

Pentecost 4 6/21/15
Mark 4:35-41 7B

“WHO IS THIS, THAT EVEN WIND AND SEA OBEY HIM?”

You know the old saying is, “Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.” Except Jesus. Jesus didn’t talk about the weather. He talked to the weather and the weather did what He told it to do.

We can talk about the weather; even complain about it. But, we can’t do anything about it. But, Jesus can. He can because, yes, He is true man, born of the Virgin Mary, but He is also true God, begotten of the Father from all eternity.

In Mark’s Gospel, from which our Gospel is taken, it is almost like people are playing the game show *Jeopardy*. Maybe you’ve watched *Jeopardy*? The game show works like this: the host gives the answer and then the contestants must come up with a question that matches the answer. For example, the host would say, “C.F.W. Walther.” And you would have to provide the question, “Who was the 1st president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.”

The Evangelist Mark begins His Gospel with the words, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (1:1). Like *Jeopardy*, he gives us the answer: “Jesus, the Son of God.” Then, throughout his Gospel, people are asking the question. In this Sunday’s reading, the question is, “Who is this, that even wind and sea obey Him?” Today’s reading from Mark’s Gospel account makes it very clear that Jesus is “very God of very God,” and yet true man.

It had been a day of teaching and healing. As the sun went down, Jesus decided to cross the Sea of Galilee. At first, it might seem a little unusual to set out across the Sea as the sun was going down, but remember that some of Jesus' disciples were fishermen who regularly fished the Sea during the night.

Once they were under way, Jesus took a nap. Jesus had been teaching and attending to the needs of the crowds all day. He was tired and fell asleep in the stern of the boat. Jesus, in human body, was tired. As a true man, He slept like any person would.

Then the storm struck. It was bad. The boat was filling with water. Even the seasoned fishermen were terrified.

Then the disciples woke Jesus from His slumber. They didn't mind that Jesus had nodded off earlier, but now, they were terrified and thought the end was near. "They woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?'" Maybe they were thinking Jesus could take a container and use it to bail the water out of the boat. But, Jesus did something totally unexpected, "He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' He scolded the wind and the waves. He spoke to them like a group of unruly children. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Here is Jesus demonstrating the human property of exhaustion and the Divine power over creation. Here we see another example of Jesus demonstrating the truth of Mark's opening statement – that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Here we see the answer to the question, "Who then is

this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” This is none other than the God-man Jesus, the Christ.

Today’s Gospel not only tells us that Jesus is both God and Man, but it also tells us why it is important that the Son of God assumed a human nature. Every storm is an expression of the curse that came when sin entered the world. Our sin not only brings sickness and death to us, but even the world in which we live is cursed. St. Paul says it this way in the book of Romans, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Ro 8:22). Floods, fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, hail, lightening, earthquakes, and all natural disasters are the result of the curse that sin brought into the world.

These natural disasters are not the only storms that our sin has brought into the world. There are other storms in our lives, as well. There are the medical storms of infections, heart disease, diabetes, strokes, cancer. There are the relational storms of broken families and friendships. There are the financial storms of plant closings and layoffs. Ultimately, there is the storm of death that comes to all of us sooner or later. We may try to deny the existence of sin in our lives, but these storms, both private and public, say otherwise.

We don’t have to be in a boat sailing across a lake to know that same sinking feeling that the disciples had on the Sea of Galilee. In the midst of our storms, we ask that same question the disciples asked, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?,” wondering if God really cares for us.

It is in the incarnation of Jesus Christ – the fact that the Son of God assumed human nature – that we see God’s care. In Jesus, God assumed

human nature to save humans from their nature – their sinful nature, for our sin doomed us to perish in hell. We would be lost forever unless delivered from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation. But the Father of all mercy and grace sent His Son Jesus Christ, who atoned for the sin of the whole world “that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

The one who stilled the water and even walked the on water eventually spilled forth water. As Christ’s dead body hung from the cross “one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (Jn 19:34). With that water and that blood the one who brought peace to the wind and the waves also brought peace between God and man. He removed all our sin from us and took it all upon Himself. With the pouring forth of the water and the blood in His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus satisfied God’s justice against our sin.

The water that poured forth from Jesus’ side as He hung dead on the cross reminds us of another pouring of water – the water that joins us to Christ in His death – the water of Holy Baptism. It is in that water that we receive all the blessings that Christ earned for us by His death on the cross. And, it is also by in that water that we receive the blessing of His resurrection.

The GOOD NEWS of the Christian faith is that Jesus did not remain in the grave, but, after He conquered death, He rose from death never to die again. Just as Holy Baptism unites us to Christ in His death, so also it unites us to Him in His resurrection so “that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Ro 6:4).

Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. In Him, we find our salvation from sin, death, and the power of the devil. In His humanity, He was able to suffer on the cross in our place and for our good. In His deity, He was able to defeat our foes and rise from the dead to give us eternal life. It is in the person of Jesus Christ, who both slept and stilled the storm, that we have our faith and the promise of eternal life. Amen