



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

June 23, 2024

Pastor Ron Raddatz

5th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Job 38:1-11](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 46 CW

Second Lesson: [Acts 27:13-26](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Mark 4:35-41](#)

A Top-Down Faith **Our Gracious God is with us through All the Storms of Life** **JESUS, SAVIOR, PILOT ME**

- a. For You are the Lord of Nature**
- b. For You are the Lord our Savior**

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ:

At one of my congregations that I served years ago, the building was in the shape of a ship. The front and the back both came out to a point. It was to remind the worshipers that as they entered that building, as our Gospel lesson points out, Christ was there to pilot them over a tempestuous sea. The Gospel, in Word and Sacrament, would assure them and comfort them when they faced difficult waters, so they could be assured of forgiveness, life and eternal salvation.

At times in our lives, we face storms that come our way, unexpected sometimes, and we need that assurance that Christ is there to help us through those difficult times. At those times, we pray "**Jesus, Savior, pilot me**, first of all because *you are the Lord of Nature*, and secondly because *you are the Lord our Savior*."

It had been a busy day. Jesus had been preaching and teaching from a boat. Because so many people had come to see Jesus, He had to get in a boat and push out a little way from the shoreline so that everybody could hear Him. At the end of the day, He was tired. He was worn out. Yes, the Son of God and the Son of Mary got tired and worn out, just like any other human being. So He asked the disciples to push out from the shoreline and then head for the opposite shore so He could lie down and get some rest.

The disciples thought "Oh, great! We can handle that!" Many of them were fishermen. They were strong. They had experience. They knew about the sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee, but they were going to do fine. They could let the Lord sleep. They didn't want to bother Jesus.

Isn't that the way we have been sometimes in our life? "We have this under control, God. You don't have to worry about a thing. I've got the experience. I've got the knowledge. I know what I am doing." And as we go to sleep at night, maybe we forget to pray Luther's Evening Prayer, which says, "Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me."

All of a sudden then, the disciples also found out that storms arise, and it came that night. At those times when we think that everything is going fine and we really don't need the Lord's help or assistance, maybe it's after we are confirmed and our parents maybe think "My kids went to church regularly because they had those sermon outlines that they had to hand in for class. We can take off some time now. We really don't need to go to church as much as we did." Or maybe they graduate from high school and they are going to be on their own. They have a job lined up. They have their own car. Mom and dad aren't around. "We maybe don't have to go to church so much." Or the college graduate, who has all that learning in his/her head and all that experience from going out and practicing their occupation a little bit, they know what is ahead and they can handle it all by themselves. There are times in our lives where we think we can handle it all by ourselves. And then what happens? Like the disciples, a storm comes up on the sea.

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?" Storms on the Sea of Galilee were not uncommon because the air currents would change suddenly and that would cause a lot of waves and a lot of storms. These fishermen knew all about it, but they didn't think THIS kind of storm would ever come up. So their fear in their heart, rather than the faith in the heart, convinced them that they were going to die. The waves were coming up over the sides of the boat, filling the boat with water. Surely they were going to drown and they were all going to die. Because the situation was out of their control, they thought it was out of God's control as well. So they were filled with fear. What were they going to do? Did Jesus really care about them if this storm was happening to them now? Their feelings, rather than God's Word, took over, kicked in, and rather than trusting God, what did they do? They yelled at Jesus, of all people! "Don't you care, Lord that we will all drown?!" That seemed kind of ruthless.

He had been preaching and teaching all day. Where was their faith, combined with that Word, to trust in Him as their Lord and Savior to know they could handle any situation in life? The reality of the wind and the waves impressed them more than what Jesus had said. So they were struck with fear.

How about in our lives? Everything is going fine and then suddenly something happens and it's overwhelming. "I'll never make it through this. It's too big!" Somebody hears that they have cancer. It puts a fear in their heart. "What's going to happen? Am I going to make it through this? Will the chemo work? Will the surgery work?"

A young man, who had gone to a Lutheran grade school and a Lutheran high school, married a fine young woman. They had two children. He went to church every Sunday. He took the kids to Sunday school. One day his wife said, "I want a divorce and I want permanent custody of the boys." His world was falling apart. He already had \$70,000 worth of lawyer fees. How was he going to make it? The Lord was there for him, just like for the disciples. Would he trust that God would get him through it or wouldn't he? Do we trust that God will get us through the storms of life? Do we have that faith?

The disciples lacked it. They didn't trust in Jesus as the Son of God. Yes, He was a prophet. They met Mary. They knew His mother. He got tired, just like any other human being. How could He help them out of this situation? So they woke Jesus up. ***He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*** I always assumed it happened just like that. Jesus said the word and immediately the wind stopped and it was perfectly calm. He impressed upon them what they had failed to believe—that He was God. They lacked the trust that it would all be okay, just let things be.

