

June 24th, 2018 5th Sunday after Pentecost. Mark 4: 35-41.

What if you were on your way to work, drinking your morning coffee, listening to some tunes, when this message came across the radio. “The U.S. military has detected an immediate missile threat. A missile may impact on land or sea within minutes. This is not a drill. Seek immediate shelter!” How do you react? What are the thoughts going through your head? This was not a hypothetical situation for people in Hawaii this past January. This was as real as could be. This actually came across the radio! The threat was imminent. The warning sent all of Hawaii into pandemonium. There was nothing but chaos and panic and fear as people rushed around looking for shelter and bracing for the end, bracing for death.

It took about a half-hour until the authorities were finally able to call off the threat. It had all been one big mistake. It was supposed to be a drill! The wrong button got clicked. All that panic for nothing, and it didn't even end when the threat was called off. A woman who was interviewed said it was so scary she couldn't stop shaking for 2 hours afterward. And who could blame her! She thought she was going to die! It's easy for us to feel for everyone that went through that ordeal. What a scare! It's chilling to think that life can send you the proverbial life-ending storm in an instant. Our text today looks at the human response to that storm, as the disciples found themselves in the middle of a real life-threatening storm. How did they react? How do you react when it suddenly comes? With fear, like the disciples? With panic, like the people in Hawaii? Jesus calls us to a much different response. He calls us to put our faith into action when the crucial moment comes. He calls for trust. When the storm comes, **find your calm in Jesus!**

It wasn't all that different than the Hawaii scare for the disciples that evening. They were fishermen, on a boat, on an ordinary commute to the other side of the lake. Jesus had been preaching to the crowds most of the day. Actually, the sermons I preached the last two weeks all seem to have taken place on this same day. Now they had left the crowd behind and were on their way across. Needless to say Jesus was tired. It said, “They took him just as he was,” probably without eating or resting. When he finally got the chance to crash, he was out! He fell asleep on a boat cushion

in the stern, which is the back of the boat (for those like me who didn't know your boat directions). Jesus was a real man after all, with real human needs, who actually needed to sleep.

Then out of nowhere, a furious squall came up. With the steep hills located around the Sea of Galilee, this fast-forming stormy weather was prone to happen. But this storm must have been especially fierce because at least a bunch of the disciples were experienced fishermen. They knew their way around a boat and had probably seen a storm or two in their day. But this storm had them scared. The waves were crashing over the side of the boat. They were taking on water and the boat was getting full. It wouldn't be long before they'd go under. The threat was imminent! The danger was real, and the panic set in. There was nothing left they could try but to wake Jesus up.

Wait! To what? To wake Jesus up? How was he still asleep? The boat was being tossed around. The water was pouring over. How could he be asleep still? That's probably exactly what the disciples were thinking when they woke him up said. “Don't you care if we drown?” ‘Jesus here we are about to die, and you're still having a nice little siesta.’ The panic had seized them, the fear had taken over. They had done everything they could, but it was no use. And who Jesus was didn't seem to matter either at that point. They couldn't think straight, they were on the brink of despair. Their hearts were as shaken and battered as the boat in the storm. Everything they had learned about the power their Messiah had—flushed from their minds in an instant. Everything Jesus had promised them about being his chosen apostles, about being fishers of men—gone! They acted as if some storm on a little lake in Galilee was going to drown the Son of God and them too. Either that or Jesus was just going to evaporate without a care and let them die by themselves.

This text isn't about us scolding the disciples for how bad they were. It's about all of us in in the same boat with them. We fail to trust when things get rough. This is Jesus scolding all of us for how we react when the storm comes. “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” Maybe it actually is a real physical thing, a missile warning, a natural disaster, a car accident. The wind picks up and the waves get choppy, and we try to handle it all ourselves. We strap in and do it our way; we rely on our experience,

our strength. When that's not enough, we panic and right as we're about to go down with the ship, we summon Jesus our magic Genie in a bottle for one of our three wishes. Maybe it's not a physical disaster kind of danger, but life seems to throw you one storm after another... a sick child, a bank account running on empty, and now a lay-off at work. Stress upon stress, wave upon wave and you don't know how long it'll be to your boat sinks. Then comes the time you accuse Jesus. "Wake up! Don't you care about me! Can't you see what I'm going through?"

When they woke Jesus up, he got up as if nothing was amiss and rebuked the wind and the waves! "Quiet, be still!" Immediately the winds ceased and **there was a great calm!** From choppy and raging to calm and serene from one moment to the next. This is the power Jesus holds as Son of God. Even the wind and the waves obey him. Our reading from Proverbs told us he has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hand, he wrapped the waters in his cloak. He has established the ends of all the earth and he holds the power over all of it. The Messiah will not be shipwrecked and destroyed by the wind and the waves. He is Lord of all creation and he cares for you!

God's plan to save the world through Jesus was not going to be dismantled by a pop-up windstorm on the sea of Galilee. There is nothing that could stop God's plan or prevent Jesus from bearing the sins of the world on the cross. So securely has God established his plan to save us that he even sent his own Son, true man and true God, to accomplish it. And to show his disciples once again just exactly who he was and how much he cared for them, Jesus stilled the sea and quieted the wind. Jesus rescued his beloved followers and preserved them for the roles he had given them, to be his apostles, ones who were sent out by him to preach in his name! When Jesus spoke those few words to the sea, he powerfully produced a **great calm** that only he is capable of. Not human skills or experience, not a false bravado or a macho man, this calm was made by the power and love of Jesus graciously working for the eternal good of his followers.

This was a real storm, with real waves, and real danger, but the disciples were safe with Jesus. Though Jesus was physically sleeping, God was not sleeping. He was with them and his promises directly applied to the situation they were in. They were not to drown in the sea but were to be his

apostles. You live in a real world, where sin causes all kinds of trouble and fear and stress, and you don't have the advantage of Jesus being physically in the boat with you. But your God has not abandoned you in the storm. His promises apply directly to you! There is nothing you need to fear in death. He has washed you with the blood of his Son, Jesus and made you his child through Baptism. When the day of trouble comes, he has insisted that you call upon him and has promised to deliver you, whether to physical safety, or to eternal safety in heaven. His pledge is to be a shield for all who take refuge in him. And we know that he works in all things for the good of those who love him. He may not be with us in person in the boat on this wild raging sea, but he is with us. He promised to be there with us, to the very end of the age.

Incidentally, the storms won't stop coming. Jesus has promised you that too. You will have trouble, at least until you reach the shore of heaven. But he is there to help. There is a refuge at your side, watching over you and protecting you. And that makes your reaction so much different. That's exactly what these hardships in life are meant to teach us. We can't cut it on our own, we don't have the power. But Jesus the Lord over wind and waves has the power to protect you. Fear and chaos, panic and despair need not consume you. He has connected you by faith to himself, to an unmatched source of power, comfort, and mercy. His power and protection are there for you in every storm. His comfort his waiting for you! **Find your calm in Jesus**, trust in him from start to finish. He's the only place to look, and he's the only one that can truly set our hearts at rest. With his power, he silenced the storm that threatened the disciples. In his mercy, he accomplished the plan God set for him, to save our souls. He watches us with protecting eye and calms our raging hearts with the forgiveness he won and the eternal life he secured. **Find your calm in Jesus**. There's no place else to look. Amen.

The Lord who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. He will watch over your life. He will watch over your coming and your going, both now and forevermore!