

Jesus of Nazareth is your peace with God in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Today I want to talk to you about calm in the eye of the storm. Jesus is our calm; he is our peace in the midst of the storms we experience. Take physical storms for an example. A few years ago as I was driving home from a fishing trip I saw the largest lightening storm I've ever seen in my life. It was above Chicago. As far as I could see from east to west I saw lightening. The lightening was beautiful, as beautiful as any fireworks display I've ever seen. Although beautiful there was also no way around it. The only way to put this storm behind me was to go through it; there was no going around it.

As we neared Chicago we stopped in a parking lot. We didn't intend to stop but the 5 lanes of one way highway traffic converged into 1 lane. Whether it was the rain, wind or the lightening I don't know. But the highway was flooded with water. At one point we traveled a hundred feet in half an hour. The storm caused the highway to become a parking lot. By now the physical storm was creating an emotional storm within my heart. I hate standing still on a highway when I want to move at least as fast as the speed limit. The impatience, the frustration, the fear of not knowing when the storm or its effects would end were like winds of emotion pushing and pulling and hurting everyone in the car.

The disciples remind us that physical storms are not content just to create emotional storms. A third type of storm in the spiritual storm. What begins as a physical storm disturbs emotions that result in spiritually stormy weather. The disciples set sail with Jesus on board. They knew the water. Many of them were expert sailors who knew the sea, and the boat and how to respond to both when in a storm. But soon this storm took them beyond their abilities.

At first they trusted in themselves. They knew from experience how to respond to the storm. Then the water started coming over the side of the boat. No matter how they turned, trimmed or let out the sail, the water kept coming over the side of the boat. They discovered they were not all powerful, they learned they were in a storm that exceeded their abilities, that defied their strength, that overpowered their will to live. With this discovery the spiritual storm increased its intensity as death, their death became an absolute certainty. And they cried, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

What kind of storms rage inside our lives? I do not mean a rainy drive home or an unwanted traffic jam. Sometimes our marriages turn stormy, or we hit a relational jam with our children, or as our health fades we face the absolute certainty of our death. Like the disciples we may at first respond with confidence in our abilities. We have been here before or we seen others handle the storm. We are confident we can handle it. But the withdrawal of love, the pain of wayward children, the terror of death overwhelms us. These forces are overcome only by a power greater than we possess.

Consider the effect these storms have on us. The disciples began with courage but ended in fear. The disciples began with confidence but in the end their self-confidence merely masked their unbelief. In fear of fear caused by unbelief the disciples recognized their complete and absolute need for Jesus. Our storms have the same effect on us. Our storms show us our human strength is really weakness, our terror of death flows out of unbelief, and what we really need in life – above all else – is Jesus Christ and his Word.

The physical, emotional, and spiritual storms of life take us beyond our abilities, they confirm our weakness with fear, and help us see our need for calm in the eye of the storm. A hurricane is a powerful storm that damages and kills, but the eye of the hurricane is calm and gentle. The storms threatening us are dangerous and harmful but Jesus is present. Like the calm within the storm Jesus reveals his presence through His Word. When he spoke the words Σιῶπα, πεφίμωσο the Greek words for “Quiet, be still” nature listened and obeyed. Through these words Jesus reveals his authority over nature and that he is God. Jesus continues to reveal his presence among us. He does so through his word – the Bible. As we hear God’s Word or remember God’s Word or think about God’s Word Jesus reveals he is with you. He is your calm in the eye of the storm.

Jesus calms my storms. He calms your storms too. Some of God’s people are presently facing storms much more severe than the storms I face. We have members who have been told they have 6-12 months to live. Yet they come to worship and they receive the crucified body and blood of Jesus Christ. He is their calm in the storm because he is their life that will never die. The storms we face are real and dangerous and harmful and the ultimate storm we face is death. Yet

Jesus is present with you, he is present with you in his word so you can see he is God. As God Jesus is in complete control even of death. He who rose from the dead promises to raise you from the dead. With this promise and the forgiveness of sins it gives, your fear gives way to peace and your self-confidence gives way to faith in Christ. As surely as Jesus spoke and nature obeyed so when he promises you life, death must yield it hold on you so you may know eternal life in Christ. I invite you to take a good look at one another. Look past the hair color and style of clothing. Look closer and see the storms confronting your brothers and sisters. Look at each other while listening to Jesus and you will see their faith, a faith created by the calm in the storm. What you see and what you hear will humble you and strengthen you and enable you to believe in Jesus, the Son of God sent by the Father, revealed by the Spirit who serves as your calm the storm, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.