hyped up Tropical Storm Cindy a whole lot, didn’t they? And what did we get? Tuesday. Wednesday. Some bluster and some showers, but nothing to be all that afraid of.

Yet our eyes watch the news and see all the terrible possibilities that the reporters and weatherfolks and NOAA were painting for us and we maybe kind of freak out. We become afraid. We get afraid of all the devastation that “could be” so horrible and painful, when the reality is far different.

Life is kind of like that. We look around the world we live in and we get worried and afraid. There is plenty to fear. Crazy dictators wage persecution and war in distant lands—and some of them may be going nuclear! Terrorism is spreading across the globe. Closer to home we’ve got drug addiction, gangs and all the crime and violence that goes with them not just in the big cities, but right in our neighborhoods here in Terrebonne parish. And in our church and family and circle of friends we’ve got accidents, injuries, sickness and disease all accompanied by bad attitudes and strained relationships. It’s pretty easy for us to look around and in our mind’s eye be screaming, “A storm is coming! A storm is coming!”

But what’s the reality. It’s Tuesday...in a fallen world. It’s Wednesday...in a fallen world. Yes, the nasty evil is all over the place but what of it? You’re baptized into Christ. You know that ultimately, it’s all bluster; nothing to be afraid of.

How can I say this? The words of Jesus: *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they malign those of his household.”*

Admittedly, in the original first-century context spoken to the twelve disciples this means that they should expect the same ridicule and rejection that Jesus was met with by many of the Jews during His earthly ministry. But I don’t think it wrong to bring this concept forward into our 21st century lives and ponder what it has to say to us in our God-given vocations and lives.

What did our master, Jesus Christ, have to go through as a human being? He did Tuesday...in a fallen world. He did Wednesday...in a fallen world. He struggled through life in a world full of evil people and evil happenings and crazy leaders and wars and earthquakes and death. He did His teaching and preaching and miracles in a world He knew eventually mock Him, beat Him, torture Him and crucify Him. He knew He was going to die.

He didn’t gladly embrace the pain and suffering. He actually prayed that it might be taken away. But He didn’t fear. He didn’t fear that in the end when all was said and done, He wouldn’t be raised to perfect and eternal life. He never said, “The Son of man will be betrayed into the hands of men and crucified and maybe, cross my fingers, in three days He will be raised from the dead.” No. He knew His life would really stink for a while as He suffered and died in a world of sin, wearing that sin, our sin, and taking it to the grave. But He was faithful to the promise of resurrection.

So if you’re tempted to feel sorry for yourself because of whatever it is you’ve suffered, you might want to rethink that. It’s Tuesday...in a fallen world. Your affliction is no worse than

your master's. And you, being a poor, miserable sinner, actually deserve whatever evil comes your way and much, much more. You deserve to be rejected by your master, yet He has embraced you in the waters of your Holy Baptism, forgiven your sins and already brought you through death to life by His cross and empty tomb.

So when Jesus says, *“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell,”* He is saying that the worst the world can possibly do, is kill you. And Jesus is in the process of handling that problem as He speaks these words. And we know He has accomplished His task. I think we, though not apostles, as children of God should make sure we're not lamenting in fear for our life in a fallen world, but always strive to be meditating and speaking of the new life we have in Christ.

Today we have a couple confirmands publicly confessing their faith in Christ. Adriana and Donovan aren't apostles. But they are Christians. They are believers. They are precious, beloved children of God in Christ. Jesus Christ has redeemed and saved their bodies and souls. They are tasked, as are we all, with holding fast to this faith through every Tuesday, Wednesday and every day in a fallen world they have yet to face.

It's not easy. The world tries to lure us from the faith with empty promises of a “good life” which simply does not endure. Satan tries to drive us to fear for this life as if it's more valuable than life in Christ. But we can and we do fight back.

Jesus tells us how with words that can sound like a threat, but in reality, they're more a promise. *“So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”*

This is a promise because you're here today confessing Jesus as your Lord and Savior and it's a guarantee that if you just keep on doing what your doing, on judgment day Jesus will say the same thing He declared in your Holy Baptism, the same thing He declared just a few moments ago in the absolution: “He is one of mine, she is one of mine.” Keep confessing Christ.

And Jesus has also provided a great way to do that. He's given you His church to proclaim this gospel promise and give it to you in His Sacraments. Here you confess Him, hear others confess Him, and receive Him and His forgiveness in the way He has established. He has given you Sunday...in a fallen world. This Divine Worship service, stiff and boring as it may sometimes seem, is God's gift to keep you in His grace. Don't neglect it.

The world has it's blustering and its dire and evil possibilities. You have the victorious Christ. You are in His church under His reign. You have nothing to fear. The worst, the most the world can do to you is kill you, and unless Jesus comes back first, it will. But have no fear. Jesus has been there, done that. *“The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*