

"In the Boat"

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

June 21, 2009

A mother was out walking with her 4 year old daughter. The child picked up something off the ground and started to put it into her mouth. The mother took it away and said "Don't do that!"

"Why not?" asked the child.

"Because it's on the ground," said her mother. "You don't know where it's been. It's dirty, and it's probably loaded with germs that could make you sick."

The child looked at her mother with total admiration and said, "Mommy, how do you know all this stuff? You're so smart."

The mother said, "All Moms know this stuff. It's on the Mom's Test. You have to know it or they don't let you be a Mom."

There was silence for a minute or so as the child thought this through. "Oh, I get it," she said at last. "And if you don't pass the test you have to be the Daddy?"

Happy Father's Day!

I am keenly aware that there is so much going on this weekend and that we must leave for the community wide worship in just a few minutes. The cities 125th Anniversary, the Bottineau County Fair, Father's Day, the blessing of two baptisms this morning - each event in and of itself would be enough excitement for the month for many people. Still I am so compelled by the scriptures and the world into which this world of God comes that no matter how much some were hoping to avoid a sermon this morning, I must preach even if it is a very brief sermon.

Jesus has been actively teaching the crowds of people that have come to hear him. He is tired and suggests that He and His disciples go across to the other side of the Sea of Galilee where they can get away and rest. He falls asleep in the boat and then a storm hits.

I suppose that it would be easy for us to say that with everything that is going on in our lives it is hard to really care too much about the story of a bunch of fishermen in a little boat in a storm 2000 years ago. But the fact of the matter is that the image of the boat has always been seen as a metaphor for the church. And no matter what

century we are living in, sudden storms appear and take us by surprise. Storms rage and toss us around so that we are filled with fear.

There is a great Rembrandt painting of this Biblical story entitled "The Storm on the Sea of Galilee." Rembrandt was a great artist but what makes this painting so remarkable is that, if you count the people on the boat you will notice that instead of 12 disciples and Jesus there is a fourteenth person. The extra person in the boat is Rembrandt himself. He has placed himself in the same boat. And that is exactly what we should do. We are in the boat - we are part of the church / the people of God. And that doesn't mean that storms will go around us. The boat is on the water and the wind blows where it will. Sometimes the storms rock the boat so badly that we are filled with fear.

I suspect that there are those who what to read this text and suggest that Jesus is obviously asleep at the switch when the storms come. But I would invite you to see this image as one which points us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Throughout history, we have often talked of death in terms of 'sleep' - Jesus slept the sleep of death but has been raised to life. The risen Jesus rides the waves with us and calls us to faith. The risen Jesus speaks words of calm and peace in our stormy situations while calling us to faith. And there is peace as the risen Christ confronts the storm.

It is just too easy to question and doubt God when storms rage and faith wavers. Job experienced it and God reminded him that He has always been in charge. God has set the boundaries for the waves of the sea - not to mention the foundations of the earth and the twinkling of the morning star. Trust God.

As you walk through the celebrations of Father's Day or 125th Anniversaries - Reunions or county fairs - know that even if storms come the boat is here and Jesus is in the boat risen and ready to call you to peace.

AMEN