

“Why Doubt?”

Job 38:4-18

Romans 10:5-17

Matthew 14:22-33

Pentecost 10

“Take heart; it is I”, Jesus said. “Do not be afraid. Why did you doubt?”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

If I could be anywhere in the world, it would be **on** water. If I could live anywhere (no restrictions), I’d live **on the water**. A houseboat of some kind would be my choice, but even just floating on my back in the calmness of water; there’s nothing (I don’t think) to compare to the **peace and serenity** of time upon the surface of a **smooth** body of water.

However, that whole situation can turn **terrifying**, and a foot or two down can begin to be **the most frightening place** upon this planet. And if waves swell or sinking begins, there’s no place in the world I’d rather be **far away from** then an **imposingly-churning** body of water.

My fondest **memory** (most **peaceful** memory) of Israel was being on a boat on the Sea of Galilee, but I can imagine how **frightening it can get in a storm**, one on just a very small boat in the middle of this very big lake (or, rather, sea), and in the middle of the darkness of the night **praying to get to a shore that you can't see**.

Text

Such was what was **documented for our learning** … a dozen men in a terrifying situation 2,000 years ago. **Still told today** as the reading for the whole Church all over the world on this weekend, the **horrific episode of the lives of 12 men** … some of whom had made their living in the peaceful versions of the same **desperate** context …

... which should help amplify the **severity** of this situation. Seasoned night-time fishermen got **scared to death**. When the word “**storm**” was used here, it **meant it in every way you could legitimately call what they went through that** as previously calm men who were comfortable on the water found themselves in a **TERRIFYING SITUATION**. What struck from outside of themselves (weather and where they were in that weather) shook them to their core. They seemingly **couldn’t cope**.

So frightening was that situation that there’s been a movie made about the facing of this very same circumstance. “**The Perfect Storm**” put up on a big screen fishermen who were also caught **shocked** facing the surges of waves they couldn’t ride out. Their inability to cope had them coming to the determination that all they had left as an option was to (as the expression goes) “kiss themselves goodbye” and get ready to drown ...

... which can **be the case in ways other than by water and a roaring sea**. Such **is the case** (at least in some varying degrees) to many of **us**. And that’s the reason why that Hollywood movie was made (because we could **relate some**) ... and it’s why this 2,000-year-old account was documented, for us to **relate to and learn from**. It may be a cancer diagnosis. It may be the burial of a family member after watching them die. But, also, to lesser degrees (and still not lost on the lesson) the fracturing of relationships ... or a job loss ... or just, simply, watching the news these days might send **shiver down one’s spine**.

Well, **Jesus** wants us all to **KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THAT**. He wants our reaction to things terrifying to maybe a little **different** than it **could be**. He wants us to **KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT SITUATIONS**, even when emergency strikes, or tragedy does beyond our control. He wants us “**TOOLED**” for them (“**EQUIPPED**” for them), even when **wilting** would be the more **natural response**.

And what He **imparts for that** is through the form of a **parable in a real situation with His involvement in it**. We've been **hearing** parables for a few weeks now, but last week and today, we're **seeing** parables true-to-life in **experience** and **analogies for us** that demonstrate **where Jesus locates Himself for His people** ... and that He's **still showing up (present / right there) for us over and over and over again**. Being **ascended** means that He's **everywhere that He's needed**, all-powerful and everywhere capable of being present, no longer standing in just one place to feed 5,000 or walking on water in one place to care for terrified disciples, ruling by having ascended and promising to **NOW** do as He **was then, but DOING IT EVERYWHERE NEEDED** when people and disciples **have still issues**. Jesus feeds and protects **NOW AND STILL**. He **CALMS STORMS NOW AND STILL**. And Jesus **HAS BEEN (AND IS) WITH EACH ONE OF HIS OWN (IN GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALLY) THROUGHOUT EVERY EVEN "STORM"**.

