

The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, June 24, 2018,

Job 38:1-11; Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

Our gospel lesson is a continuation of Chapter 4 of Mark's gospel which began with the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-9) which talked about how faith grows in one's life. Faith must be nurtured if it is to grow. Our lesson for today begins with Jesus saying, "Let us cross to the other side." In this case he was talking about going by boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which meant going from the familiar confines of Galilee and Jewish people to a foreign land filled with Gentile people.

The scene is depicted as much sailing happens on the waters. There is wind and waves, but usually not overwhelmingly so. Sailing can be an adventure, and is sometimes dangerous. In this case it became dangerous, and Jesus was fast asleep in the stern of the boat. The disciples despite having fishermen in their number found the winds and the waves to be too much, so they cried out to Jesus, "Do you not care that we are perishing?"

Sometimes when we are going through difficult times in our lives, it often seems as if God does not notice or care. So in our need after trying to solve things ourselves we cry out to God, "Lord, have mercy on me. Save me."

The story of waking Jesus on the boat in a storm is reminiscent of the sailors who took Jonah on their boat, and God caused a great storm so Jonah would turn around. So in this way, our story identifies Jesus with God. And then Jesus rebukes the winds and waves and says, "Peace! Be still!" And the disciples were amazed.

What I find interesting about this story today is how the boat ride to the other side of the Sea of Galilee can be considered similar to the long journey migrants take seeking asylum from the dangers of their homelands. They face many dangers along the way. Like the disciples and us when we are in trouble, they too cry out to God. And when they finally arrive at their destination, they are at the mercy, not of God, but of the people of that place.

Next Sunday, we will not read the story of the arrival of Jesus and the disciples on the other side, so I will tell you a bit about it. When they arrive on the Gentile side of the Sea of Galilee, they are greeted by a man filled with demons. (Mark 5:1-20) Instead of being welcomed, they were charged by this crazed-fill and tormented man. The demons within him knew who Jesus was, and Jesus cast out the demons into a herd of pigs, which drove themselves to death into the sea. The man, however, who had hurt himself in so many ways, was now in his right mind. The herdsmen, however, did not appreciate this exorcism and they encouraged Jesus and the disciples to leave their land.

Migrants and especially asylum depend on the hospitality and compassion of the people of the places where they arrive. As we know all too sadly, they have been mischaracterized as "invaders and criminals" when they are merely people fleeing danger or seeking safety. It seems as if the policy of family separation and especially the characterization of asylum seekers as criminals is not of God, and may reflect what Mark in his gospel named as "demon possession."

There is a temptation to delegitimize and dehumanize the “other” when we are afraid. And in this temptation we justify to ourselves the mean-spirited and cruel actions as revealed in criminalizing asylum seekers, separating families and building detention centers.

As we all know this is a sad part of the American experience. Within the lifetimes of many of us, people of Japanese ancestry both citizens and foreigners were mischaracterized as “dangerous and subversive” during the beginning of World War II. This dehumanization of people of Japanese ancestry allowed the government by Executive Order 9066 of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to intern the West Coast population of people of Japanese ancestry.

We are in danger of repeating this regrettable history as a nation. What are we to do? As Jesus rebuked the winds and the waves and said, “Peace! Be still!” we too must calm the storms of our fears and quiet the irrational scapegoating of the most vulnerable.

When people cry out to God for mercy, what will God’s people do? We must not be silent nor be afraid. We must speak the truth in love, and see one another as children of God in need of mercy. We must not let inhumane acts of the government repeat itself on our watch without protest. We must bear witness against the evil done in our name.

How do you see the stranger among us? How are your actions stirred up by the vile rhetoric trying to divide people? I invite you to remember our heritage as God’s people whose trust is in God as revealed in Jesus the Christ. We are first to calm our own fears. We are to bear witness to the truth that all people are worthy of God’s love and care, as well as ours. And when we see injustice, we are to act with mercy and compassion.

Amen.

I propose to show that as the disciples were going “to the other side” they were going on a journey which threatened their lives, just as the migrant peoples of the world seek to arrive safely at their destinations. And just as the disciples cried out to Jesus to save them, so too do the migrants cry out to the people of these new lands. How then will we as God’s people respond to people in need when they cry out?

The Collect

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your lovingkindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Old Testament

Job 38:1-11

The LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:

"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"

Gird up your loins like a man,
I will question you, and you shall declare to me.

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements—surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?

On what were its bases sunk,
or who laid its cornerstone
when the morning stars sang together
and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

"Or who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out from the womb?—
when I made the clouds its garment,
and thick darkness its swaddling band,
and prescribed bounds for it,
and set bars and doors,
and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stopped!'"

The Response

Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32

Confitemini Domino

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *
and his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Let all those whom the LORD has redeemed proclaim *
that he redeemed them from the hand of the foe.
- 3 He gathered them out of the lands; *
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.
- 23 Some went down to the sea in ships *
and plied their trade in deep waters;
- 24 They beheld the works of the LORD *
and his wonders in the deep.
- 25 Then he spoke, and a stormy wind arose, *
which tossed high the waves of the sea.
- 26 They mounted up to the heavens and fell back to the depths; *
their hearts melted because of their peril.
- 27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards *
and were at their wits' end.

- 28 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, *
and he delivered them from their distress.
- 29 He stilled the storm to a whisper *
and quieted the waves of the sea.
- 30 Then were they glad because of the calm, *
and he brought them to the harbor they were bound for.
- 31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his mercy *
and the wonders he does for his children.
- 32 Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people *
and praise him in the council of the elders.

The Epistle

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

As we work together with Christ, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see-- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return-- I speak as to children-- open wide your hearts also.

The Gospel

Mark 4:35-41

When evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 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?” 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. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” 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?”

In preparation for this coming Sunday's worship, please pray this coming Sunday's Collect of the Day and read and reflect on the lessons assigned as printed below

The Collect

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The First Reading

Wisdom of Solomon 1:13-15; 2:23-24

God did not make death,
And he does not delight in the death of the living.
For he created all things so that they might exist;
the generative forces of the world are wholesome,
and there is no destructive poison in them,
and the dominion of Hades is not on earth.
For righteousness is immortal.

God created us for incorruption,
and made us in the image of his own eternity,
but through the devil's envy death entered the world,
and those who belong to his company experience it.

The Response

Psalm 30

Exaltabo te, Domine

1 I will exalt you, O LORD,
because you have lifted me up *
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.

- 2 O LORD my God, I cried out to you, *
and you restored me to health.
- 3 You brought me up, O LORD, from the dead; *
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.
- 4 Sing to the LORD, you servants of his; *
give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.
- 5 For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, *
his favor for a lifetime.
- 6 Weeping may spend the night, *
but joy comes in the morning.
- 7 While I felt secure, I said,
"I shall never be disturbed. *
You, LORD, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains."
- 8 Then you hid your face, *
and I was filled with fear.
- 9 I cried to you, O LORD; *
I pleaded with the Lord, saying,
- 10 "What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the Pit? *
will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?"
- 11 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me; *
O LORD, be my helper."
- 12 You have turned my wailing into dancing; *
you have put off my sack-cloth and clothed me with joy.
- 13 Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing; *
O LORD my God, I will give you thanks for ever.

The Epistle

2 Corinthians 8:7-15

As you excel in everything-- in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you-- so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something-- now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has-- not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much,
and the one who had little did not have too little.”

The Gospel

Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.