

Peace in Your Whirlwind

Job 38:1-11 and Mark 4:35-41

I don't have to tell you life can get very difficult:

Aging: pain in legs, and back, shoulders, stronger glasses, hearing aids, oxygen

Losses: death of beloved spouses, parents, children

The news is depressing: A nation that kills 3000 preborn babies and scars their mothers for life. A culture that puts personal sexual satisfaction above life-long commitment to the children that come from it. Home grown terrorists, crazy people who kill innocent people,

Imagine you are an experienced fisherman in that boat with Jesus:

You have seen fierce wind storms come up suddenly as cold air from 9000 foot Mount Hermon hits the warm air over Lake Galilee 700 feet below sea level.

You respect their power and threat. You know of families of fishermen like you who were drowned in those storms.

You've always been able to get to shore away from storms in the past, but this time you are going to have to fight it head on, and you know may not be able to make it. Everyone is going to have to do his part to make sure the wind doesn't break the mast and put a hole in the boat. Some are going to have to row like their life depended on it - because it does. The boat has to avoid getting tossed sideways where waves can swamp it. Others are going to have to bail water like their lives depended on it because they do!

All the while you can bet everyone, like you are, is praying to Almighty God for mercy and protection.

You are shocked and angered that Jesus your rabbi and leader is sleeping on a cushion in the stern and he's the one who is the **expert** on the ways of God! Why isn't **he** doing something to help? Is he just going to let everyone be drowned without trying to help fight the wind and waves? You shake him and yell, "WAKE UP JESUS! DON'T YOU CARE THAT WE ARE GOING TO DIE?"

Can you put yourself in **Job's** place. A good and Godly person. Yet God lets you lose your income, all your children are killed by a fierce windstorm, your relatives all avoid you. You get stricken with a painful disease, broken financially, socially, and physically, and even your wife criticized you for your faith in God saying, "Job, curse your God and just give up and die!" I hope I never get in that place. I know that the last years of life usually get very very difficult. If you end up without money as Job did, and without loving family as Job did, and understanding friends as Job did, those years can seem unbearable.

Do you know what Job did? He loved God but he wanted to know **why** God was letting this happen to him.

(From hind sight, we know God was allowing this battering by Satan to **strengthen** and **save** Job, and to strengthen and save **all** who read Job's story or who hear it preached to them.)

Job 1:13-22(ESV) Now there was a day when his [Job's] sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The **oxen** were plowing and the **donkeys** feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and

burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “The Chaldeans formed three groups and made a raid on the **camels** and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you.”

Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and **fell on the ground** and worshiped. And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.”

Wow! If you were in Job's place would you have accepted your losses so faithfully?

Maybe you would for a time, but Job's loss of his children was a deep, deep, loss. He was so depressed he fell to the ground and didn't move for a week! His so called "friends" with their misunderstandings of God, sat with him until finally he began to speak his depression. Listen:

Job 2:13-3:2(ESV)

[His Friends] sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

After this Job opened his mouth and **cursed the day of his birth**.

And Job said:

- “Why did I not **die** at birth, come out from the womb and **expire**?
- Or why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light?
- “Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul,
- Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in?

Deep grief tempts us to get angry and question God. Also when the "God" we have believed in is not **the God of the Bible** but the god of our own minds" - a much smaller god - a god that looks like us, we see horrible evil like the shooting of those nine Christians in their church, studying the bible - and we ask "**Why** did you let this happen God?" I don't understand! This doesn't make sense to me. **I** wouldn't have let this happen for **any** reason! **Don't you care** that people were perishing? **Don't you care**, Jesus? We think just like Jesus' disciples who saw him sleeping in the middle of that evil, deadly windstorm surrounding their little boat!

Most of the book is taken up with Job and his criticizing friends carry on with their misunderstandings of Why God let this horrible evil happen to Job.

Job 9:16-17(ESV)

In chapter 9 Job carries on with his negative view of God saying, "If I summoned him and he answered me, I would **not** believe that he was **listening** to my voice. **For he crushes me with a tempest**..." Job complains that God would **crush** him like a house under a tornado if he were even able to ask God his "Why" questions face to face.

This kind of bitterness goes on and on until the 38th. chapter and God finally gets a chance to speak to them. And guess how God's voice, His living Word, the 2nd person of the Trinity, Jesus before he became a human speaks -- He speaks out of a **TEMPEST** - a powerful, threatening, huge **whirlwind**, that rages -- but doesn't hurt Job.

1 Then the LORD answered Job **out of the whirlwind** and said: 2“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Dress for action like a man; **I** will question **you**, and **you** make it known to me.

4“**Where** were **you** when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

5 **Who** determined its measurements—surely you know! Or **who** stretched the line upon it?

