

June 20, 2021
Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

“Of Course He Cares!”

Mark 4:35-41

“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

Well, that’s kind of a rude thing to say to the Son of God made Son of man! It’s a testament to Christ’s patience that He doesn’t turn around and smack these guys!

Think about it from Christ’s perspective. He is the second person of the Triune God through whom all things have been created. It is against Him that all mankind has sinned and rebelled and now stands under eternal condemnation, eternal death. Out of steadfast love, mercy and grace this Son of God has taken on human flesh, placed Himself under the law and under the condemnation of the world’s sin and is in the midst of bearing this burden to His being forsaken and suffering and being crucified—all to pay the price of our salvation that we would not perish forever to God! Then after a long day of teaching the crowds in the hot sun so that they might come to believe and receive this salvation Jesus takes a nap on the boat trip back home. But His disciples abruptly wake Him up with the completely bogus accusation: *“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”*

Of course Jesus cares that they are perishing! The entire reason He is with them in human flesh is to keep them from perishing! It’s a wonder that He doesn’t hop out of the boat and walk away across the water in a huff and leave them to their fate!

But He doesn’t do that because He is Jesus, He is patient, He is loving and, quite frankly, I don’t think He really expects the disciples to understand His work until after He has gone to the cross and risen from the dead. Jesus simply does the God thing like what God Himself described in our reading from Job—He sets limits for the very sea itself saying simply, *“Peace! Be still!”* and it obeys then turns to the disciples, *“Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?”* Predictably, the disciples still don’t get it: *“Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”*

You and I are on the other side of the cross and empty tomb. We are able to answer the question, *“Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”* This is Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who has accomplished salvation for us by His cross and empty tomb, who now reigns at the right hand of the Father and delivers forgiveness, life and salvation upon us continually in His Word, in our Baptism into His death and resurrection, in our receiving of His very body and blood in the Eucharist. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and we have nothing to fear because He has vanquished all enemies that would stand between us and eternity in the glorious presence of God.

Yet, has anybody pulled off any of these lately? You’ve had a financial setback, maybe a covid or oil field related job loss...or maybe it’s another bad prognosis with your health...or maybe it’s problems with school...or you’re social circle where people are being mean and nasty...or maybe your little kids are driving you nuts...or maybe your big kids are driving you nuts...or maybe it’s the country you love so much going completely nuts...or maybe it is an actual death claiming someone you love—whatever it is there is a storm raging in your life and your prayer to God is this: *“Jesus, do you not care that we are perishing?”*

We do this...probably a lot more often than we want to admit. Life gets hard. People get nasty. The world does evil. The storm rages and we act like somehow Jesus is failing us; He is letting us down because life isn’t what we want it to be.

The fact is we want Jesus to be just like the disciples do in this true episode. “Jesus, wake up and calm my storm! That’s what you’d do if you really care!”

We know better than this, don’t we? Jesus is not asleep in the back of our boat so if he’d just wake up things would be fine. The truth is that in the middle of these tough, tough situations we would do well to ask ourselves the question Jesus asks the disciples: “*Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?*”

That stark question forces us to remember in who we place our faith. Our faith is in the Christ who is reigning victorious at the right hand of the Father now and forever! Our faith is in the God Almighty who created the heavens and the earth, hemmed in the sea and set its boundaries and can command it to rage or to be still. Our faith is in the merciful, compassionate and loving God who willingly took on our flesh that He would face our enemies Satan, sin and death as the righteous one on the cross and leave them defeated forever in the wake of His resurrection from the dead. Our faith is in the God who does deeply care if we are perishing and calls us to believe the truth—in His name we are not perishing!

The point of this story isn’t that God calms the storms of this life. He doesn’t. People get this wrong all the time but the Bible never says God will not give you more than you can handle. We’re broken sinners—how hard can it be for us to get more than we can handle? It happens all the time and we usually react rather badly.

The point of the story is that Jesus is the God of creation and possesses divine authority over all things. The Gospel reveals that He has the authority to lay His life down and the authority to take it back up again and He did just that for our sakes. God’s Word makes clear that for those of us in Christ, we shall be brought through the storms, the tough times, the tragedies and the losses, the very end of this broken life itself, to reign in His glory in His kingdom in His presence. Whatever storm you may be facing right now, Jesus is still Lord over it.

St. Paul talks of enduring “*in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger*” but his speech is all joy, knowing Jesus reigns above it all and that He does not leave or forsake those who are His, no matter how the seas of this life rage.

So brothers and sisters in Christ, do not panic and be rude to your Savior in the midst of your storms asking, “*Jesus, do you not care that we are perishing?*” Of course He cares, that’s why you are not perishing but being saved for eternity. Take heart! The worst any storm in this life can do can’t take you away from Christ! Even death itself can’t kill you to Christ! Jesus isn’t sleeping in your boat. Reigning above and within us, He is bringing all His children safely through the tempest of a broken world to the port of our heavenly home.

Do we want deliverance from the affliction of these earthly storms? Of course we do! And we should bring such requests to Jesus, knowing that He is the end-all authority in all things. But always begin your prayers with thanksgiving that Jesus loves you and cares for you, so much so that He was willing to perish on the cross forsaken of God so that you will never have to bear such a fate. Then faithfully bring your requests and troubles before Him knowing, that whether His will be to calm the storm or to let it continue to rage, His promise is to bring you through it to the peace His kingdom on the other side.

Amen.