

8. 6-20-21

Sermon- We Have Faith in Fathers

Scripture- Mark 4:35-41

Hymns- 689, 764, 554

Theme- Like Jesus, Christian fathers have a twofold responsibility: first to instill knowledge and faith in THE Father, and then second to live a life so as to show our children the benefit and absolute necessity of that faith, by becoming examples in the flesh. How's that working for you, Dad?

I. PICTURE OUR FATHERS, STRONG TO SAVE.

About 100 years ago an English clergyman named Whiting was sailing in the Mediterranean when a storm broke of unusual fury, and hurricane winds. The waves were like mountains, and they came crashing against the ship, and all on board felt doomed, for the life boats were useless in such a storm.

Whiting continued in fervent prayer, and by the special providence of God the storm lost it's power, and they made it to port.

In response to God's rescue, Whiting wrote the hymn, "For Those In Peril On The Sea." It is also called, "Eternal Father Strong To Save."

It became the most beloved hymn of the American Navy, and at one time every worship service in the Annapolis Naval Academy was concluded with the entire congregation kneeling and singing this hymn. We will sing it to close our service.

A. The second stanza goes like this:

O Savior, whose almighty Word
The winds and waves submissive heard,
Who walked upon the foaming deep,
And calm amidst its rage did sleep:
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee

For those in peril on the sea!

B. The wind and the sea are mighty forces, and they have taken many lives-so many that the Bible says when the dead are raised the sea also shall give up the dead in it.

The sea of Galilee is especially treacherous, for it is at a low altitude and cliffs around it have valley's going to the sea. This draws down cold air which can produce a storm in a matter of minutes.

Even today, one can look upon it when it is smooth as glass, and ten minutes later there can be a raging storm. We want to look at the experience of the disciples as they are caught in one of these sudden storms.

We will see it in three pictures which deal with the three persons involved in this event.

II. THE PICTURE OF JESUS ON A BUSY DAY. OUR FATHERS TEACH US FAITH IN SOMETHING BIGGER THAN OURSELVES.

According to Mark, this was the day that Jesus spoke to the multitudes, and His actions so concerned His mother and brothers that they tried to restrain Him.

This was the day that He debated with the Pharisees and warned them about blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. This was the day that He taught the parables as recorded in Matthew 13.

It was after a busy day like this that He was exhausted, and verse 36 says He was so tired that He slept.

A. We see the humanity of Jesus. He lived for men before He died for them. He filled His days full with service to man.

Sometimes He worked all day, and then prayed all night. He gave His life in service before He gave it in sacrifice. Why should He tire Himself to help and teach men?

He was going to the cross in a few years, and He knew it, but it was not enough that He should die for their sin and make salvation possible.

Jesus said by His life of service that a full and satisfying human life consists in fellowship with God, and compassion for men in their sin, sickness, suffering, and sorrow.

Meeting temporal earthly needs was important to Jesus even though He came primarily to meet eternal needs.

Jesus lay exhausted in that boat because He could not stand to see the masses in ignorance of God's mercy and love. While He had breath He had to teach, heal, and preach.

People who are exhausted by their service to the Lord, have the reward of sweet sleep. In this story, Jesus was so exhausted that even a storm did not awaken Him.

B. This human side of Jesus while he worked among us should give us all hope for rewards in heaven, but also should remind us that our bodies belong to Him in service.

His body was a living sacrifice, and this sleeping Christ is the greatest example anywhere of presenting one's body as such a sacrifice.

In this sleep we see also the trust of His humanity. Jesus did not fear the storm, for He knew His life was in the Father's hands.

In verse 39 we see the deity of Christ. Only God can rebuke the wind and calm the sea. The only reason Bible writers could put such contrasting pictures of Jesus side by side is because they were true. He was truly man, and truly God.

When He said to the winds, "Be still," the word He used means to be gagged or muzzled, as if it were a maniac to be bound and gagged.

Some feel this indicates that the storm was an attempt to destroy Jesus. Whatever the case, it reveals that Jesus is the Lord of nature, and that the destructive forces of it are evil in the world such as disease and demon possession.

Romans tells us that the whole world is groaning for the day of redemption, for all of nature is cursed by man's fall.

Tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes are God's permissive will, but He no more approves of them, nor is He responsible for the evil in nature, anymore than He is for the evil in man.

He who calmed the storm here will calm it forever, but until then we must live in a fallen world where evil has great power.

