

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

June 23, 2024

Old Testament Reading; 1 Samuel 17:57-18: 5,10-16

Responsive Reading: Psalm 133

Epistle Reading: 2 Corinthians 6: 1-13

Gospel Reading: Mark 4: 35-41

Sermon: Who Can This Be

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: If creation itself listens to Him, maybe we should take the hint.

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

According to Google, now I'm going to the big guns for Biblical history, anyway according to Google Jesus had performed 17 miracles before He calmed the waters of the Sea of Galilee. He had given sight to the blind, turned water to wine, made the lame walk, and the list goes on. So why were the disciples so astonished by this "sign"?

I think a couple things come into play here. First, this was personal. This was what I believe to be the first miracle that directly affected them. Oh, He told Nathaniel that He had seen him under the fig tree but that was small pickens. This action saved their lives. Not only that, but this was not just healing one person at a time, this was messing with climate change. (And you thought that was a new problem.)

Jesus just showed that there were no limits to what He could do. It had to hit them right between the eyes; Wow, only God could do that! Wait, no, it can't be that. Let's rethink this a little bit. "But.... then who could this be!?"

I believe that this question bothered them right up to that night in the upper room when the risen Jesus came in through the doors that were shut.

This incident is extremely insightful to us today. This beautifully shows the duality of Christ. Jesus slept on a pillow in the stern of the boat as the storm raged. Jesus was so human and so exhausted that he slept through the storm. When His disciples

woke Him, He proved that He was totally divine by stopping the gale with three words and a gesture (I think, or maybe that is just an image that this account stirs up in my own mind, but that is OK, we must all make the word of God our own).

Anywho!

My summary statement for this message is, "If creation itself listens to Him maybe we should take the hint."

Our Old Testament lesson takes up after David had killed Goliath. Saul had "set David over the men of war", this was like Eisenhower in WW2, he was in charge from behind the lines. When David became more popular than King Saul and had escaped two attempts on his life Saul made him "Captain of a thousand". This was a demotion and meant that instead of being behind the lines David would be leading the charge in battle. Saul hoped that this would get David killed. Where have we heard that scenario before? The problem was that unlike Saul, David trusted God completely. Remember that when David petitioned Saul to let him fight Goliath, David did not take credit for slaying the Lion and the Bear. David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

David believed in the absolute power and love of God long before Jesus walked the streets of Galilee. If God can protect David from the paw of the lion, the paw of the bear and the

hand of Goliath then He surely can protect us from the storm. But I get ahead of myself.

David was in a relationship with God. In our Psalm today the Psalmist shows how “pleasant” it is to be in a relationship with God and with His creation, “when people dwell together in unity”, or in other words when all people are listening to God.

If even creation obeys Him maybe we should take the hint and listen. When is the time to perk up our ears and listen?

In our Epistle, Paul wants us to get with the program. He starts by saying, “We then, as workers with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Paul goes on to describe a whole lot of storms that may come up in your lives of following Christ, but this is the day of salvation. This is the time to listen to and to follow Jesus. Paul says that the good outweighs the bad, “as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!”. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, (and us), “Why are you so fearful?

How is it that you have no faith?” And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Why fear, as long as YOU are in the boat with Jesus the storm (any storm) can not kill you. This is the acceptable time, and the Lord has heard you. And in this day of salvation, he will help you.

Hallelujah and Amen!