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## Mark 4:35-41      Second reading Psalm 107:23-32

### With Jesus in the storm

1. When we hear this story, we need to understand that the position of the disciples was very different from our position. We have read Mark 1:1, but they were only just getting to know Jesus. We confess Him, they are still searching for His identity. Verse 41 suggests they had a long discussion.

2. It's a great story about a vehement storm. The disciples' lives are in danger, but while they toil, Jesus manages to be asleep. (We are not sure why.) So they panic, and the way they address Jesus is not very polite. Yet they turn to Him because they know that He (and only He) has a solution. Jesus addresses the storm and the waves as if they were human, and they obey Him at once.

As a result of the miracle, the disciples fear Jesus as they first feared the storm. Is that a strange response? No, not really: they show due respect to Jesus. They may have Psalm 107 in mind, which talks about God's power over creation. The person before them could be God; and seeing God meant death. Those of us who sometimes speak flippantly about God/Jesus should take heed. The question of verse 41 was answered for us in 1:1 – and by Psalm 107 and several passages in Job [26:11-12; 38:8-11]: Jesus is God!

3. Although this is a great story, I have never preached it. Miracle stories are hard to preach because we see so few miracles. I do believe that the biblical miracles happened as described, but in our time Jesus does not always save (heal) us. We all know examples of people who suffered and died despite our prayers. People die of covid, cancer and car crashes. (That is three Cs.) And that is not through lack of faith or lack of prayer. Already in the time of the Bible people suffered (Paul, see 2 Cor 12; Stephen and James). Most apostles died as martyrs; the early Anabaptists in the 16th century were killed by reformed Christians; and to this day persecuted Christians suffer despite our prayers.

4. We conclude that the Christian faith (believing in Jesus) does not guarantee that we will be safe from harm. But it does mean that we are safe with Jesus. We follow Him not for gain, not as a life insurance, not to escape hell, but because we love Him. Faith is entrusting ourselves to Him.

When we are in trouble, fear is human, natural. Therefore fear is the weapon of dictators, of those who spread fake news, and of satan. But we can overcome it by looking to Jesus! Let us put Him central and admire our Lord!

5. The world is in the midst of the covid storm. Can you entrust yourself to him? Let us do so! Paul sums up what I want to say in Philippians 4:

'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

Faith does not mean that nothing will happen to you, but that Jesus is with you.

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