

**“In We God Trust”**  
**Mark 5:21-43**  
**Preached by Rev Dr. Harry Cahill**  
**Babcock Presbyterian Church**  
**Father’s Day, Sunday, June 21, 2009**

Let’s begin by stating the obvious: Jesus calming the storm totally contradicts rational thinking. As children of the Enlightenment and students of the scientific method we’d all agree the universe is governed by set natural laws.

Therefore, Moses’ parting the Red Sea had to be of an earthquake or an unusually low tide. A perfectly respectable, rational explanation. Jesus fed the five thousand with only five loaves and two fish because his act of generosity started a chain reaction of people sharing food with people who had none. Another rational explanation.

Maybe these rational explanations help some people embrace the Christian faith but let’s never forget God can do whatever he wants, even contradict the laws of nature he first set into motion when he said, “Let there be light.”

So Mark’s story of Jesus’ calming the waters one dark and stormy night is actually an affirmation of God’s absolute power over the natural world. God revealing himself to be totally capable of suspending the laws of nature as easily as you change TV channels with your remote control, the big difference being God doesn’t need the remote, he does it all by himself.

So, whenever you read or hear one of these miracle stories, instead of explaining them away maybe we should just be awed and bowed down before that mysterious, immeasurable Presence who rules the world with truth and grace.

Having said all that, let’s now take a closer look at Mark’s story of Jesus stilling the storm.

Jesus just finished his inaugural preaching tour of Galilee where he proclaimed the sudden arrival of God’s Kingdom, healed paralytics and lepers, confronted the leaders of the religious establishment and began the process of building a community of disciples who would soon go out on their own and minister in his name.

Not surprisingly, the rumor mill was buzzing, “Who is this man who welcomes outsiders and kicks out demons? Is he John the Baptist, raised from the dead, or Elijah or one of the prophets?”

The disciples counted their good fortune. They hitched themselves to a star just beginning to soar into the heavens. Pretty good for a bunch of guys who only recently were simple fishermen and a hated tax collector.

But it all wasn't fun and games being disciples. They had to be unnerved when watching Jesus spar with the scribes and Pharisees, but since Jesus never surrendered his authority, that helped them feel even more comfortable and secure. But in a matter of hours they would become totally confused and terrified when they saw Jesus not just establish his authority over human adversaries, but even over the laws of nature.

“On that day when evening had come, Jesus said to them, “Let's go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat just as he was...” (Mark 5:35-36)

Mark quickly sets the stage. After a long day of teaching and healing Jesus decided it was time to cross the lake. That phrase “they took him with them in the boat just as he was,” implies Jesus was exhausted and since they were professional sailors they could navigate the boat to the other side like they did countless times before.

But their three-hour tour was immediately interrupted when the weather started getting rough and the tiny ship was tossed but without the courage of a fearless crew the boat was almost lost.

And what was Jesus doing during the storm? He was sleeping! How could Jesus do that? Was he so exhausted it took the cries and pleas of his disciples to wake him up?

Or consider this: maybe Jesus slept like a baby because his disciples were seasoned sailors.

Before Elisabeth got her license and was still learning to drive, whenever I took her out on the road and let her get behind the wheel even though I was sitting on the passenger side, my foot would occasionally hit an imaginary brake because I was nervous. Now, when Elisabeth drives on long trips, I can put my seat back and fall asleep, totally confident we'll arrive home safe and sound.

Likewise, Jesus fell asleep without hesitation because he trusted his disciples with his life. Maybe this should tell us something. God's faith in us is more important than our faith in ourselves, even our faith in God.

This sermon's title play on our national motto, “In We God Trusts,” should get you thinking... God created you with everything you need, the right balance of natural talents and spiritual gifts, the ability to be creative, a healthy dose of fear and a whole lot more to lead a successful and significant life. What's more God, who has authority even over the wind and the waves, wants to use you to make all things work together for good even when you find yourself being overwhelmed and out maneuvered by your problems.

How do you think your life would be different if you could trust that God's trusts you? Think about that for a moment, then picture Jesus sleeping soundly the next time you find yourself being swamped because Jesus believes in you.

Yes, trusting God is important and trusting in yourself is necessary, but ultimately, what makes it all work is God trusting you to accomplish the purpose you were born to make happen.

Then why doesn't it always work out according to plan?

Mark continued, "...and they (the disciples) woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' Jesus then woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace. Be still!' Then the winds ceased and there was a dead calm. He then said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?'" (Mark 5:38-41)

The Greek word for fear in Mark 4:40 can be translated to mean a cowardly fear.

Let's be honest, fear is a natural emotion that warns against danger. Soldiers who won the Congressional Medal of Honor would be the first to admit they were afraid when they went above and beyond the call of duty. They'd be fools not to be. That's why I said earlier God even gives us a healthy dose of fear. But when your fears keep you from being loyal and true, that's when fear becomes cowardly.

When Peter denied Jesus three times, he played the coward. That's why Peter wept bitterly when the cock crowed the second time. He was ashamed.

"Why are you acting like cowards? Don't you trust me yet?"

Of course the disciples were still a long way from accepting God trusted them to be and do their best, but Jesus was patient. He knew they'd continue to let him down, especially on Good Friday, but he didn't fire them. Instead he put up with them because he knew the time was coming when his trust in them would be vindicated.

Next time you question whether or not your trust in God is adequate, maybe the question should be "is God's trust in you enough to overcome your fears and be the man or woman God created you to be?" And if you listen hard enough, you'll hear Jesus answer, "Yes, I trust you with my life."

The story is told after Jesus ascended into heaven he was talking with Michael the Archangel. He asked Jesus, "Now that you're back up here, what's the plan to spread your gospel to the four corners of the world?"

Jesus replied, "I've given that responsibility to my disciples."

Michael was shocked. "You're trusting them to finish the job? How could you after they failed you so many times? Surely you have a Plan B!"

Jesus answered, "There is no Plan B."

It’s true, as amazing as it sounds “In We God Trusts.” God sees something in each of us that gives him the confidence to believe we can overcome our fears, overcome our challenges and overcome the world.

We began by affirming God’s absolute power over creation. God trusts us to be and do our best even in the most dangerous situations.

Sure, we are still sinners, we will continue to hesitate and fail, but as our confidence in God’s trust in us grows, so will our confidence in ourselves.

I especially like the quotation on this morning’s bulletin cover: “The bravery of God in trusting us! It’s a tremendously risky thing to do!”

Next time you find yourself nearly swamped on a dark and stormy night remember your God is God and to be trusted is the greatest compliment God can give you.