III. THE PICTURE OF THE DISCIPLES. FATHERS ARE TO TEACH US OBEDIENCE.

A. In obedience to Jesus the disciples found themselves in trouble. They were probably taken by surprise thinking that the Lord is with us, and so we certainly cannot run into danger.

It was by His command that we are here. But it just is not true that there is no danger in obedience to Jesus, or no danger when He is present.

Fathers are called to not only risk their lives, but lose their lives in obedience to Christ.

A missionary was once asked if he liked what he was doing, and he replied, "No, we do not like to live in filth and with disease all around, but Jesus died for these people, and we dare not let them perish because of danger." Following Jesus is not always a stroll through the garden.

If obedience was easy the great commission would have been fulfilled long ago.

The disciples could not understand when things got out of control. It had to be a terrible storm to frighten these old fishermen. They were filled with fear and unbelief, and they awoke Jesus accusing Him of not caring.

It was as if to say, "We have been fighting this storm for our lives, and you just sleep as if you didn't care whether we sink or not."

It is always hard for believers to see why they should suffer. If the disciples saw a boat full of Pharisees going down in the storm they would not question such a tragedy.

B. It is when we suffer while living in obedience that we question the love and care of Christ. Many charge Jesus with not caring when tragedy strikes them.

It is fortunate that many manage to hold on to their faith and later beg for forgiveness when they see how God works in all things for their good.

Fear can do strange things to people. There are natural and God-given fears such as fear of pain which teaches a child not to touch fire.

Everyone should fear to take foolish and unnecessary chances with their life. But there are many fears which arise in the mind, and over which we have no control, and they can make life miserable.

Fears tend to produce the very thing feared. Fear of failure usually causes failure.

In verse 40 Jesus tells us the cause for fear. It is a lack of faith. When faith fails fear flourishes.

**C. Fear paralyzes faith so that it cannot work.
Fortunately, the disciples had nowhere else to turn, and so they came to Jesus.**

When Jesus reveals Himself as capable of handling even the forces of nature they are amazed. Here He was sleeping, and now He speaks and nature obeys His voice.

Verse 41 says they feared greatly. Did they go from bad to worse? No, their fear at first was known as *dolos* in the Greek, and it means cowardly fear, but this second fear is *fobos*, and it means great reverence, or filled with awe.

They were awakened to the fact that a greater power than man knows anything about was just demonstrated. They were not able to grasp the reality that Jesus was in fact, God.

The lesson was learned, and they stood in fear of the Lord, that fear which is the beginning of wisdom. It is that fear which drives out false fears. A proper fear of God will eliminate the fear of the world.

A story is told of two boys, and one is saying to the other, "Go ahead and take the apples off the tree. Your father will not hurt you." The other boy responded, "I know, but if I disobey I will hurt him."

It is true faith when we fear, not just being hurt, but hurting our heavenly Father. This is a godly fear which arises out of faith and says, "I would rather perish in the storm with Jesus than be safe on land without Him."

The man who fears God need not fear anything else, for nothing in all creation can separate him from the love of God. This was an important experience in bringing the disciples to that point.

This picture closes with them asking the question which all must ask and answer: What manner of man is this? His power demands that the answer be, He was the Son of God.

III. THE PICTURE OF THE OTHER SHIPS. WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

In verse 36 we see there were other ships in the storm. They no doubt contained some of the people he had been speaking to on shore.

Jesus could not escape for people followed Him everywhere. Here they were as a very small part of the picture. They had nothing to do with what happened.

A. So why would such a detail be included in the Word of God? There is a significant teaching here by implication. They profited by the experience of the disciples.

They also were spared because of the calming of the storm. They may not have even known what happened, but it was a blessing to them.

There are many blessings that Jesus gives to His church that are a blessing to society all around them, even though they do not recognize the giver of the blessing.

This is typical with the work of Christ. When He blesses He does not stop with His own, but sends rain on the just and the unjust.

In America where we have so many freedoms and rights because of the Christian influence, unbelievers do not even know why they have them, and that many of our blessings are the result of the teaching of Christ. His blessings overflow, and there is truly a wideness in God's mercy.

When we trust in Christ and allow His power to still the storms in us, there should be an overflowing benefit to all those around us.

And for our earthly fathers, what great strength and benefit we all have in following the example set by Christ. My heart breaks for the fathers who are trying to raise kids without Christ.

Amen? Let us pray...