

A FAITH FOR THE STORMS
Devotional for June 24, 2018 based upon Mark 4: 35-41

What are you afraid of? Everybody is afraid of something. A lot of people are afraid of flying in airplanes – especially smaller airplanes.

Imagine yourself in a small airplane – like one of those two-or-three-people-across, propeller type airplanes. You are being buffeted about in a terrible storm that is threatening to tear the small aircraft apart. If you do that, then you can appreciate the terror the disciples must have felt when that ferocious storm came down upon them on the Sea of Galilee.

For that sea can become unsettled by tremendous storms that suddenly come sweeping down upon the lake, which is several hundred feet below sea level. The disciples are caught in one of those storms. The wind and the waves are threatening to capsize their small boat. Only if you remember that several of the disciples were seasoned fishermen can you fully appreciate the ferociousness of this storm. A smaller, more normal storm they would have been able to take in stride. But this time the disciples are terrified. They are afraid they are going to die. So they wake up Jesus, who is fast asleep in the boat, and in total panic ask Jesus, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

Every one of us goes through storms at various times in our lives. Some of these storms are like tornadoes. They come up suddenly and unexpectedly, as did this storm on the Sea of Galilee. Other storms are like hurricanes. You can see them coming for a long time before they arrive. They are the result of a long series of circumstances.

With both kinds of storms it sometimes seems that Jesus is asleep in the boat. We want to wake Him up and ask, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" All of us go through storms. The worst part is that sometimes Jesus seems to be asleep. We ask, Where is God in the storms of my life? Why doesn't He intervene and stop the storm? Does He care? Is He asleep?

Our Bible story for this morning gives a resounding, Yes, Jesus does care. When the storms of life are raging, Jesus does care. When you think that you cannot hold on for one minute more, Jesus does care. When the waves are threatening to capsize you, Jesus does care.

The disciples wake Jesus from His sleep. Immediately He rebukes the wind and the waves as He says, "Peace! Be still!" The winds cease, and there is a great calm. Then Jesus turns to His disciples and asks, "Why were you afraid? Do you have no faith?"

And so, you see, the main question of life is not, How many storms will I have to go through? Or, How can I avoid the storms? Rather the main questions of life are, Do I have faith for the storms? And if I do not, how can I develop a faith for the storms? For we will all encounter storms. And sometimes it will seem that God is asleep. It is especially then that we will need a faith for the storms.

Do you believe in a God who loves you? Do you believe in a God who has promised never to forsake you? Do you believe that no matter how dark the clouds may seem, behind those clouds the sun still shines? Do you believe that beyond the cross is an empty tomb? If you do, then you can weather even the severest of storms. If you do not, then today is the day for you to ask God to give you that kind of faith.

Do you have a faith for even the severest of storms? What would happen to you if you were in a tiny, tiny boat in a terrible, terrible storm? Which is the predicament that the disciples were in. And which may be the predicament that you – and/or someone whom you know and/or love - is in. At times like those we need a storm-enduring faith that we have been nurturing for years. For if our faith is real, and our faith is our own, then we, too, will be able to hear the voice of the One who can calm all storms. "Peace! Be still!"

Rev. Dennis D. Nelson