

Lessons for the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 20, 2021

Psalm 124 ~ *Praise to God for deliverance from enemies, reminiscent of rescue from Egypt in the waters.*

Job 38:1-11 ~ *The untamed fury of the sea is one sign from nature that God is far greater than we are!*

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 ~ *St. Paul had weathered many storms in his ministry, but he rejoiced in God's care.*

Mark 4:35-41 ~ *When the disciples finally awoke Him, Jesus quieted the storm and calmed their fears!*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: God of the Storm

"Widows' Walks" were built on top of many houses in seaport towns so mothers and wives might watch for the return of their men who went out to the sea in ships. It was over the sea that the Spirit brooded and brought forth life, but the sea is never tamed. No wonder the disciples were upset at Jesus' calm, indifferent sleep. The storm over which Jesus ruled is a sign of all our fear and doubt. St. Paul told about some of the storms in his life, yet expressed his confidence that God would continue to bring him through them all. Troubled Job speaks for each of us. To Job, to us, and to the Church, God speaks words of assurance: the storms of life are stilled!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: O God of all Creation, storms rage not only over the seas, but also in my life. Calm them so that once again I may praise Your gracious gift of love to me. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Worries about money and trouble with financial matters cause many of the storms in our lives. God is able to calm these conflicts as well as the winds and the waves. Our tithe is a way to remind ourselves that we trust in God to take care of us in all things.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, not these gifts alone we place into Your hands;
With them we also trust our lives upon Your care.
Grant faith to us, enough to live by Your commands,
And goods to meet our needs – and love enough to share.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We are confronted by many storms in life, some thrust upon us by circumstance and others of our own making. Sometimes we react with impatience as did Job, blaming God for our troubles. At other times, like the disciples, we are disturbed by God's apparent indifference to our problems. Only when we have been embraced by God's grace in Christ, even in our lack of trust, are we able to say with Paul regarding our hardships: ". . . dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything."

Questions to Consider: How can we remain calm in chaos?

- How did God draw Job out of his helpless feeling of frustration?
- Why was Paul able to open his heart wide and commend himself even in sufferings?
- Why is it not surprising that the wind and waves obeyed Jesus?
- Can you think of some words of Jesus that announced the stilling of storms in our lives?

Page 2 Bonus: "A Horizon of Blue"

A Horizon of Blue

Now this is a view
there's no getting used to:
as far as the eye can see
here nothing is new,
a horizon of blue
on the arms of the endless sea.

When I'm feeling brave
on the crest of the wave,
I turn a full circle around.
There's nothing to save
from a watery grave
and no sight of the solid ground.

No port in a storm
to shelter from harm
when wind and wild breakers roll;
to calm my alarm
only God's mighty arm
is a guide to my final goal.

The heart of this world
out of chaos was hurled,
when up from the fountains deep
the flood waters swirled
until beaches were curled
at the foot of the mountains steep.

"This far and no more,
to the edge of the shore,"
God said to the ancient foe.
He bolted the door
and contained the fierce roar
of the tempest that rages below.