And, so, Scripture **gives us the visual of THAT**. It shows us the **FACT OF THE MATTER** that **FAITH** gives us to **BELIEVE BY PROMISE**. And He's never not kept a PROMISE. For disciples, He **walked right up to their boat and said “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid”**, and He says to **us** disciples: “Lo, I am **with YOU always**” (and **THROUGH EVERYTHING because that's what “with YOU always” means**); “**to the very end of the ages**”.

Application

And **faith** is simply **taking the Lord at His Word**, and to help with that He gives us **visual examples** of how **Good His Word is**. In other words, ways to remember that we can **COUNT ON HIM** because He has **always been Good on His Word. Remember** that it was **He who'd done what He'd promised** in being born of the Seed of a woman (Mary), suffered as He'd promised that He would (“wounded for our transgressions / crushed for our iniquities”). Jesus **was** crucified,

(whipped), died, and was buried, yet death could not hold Him. Raised Jesus **was** from the dead, the first of **us** who He'd promised to **also raise**. **He's kept His promises (the Lord has); fulfilled every prophesy, and NEVER LEAVES His Church ("with US always").**

He said (through Paul) that "He" (the very Word itself in the **person of Jesus**) is "**near YOU, in YOUR mouth**" (which is **both eucharist** as in the body and blood of Him who is the "Word" given to eat and drink but also as our proclaiming of Him as we do **with out-loud words** and, again, **eucharistically** "proclaiming the Lord's death and resurrection until He comes") ... and **in YOUR heart**" as a **trust**.

Peter heard that Word: Jesus told him in answer to his desire to step to Jesus even into the waves of the sea, "**Come**" and he did until removing his eyes from His Lord who **never left** ... as a matter of fact, **grabbed him quickly**. **Job** knew the security of God's **never leaving of him** for the 37 chapters of horrible circumstance and wrestling over the "why's" of how everything happened as it did. God, though, **assured him** (in that 38th chapter) that He'd maintained **everything Good for Job in spite of the bad**. The **BETTER** was always **ahead**, and the **GOOD** was always right there for him.

But you may not be a **Peter** or **Job** ... except, that yes you are. "Why do **you doubt, Peter?**" and "**Where were you, Job, when I ...**". The only one **perfect in that faith** is the **One into Whose faith you and I've been baptism**.

There was **another** stormy situation (maybe a year earlier) where Jesus (this time riding **in the boat with the disciples**) **slept** in the back while that storm caught them all by surprise. But **Jesus didn't worry about it**. The storm didn't cripple Him ... He **trusted the Father to make every bad night of storm end in the Goodness of His Divine will (the life of believers through His death then resurrection)**. Jesus **slept (at peace)** through a storm that everyone else panicked

through. He slept, then went to His one-day slaughter like a lamb in silent confidence, praying “not My will, but, Father, Yours”, Jesus endured the cross, seeing through it, focused a Divine direction that didn’t allow room for worrying about the challenges of GETTING THERE. Jesus actually COUNTED ON WHAT HE WANTS US TO COUNT ON through storms and challenges: Him and the will of Him who’s both of our Fathers.

And He allows only a controlled level of those bad things to be our situations. Job got a hefty test (yet one the Lord helped him handle) and Jesus sent the disciples across that lake seemingly alone into the challenge of their storm. For 9 hours Jesus let them row against the wind, succeeding only 3-4 miles across an 8-mile-wide sea. Jesus allowed the storm that He knew was coming to strike them and that boat … EXPECTING OF THEM FAITH THAT HE WAS NEARBY.

If you (like me) want **growth** in that faith, then notice that the disciples grew in it. Where they were only **amazed** the first time Jesus calmed their storm, the second time (after **hanging-out with Him a good bit longer**), they (this time) “worshiped Him”, confessing the faith they were growing into: “Truly You, Jesus, are the Son of God.”

So, in +His name hear the word that responds to Jesus saying “Come to Him”: “Amen