Parents who have young children understand this. They are in the middle of a thunderstorm and the lightening and the banging going on, and the little children are afraid and frightened. They either get up and run to you, or they start crying and you have to go to them. Then you say, "Why don't you come and sleep in bed with us." Almost immediately as their head hits the pillow, what do they do? They fall asleep because you have your arm around them or they feel safe and secure because "Mom and dad love us and nothing bad is going to happen to us." That's why Jesus could sleep in the boat. His Heavenly Father was there and was watching over and protecting them. No matter how much the boat rocked from side to side or up and down, He was safe. He didn't wake up. But the disciples were filled with fear. They lacked that trust that God loved them and was with them.

As a result, when Jesus did this, they were filled with a different kind of fear—awe. They had an awesome feeling about this Jesus. ***They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*** With our hindsight, we would say "Duh! He is the Son of God, the Creator of heaven and earth! He controls

nature. He has the power.” But they lacked the faith and therefore, they lacked the confidence and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Today we have a lot of experts out there writing articles and on TV and videos claiming Global Warming. “We only have eight years left before the world is going to be so hot that it is going to burn us all.” What did God say? After the flood, what did He promise Noah? There would always be seedtime and harvest. [\(Genesis 8:22\)](#) Those scientists are nuts. The world will not burn up in eight years, unless God comes to judge us. We have the confidence in God, who will watch over and protect us, just like Jesus said the disciples should have in Him—that He was the Lord of heaven and earth.

So when we face problems in our earthly lives, when the word cancer appears or a divorce happens or we get sick or we lose our job or we go financially broke, don’t panic. God promised to be present with you wherever you go, that He has things under His control, and this, too, will work out. Luther said those kinds of things are good for Christians, too. “It is well with those who find water breaking into their ship, for this moves them to seek help from God.” Bad times are to draw us closer to our God, get closer to the source of our comfort and assurance, and that is God’s Word and the Sacrament of the altar. Where through those means, the Holy Ghost will strengthen our faith so like little children, we can fall asleep in our Heavenly Father’s arms or have the confidence of knowing that we are not walking alone. Jesus is with us.

Like that church built like a ship; there are a whole lot of other people on board. You have one another to strengthen and encourage and to help one another through difficult times. God has placed you here for a reason—to encourage one another, as brothers and sisters do in Christ Jesus. And as we realize that, we realize that Jesus just isn’t powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, He is also the Lord our Savior. ***“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!”***

It is one thing to know that we have an awesome God, but the important thing to realize is that we have a Savior God. For as God, He was able to live a holy life for everyone. And as the Savior God, He was able to suffer and die to pay for everybody’s sins. As God, He could do it, do it for everybody. So as you come here to sit in the boat with Jesus, you have that assurance that your sins are forgiven and that His holy life is yours. That’s why we call you a saint; not because of who you are or what you’ve done but because of what Jesus has done for all of us. He has taken away our sins and given us His holy life. So you never have to wonder, “Boy, I wonder if I’ve done enough good to get into heaven. I wonder if I’ve done enough good to pay for my sins. I really messed up in my younger years.” All of that has been covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

In exchange for your sins, He gives you His holy life. God only sees Jesus in you. And that’s why it’s important to see that Jesus is God. He is able to do that; to drive away the

fear and to bring you peace and assurance, as it should have done for the disciples even on Easter Sunday. Think of it! They were sitting there in church every day, listening to Jesus preach to know that His Word is true, and when Jesus had told them before He died, "I have to suffer and I have to die, but on the third day I will rise again," they didn't think it was possible! The women went to the tomb with spices to finish burying Jesus, because they thought He was dead, and the disciples lived in fear and wouldn't believe the women when they came back and said "He has risen." Jesus had to appear.

How about us? When the bad things come, when the waves roll into our lives, are we going to have the faith to believe "God can handle this. I have to trust in Jesus. Since He is God, He knows what is best for me. This, too, will work out," just like the Apostle Paul in our Epistle Lesson. "God told me this is going to happen. It's going to work out. Don't be afraid, guys. You're going to be alive. Even though you hear the boat cracking and boards breaking, you are going to be alive on the shore." That's our joy and confidence in Jesus Christ because we know He loves us. He will take care of us. And as He has promised, ***"...do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*** [\(Isaiah 41:10\)](#)

Being in this boat does not exempt us from trouble or pain or sorrow, but it does give us the blessed assurance that we don't face it alone. Jesus is here with us, and our brothers and sisters are on board, so rejoice always. Let Jesus pilot you because He is the Lord of Creation and also the Lord our Savior. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.