6 On what were its bases sunk, or **who** laid its cornerstone, 7when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? 8“Or **who** shut in the **sea** with doors when it burst out from the womb, 9 when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, 10 and **prescribed limits** for it and set **bars and doors**, 11 and said, ‘**Thus far shall you come, and no farther**, and here shall your proud waves be **stayed**’?

Yahweh's (Jesus') confrontation is a **loving, gracious** response to Job’s many questions. Instead of answering Job’s specific questions, the Lord floods Job with further questions to demonstrate He is **far greater** than Job thinks he is and his design and arrangement of things in the universe is always aimed at keeping things **working together for good** to those who trust in His directions and promises in the midst of things they can't understand.

People who don't know the Bible or have never read Job often have questions about why the Bible doesn't speak about the dinosaurs. To help Job understand that He is able to do things that Job can't imagine, **God** tells him that he has control of the largest dinosaurs. He doesn't use the **word** because it wasn't invented until the 1800s. Listen:

15“Behold, **Behemoth**, which **I made** as I made you; he eats grass like an ox. 16 Behold, his strength in his loins, and his power in the muscles of his belly. 17 He makes his tail stiff like a cedar; 12“I will not keep silence concerning his limbs, or his mighty strength, or his goodly frame. 13 Who can strip off his outer garment? Who would come **near** him with a **bridle**? 14Who can open the doors of his face? Around his teeth is terror. 15 His back is made of rows of shields,

25 When he raises himself up the mighty are **afraid**; at the **crashing** they are **beside** themselves. 26 Though the sword **reaches** him, it does not **avail**, nor the spear, the dart, or the javelin. 27 He counts **iron** as **straw**,

33 On earth there is not his like, a creature without fear. 34 He sees everything that is high; he is **king** over all the sons of pride.”

When Yahweh [Jesus] finished questioning Job, Job **repents** of his sin of questioning God's wise care for him this way: "3Then Job answered the LORD and said: 4“Behold, I am of **small** account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further.”

42:3 **I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know, therefore I despise myself, and **repent** in dust and ashes.”**

A similar awe struck response came from the disciples when they heard Jesus speak to the wind "Peace! Be still!" and when they **saw** that the wind stopped and the waves dropped not **gradually** but **instantly!** "And the wind ceased, and there was great calm." ... "And they were filled with **great fear** and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the **wind** and the **sea** obey him?"

And they must have been thinking, "He used His **powerful words** to protect us! He **does** care for us!"

And the day would come when they would see just how much Jesus does care for people who don't deserve such care! They would see him who controls the wind and the sea hanging ripped open by whips, bruised by fists, bleeding from nails and thorns, -- and know he had power to get away -- but instead one of them would hear him pray "Father forgive them." A prayer not just for his crucifiers, but for **all** who crucify him by **thinking they know better** how to love and protect people.

We, like Job, question God's ways, and doubt his love for us and walk away from Jesus.

We are like the woman in Thursday's daily devotion from the Lutheran Hour who took a box that had belonged to her deceased husband. It had cluttered up her garage so she took it to a recycling center and left without giving her name because she didn't think the box was worth anything when in fact it was worth \$200,000 because it contained one of the first few Apple computers that Steve Jobs personally built. --We walk away from Jesus not thinking he is valuable for our lives for all kinds of reasons such as:

- Some think the Lord had let them down in a crisis.
- Others feel that being saved by faith in Christ alone was unacceptable.
- There have been those who were perturbed at some fellow believers, and
- others who held the Savior's story of salvation was a fairy tale, which should be reserved for little children.

Whatever the reason, they **thought they knew better than God** and walked away from the Savior. They have turned their backs on the blood-bought salvation that Jesus lived, died and rose to give them. They have left behind something terribly valuable.

By coming to be with us and taking our self-idolatry, fear, and doubts, faithfully to the grave, Jesus has shown he is bigger, stronger, wiser, and most of all always working **for us** in the worst times of our lives! He speaks this word of "Peace! Be still!" in this book of the Bible, and in every one for us to hear and read day by day, and also in His weekly Divine Service to us through the pastor's "In the stead and by the command of Christ, I **forgive** you **all** your sin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

He speaks this peace out of the midst of the whirling windstorms when He serves it to us in **sermons**. He speaks this windstorm calming word of peace **in the bread and wine** that brings Him **into** our rocking boats each Lord's Day. He speaks His powerful protecting word of "Peace! Be Still!" when **you** at the beginning of His Divine Service make the Christian Peace Symbol - **the Cross** - over yourself and remember that despite your foolish efforts to make God answer to you, He has used peaceful **water** -Baptismal water to wrap you in His strong arms as his own dear child forever!

Peace! Be still!