

Mark 4:35-end. (Luke 8:22-25)

In life we all face storms at times. Some of us may be going through storms right now. Difficult circumstances that make us wonder how we, or our loved ones, are going to cope. We are anxious and a little afraid. We wish we could do something to sort it all out, but it is beyond our resources. Today's gospel story speaks directly to us, let's see what we can learn?

1. Jesus is revealed as having authority over all creation, here the wind and the waves
After a busy day of teaching the crowds, Jesus' disciples take him in their boat across Lake Galilee, and a '*great gale*' blew up, and water washed into the boat. It must have been bad, as these experienced fishermen thought they were going to drown. Jesus was asleep in the boat. '*They woke Jesus up and said to him, 'Teacher, **do you not care** that we are perishing?' (v38b)*' This is one of the questions that come to us when we are in life's storms, '*Doesn't God care for me?*' We can feel bereft, abandoned, God doesn't seem to hear our prayers, and certainly doesn't answer as we would like.

In this story, Jesus had not abandoned the disciples, he was still there in the boat with them, and on this occasion, he responds by showing his care, and calms the storm with a word. '*Jesus woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.'*' (v39)

Jesus is always with us, whatever storms life brings, as Paul wrote in our *text for 2017*, '*Nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.*' (Romans 8:39)

When the disciples saw Jesus' actions, '*They.. said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'*' (v41b)

Who indeed! This is God's Son, the one of whom Paul wrote to the church in Colossae, '*all things have been created through him and for him*' (1:16b) Jesus is Lord of all of creation. The disciples were learning about who Jesus was; and as we learn about who Jesus is, then we learn to turn to him when we face life's storms.

2. Jesus wants us to trust him.

It is sometimes inferred from this story that if you are going through a storm in your life, call out to Jesus, and he will still the raging storm and bring peace.

But that is often **not** our experience, and not exactly what it says here!

Rather, Jesus **rebukes the disciples** for calling out to him!

'*Jesus said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?'*' (v40)

What were they supposed to do?

I think, **to trust Jesus** to keep them safe, and take them through the storm.

To remember that he was with them, and that was sufficient. That's what really matters. Those disciples would face opposition and persecution in the early days of the church, issues of faith would cause divisions, Paul and his companions faced shipwreck, imprisonment, beatings, and much more on their missionary journeys, as we heard in today's epistle (2 Cor 6:1-13), but God was always with them to help them.

We face storms of bereavement and loss; breakdown of relationships; stress of work, finances and health; uncertainty over the future... and God is with us and helps us in them all. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, '*God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength.*' (1 Cor 10:13b)

Yes, we need to use all God gives us: inner strength, courage, common sense, determination; and help that is offered from others, and to put our trust in God.

Often we have to go through life's storms, but Jesus is always there with us. Perhaps seeing Jesus asleep made the disciples panic, but we know that Jesus now never sleeps, and is aware of what storms we are going through. Jesus trusted his Father to take care of him, even when he was asleep, so we can learn to trust our heavenly Father too.

3. Despite the disciples lack of faith, **as a sign of his loving care**, and to help them understand who he is, Jesus demonstrates his authority, even over wind and waves.

Jesus does bring peace to the situation, both inwardly and outwardly.

He says, *'Peace! Be still!'* I think this was to both the wind and waves and also the disciples. *'Then the wind ceased, and there was (a dead) calm.'* (v39)

Jesus doesn't always remove the storm we are facing, but sometimes out of his love for us, he does. Finally, we read, *'They were filled with great awe'* (v41a)

The disciples were no longer afraid of the elements, but are now afraid of Jesus' awesome power. This wasn't a destructive fear, like the dread which the storm had brought, rather now an awe and wonder, a reverence for Jesus.

Jesus is our friend and Saviour, but is also Lord of all.

As we go through life, may we learn to trust that God is with us to help us face life's storms, and to grow in his peace.