

Pentecost 11 8/9/26
Matthew 14:22-33 14A

*“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding”.*

“You have no idea what you’re doing, God! You’re not doing things my way!” That’s, in essence, what Job had said to God.

You know the story of Job. Job was blameless and upright, a man who feared God and shunned evil. He had *seven sons and three daughters, he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys, and very many servants (1:2-3).*

Then, the devil accused Job before God. Satan tells God that Job is righteous only because it pays. You know – you do good for God, God will do good for you – that’s the thinking of our fallen human reason, right? In other words, the father of all lies is saying that Job is righteous only so God will reward him with stuff for being good. So, Satan tells God to test Job by taking away his earthly stuff and Job will curse God. So, God allows Satan to have his way with Job.

Job is **cursed**. His oxen and donkeys and sheep and camels are taken from him. If that we not bad enough, all 10 of his children are killed in the same tragic accident. Every sign of God’s favor was taken from him.

As the book of Job proceeds, Job laments before God, in essence, telling him that He had made a mistake, that he was not doing things the way he, Job, wants them done. Finally, Job pleads, *“Let the Almighty answer me” (31:35).*

In the words of our Old Testament lesson, God answers Job. God tells Job, that no human, not even Job, was present at creation. God’s point is that no human mind can grasp His wisdom. God’s ways are not

our ways. Said very simply: God is a whole lot smarter than we think He is. He knows what He's doing, even when He does things His way, not the way we think He should do them.

Job **doubted**. Like the disciples in our Gospel reading, Job doubted. They all doubted the power and love of God. When the going got tough, they looked into their own hearts. They depended upon themselves and did not place their trust in God.

Notice the words of the Evangelist: Immediately after the feeding of the 5,000 in our lesson last Sunday, Jesus instructed the disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side. As they sailed, the boat was caught in a terrific storm. When they saw *Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, 'It is a ghost!' and they cried out in fear* (v. 26).

Jesus calmed their fears, *"Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid"* (v. 27). And, with one word, with but one word from the mouth of God, *"Come,"* Jesus enabled Peter to walk on the water. But, Peter forgot the power of God. Looking to himself, Taking his eyes off Jesus to look at himself, he became afraid of the storm and began to sink.

My Dear Friends in Christ, are we ever like Job? Are we ever like the disciples? Are we ever like Peter?

Living on this side of heaven, walking through the valley of the shadow by faith, when the going gets tough, do we take our eyes off of Jesus, to look at ourselves; you know, naval gaze?

God came to Job, *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you understand"* (v. 4). God is just a whole lot smarter than we sometimes think He is. God tests us -- not to punish us or harm

us. God tests us to strengthen our faith. God knew Job's plight. God came to rescue him. The book of Job tells us *the LORD restored the fortunes of Job...the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before (42:10)*. God gave him more sheep, camel, oxen, donkeys, and children -- more than he had before.

As Jesus prayed by Himself on the mountainside, He knew His disciples were in trouble in the boat. Knowing their need, Jesus came to them. When Peter was sinking, Jesus came to Him.

My Fellow Redeemed in Christ, the Good News God has for us as we walk by faith is that God comes to us!

Jesus came to us in human body, to talk to us with human tongue, so that we would know what was in God's heart. Through the words of Jesus, we know that God loves us, wants only good for us, and wants nothing more than for us to have eternal life with Him.

Look at that love of God: Jesus took all of our sin upon Himself and went to the cross carrying our sin and our death as His very own. By His death and resurrection, He defeated the devil. Jesus overcame all of our enemies for us. Remember well those comforting, reassuring, words of St. Paul: *The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor 15:26)*. Take heart: Christ has defeated even our greatest enemy, death itself.

When the storms come in your life, where do you turn? When you are sinking beneath the weight of the cross, where do you look? When the going gets tough, do you run away from God?

The First Commandment teaches us that we are to fear, love and trust in God above all things, but do you truly **trust** in God above all things? When illness strikes; when your crop is ruined by hail or drought; when

your children cause pain to fill your heart; when others treat you with injustice; where do you place your trust? Like Job, even when cursed by God, do you still fear, love, and trust in Him above all things? Like Peter, do you take your eyes off of Jesus, to look only at the storm engulfing your life?

My Dear Friends in Christ, like Job, God has come to our aid and rescued us from all the threatening powers of our sin. Like Peter, we have heard the reassuring words of Jesus that empower us to overcome and walk above the storms of earthly life.

Above your bed, what is the first thing you see each morning when you rise and the last thing you see before closing your eyes in sleep? Yes, your baptismal certificate, reminding you that you are God's child, all of heaven fights for you, and Jesus Himself has made ready your place in heaven for you.

Think of your children. God preserved the life of mother and child through each birth. God preserved the life of each child until that child could be made His own child through the new birth of Holy Baptism. Harvest after harvest, you have reaped the bounty of God's goodness. Payday and after payday, God has supplied you with daily bread. Morning after morning, you have woke up in a warm bed, with an abundance of food to feed your body. And let us not forget this magnificent house of worship that God has blessed us with, where we come week after week to be strengthened through His Word and His Body and Blood.

Each day, God's mercies are new to us. Each day, God is with us. Like Job, He gives us hope for an even better tomorrow. Like Peter, He reaches out to us to raise us to safety above the storms that beat upon us.

The writer of the book of Hebrews exhorts us who walk by faith through this vale of tears: *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (He 12:2, NIV).* LET US FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS! Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, for He comes to us in the midst of every problem and peril we face on this side of heaven.

“Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” Those words of Jesus give us faith. Faith is not some special feeling or merely some emotional hope that everything will turn out all right. Faith is not just a dream or wish that some good will ultimately come. Faith is intimately tied to only one source -- Jesus Christ. Faith is absolute trust, hope, and confidence in Jesus Christ. Faith always cries: ***"TRULY YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD."*** Jesus is with us on the beautiful days of our successes and joys and He is with us on the days when the fiercest of winds and waves beat upon us. Our Lord sees our hearts failing, our knees shaking, and our hands trembling, and He reaches out to us in the midst of every difficulty and disaster.

In the midst of every disturbance and storm, our comfort and peace, assurance and strength come from the Lord Jesus Christ and from Him alone, because Jesus has conquered and overcome every storm and we are safe in Him.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.