

Scripture Study

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B



Opening prayer

Job 38:1,8-11

(Ps 107:23-26, 28-31)

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Mark 4:35-41

Overview of the Gospel:

- With last week's celebration of the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, we are now back in the liturgical season of Ordinary Time, and back to the cycle of readings that feature the Gospel according to St. Mark.
- This Sunday's gospel reading finds Jesus in the fishing village of Capernaum which he has made his home and base of operations (Mark 2:1; 3:19). Teaching by the sea in a series of parables (verses 4:1-34), Jesus draws such large crowds that they threaten to crush him (Mark 3:7-12).
- Jesus directs his disciples to put out to sea, where one of the violent storms common to the Sea of Galilee comes up. While the boat threatens to be swamped by waves, Jesus sleeps "in the stern," actually the helmsman's seat on the high afterdeck of the boat where he would have been protected from the splash.
- In the parallel accounts of this story in Matthew and Luke, the disciples are clearly more panicky than in Mark's retelling: "Lord, save us, we are perishing!" (Matthew 8:25); "Teacher, teacher, we are perishing!" (Luke 8:24). They were well aware that, according to the Old Testament, only God has the power to subdue the raging sea (Job 38:1, 8-11; Psalm 74:13-14; 89:10; 93:4; 107:28-29).

Questions:

- In the Gospel reading, based on their reactions, what were the disciples feeling as this storm begins? As it whips up? When Jesus silences it?
- What was Jesus teaching them by sleeping through the storm? By rebuking it?
- What tone did Jesus use in verse 39? Verse 40?
- Why were the disciples "filled with awe" ("fear" according to one translation) at Jesus' calming of the raging sea? How might their recalling of the Old Testament have motivated this?
- When circumstantial clouds darken your life, do you sense the Son still shining? Or does he seem asleep? Why might it feel that way?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this story? How does that relate to the times you face temptation or trial?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§, 301, 2086, 2616, 2743, 2828

Closing prayer

When we find ourselves in some grave danger we must not lose courage but firmly trust in God, for where there is the greatest danger, there is also the greatest help from Him who wants to be called our 'Help' in times of peace and in times of tribulation. --St. Ambrose

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!

"Why are you afraid?"

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?"

Meditation: How can we fight fear with faith? Jesus' sleeping presence on the storm-tossed sea reveals the sleeping faith of his disciples. They feared for their lives even though their Lord and Master was with them in the boat. They were asleep to Christ while he was present to them in their hour of need. The Lord is ever present to us. And in our time of testing he asks the same question: *Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?* Do you recognize the Lord's presence with you, especially when you meet the storms of adversity, sorrow, and temptation? Whenever we encounter trouble, the Lord is there with the same reassuring message: *"It is I, do not be afraid."*



What are the characteristics of faith and how can we grow in it? Faith is an entirely free gift that God makes to us. Believing is only possible by grace and the help of the Holy Spirit, who moves the heart and who opens the eyes of the mind to understand and accept the truth which God has revealed to us. Faith enables us to relate to God rightly and confidently, with trust and reliance, by believing and adhering to his word, because he is utterly reliable and trustworthy. If we want to live, grow, and persevere in faith, then it must be nourished with the word of God.

Fear does not need to cripple us from taking right action or rob us of our trust and reliance on God. Courage working with faith enables us to embrace God's word of truth and love with confidence and to act on it with firm hope in God's promises. The love of God strengthens us in our faith and trust in him and enables us to act with justice and

kindness towards our neighbor even in the face of opposition or harm. Do you allow the love of Christ to rule in your heart and mind, and to move your will to choose what is good in accordance with his will?

"When you have to listen to abuse, that means you are being buffeted by the wind. When your anger is roused, you are being tossed by the waves. So when the winds blow and the waves mount high, the boat is in danger, your heart is imperiled, your heart is taking a battering. On hearing yourself insulted, you long to retaliate; but the joy of revenge brings with it another kind of misfortune - shipwreck. Why is this? Because Christ is asleep in you. What do I mean? I mean you have forgotten his presence. Rouse him, then; remember him, let him keep watch within you, pay heed to him... A temptation arises: it is the wind. It disturbs you: it is the surging of the sea. This is the moment to awaken Christ and let him remind you of those words: 'Who can this be? Even the winds and the sea obey him.'" (St. Augustine, excerpt from SERMONS 63.1-3.23)

"Lord Jesus, increase my faith in your redeeming love and power that I may always recognize your abiding presence with me. And give me courage to do your will in all circumstances."

*Meditation: © 2011 Don Schwager
Daily Scripture Readings and Meditations
www.rc.net/wcc/readings/*