

“Hurricane Meditation”

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Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” **36** And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. **37** A great wind-storm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. **38** But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” **39** He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. **40** He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” **41** 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 asked Jesus,
“Don’t you care that we are perishing?”

When the wind and the waves beat down upon us, we too might have a faith crisis. Our fears tempt us to forget our blessings and focus only on the wind and the waves.

This past week our fears have been stoked to a fevered pitch.

It’s the worst storm ever!
Run away!
Hunker down!

(By the way, what does hunker down mean? They keep telling me to do it, but I don’t know what it is!)

Of course it’s prudent to take precautions.
This really is a big storm.

We're cancelling services this week out of an abundance of caution, and I've been reduced to preaching by email.

But, I preach on.

For a preacher, even a hurricane is an opportunity for a sermon!

I wonder.

What role does faith play in this storm and the other storms that we will surely face in our journey?

This passage suggests it's important to remember the source of our faith ... the One in Whom we have trusted.

We don't have faith in our ability to overcome the storm.

Even though several of the disciples were experienced sailors, they were no match for the wind and the waves.

And, so it is with us.

We cannot overcome all the storms of life.

Some storms will be too big.

But, we do take hope in the fact that there is always someone in the boat with us ... someone who is the master of the wind and the waves.

Long ago Jesus said,
"Peace, be still."

The wind ceased ... and there was a dead calm.

It was Jesus' way of letting the disciples know that he was the Messiah, the Son of God.

Don't misunderstand.

This is not an easy fix for all the storms of life.

Jesus is the Lord of the wind and the waves,
but we also know that the calm weather won't last.
There will be many more storms before the disciples' journey ends.

And the same will be true for us.

The first disciples died proclaiming the faith.

The greatest missionary the church has ever known, the apostle Paul faced shipwreck, stoning, imprisonment, and finally execution because of his devotion to Christ.

The early church faced countless persecutions from the Romans and others. Down through history the story has been the same.

The storms just kept on coming.

And yet, as we look back, we learn that even a category 5 storm was no match for the power and promise of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul put it this way,

“Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Romans 8:35 (NRSV)

“... I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39 (NRSV)

With the apostle, I too am convinced that nothing in all of creation has the power to separate us from the love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus.

But, can I trust that promise in the middle of the storm?

Old Uncle Oscar took his first plane ride.

Knowing that he had been somewhat apprehensive about it, his friends were eager to learn how it went.

So, at the first opportunity they asked him if he enjoyed the flight.

“Well,” Uncle Oscar said, “it wasn’t as bad as I thought it might be. But, I’ll tell you this. I never did put my weight down!”

We talk about the love of God that never lets us go, but sometimes we have a hard time putting that knowledge into practice.

We have trouble with faith.

We have trouble “putting all our weight down” on the Lord when the storm comes.

As a result, we are plagued with doubts.
The wind always seems stronger,
and the waves always seem higher when we are afraid.

I pray for your safety as you ride out the storm this week.
We’ll help each other recover if the storm is bad.
You are not alone.

The Lord is with you, and so are we.

And I also pray ... as I do almost every Sunday
... that the “peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your
hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)

Let’s put all our weight down on the promises of God.
Let’s sail our small ships into the deep waters of life.
Let’s cross over the sea with Jesus.

And when the storm rages,
let us trust the One who controls the wind and the waves.

Pastor Frank