

A Sermon preached by Lyn Jenkins

Calming of Storm

Psalm 107:23-30 Job 38: 1-11 Mark 4: 37- 39

This is the age of Reason – Miracles just do not happen!
 Not my words, but belief of many people today.
 But the opposite can also be said ---- Miracles DO happen. They happen to all who have the eye of faith – they happen in front of our very noses, but we can so easily choose to ignore them.

Perhaps the nature miracles of Jesus cause the most problems.
 But why should they?
 The Bible tells us that for God everything is possible.
 And if we truly believe that God is all powerful, that God in the beginning created the whole universe, that he is responsible for all creation, then why shouldn't Jesus, be able to have control over the wind and waves.

Our God is a wonderful God --- so wonderful that we often take for granted all the wonderful things he has done and still does.

We can marvel at the birth of a baby, at the stars in the sky, at the beauty of flowers.
 God's wonder is all around us.
 Miracles happen every day, but can only be seen with the eyes of faith.

Our first reading from Job can be read as a beautiful piece of poetry extolling God as the wonderful Creator.
 The writer emphasises that God was there at the beginning and was responsible for the heavens, the earth and the sea.

The Psalmist continues extolling the works of the Lord.
 The words could almost have been written about the incident in the Gospel.

READ PSALM vv 23 - 30

But there will still be those who will have difficulty in believing.

Darwin has been much in the news this year.

According to some he proved that God did not make the world.—Everything evolved.

The Theory of Evolution presents no problem for me – but that does not mean I think less of God. It does not cancel out God’s power.

In fact, I think that evolution makes God even more wonderful. He was not only responsible for creating the world in the first place, but he carries on with his work of creation continually.

So Darwin is no threat to Christian belief.

Let us look at the gospel story.

Picture the scene.

Jesus is probably needing a break having spent some time teaching the people, so he suggests to his disciples that they cross over the lake. And Jesus falls asleep. Then suddenly this great gale arises and huge waves come over into the boat. But Jesus sleeps through it. We can imagine how the disciples must have felt – they would be trying as hard as they could to prevent the boat from sinking – and there was Jesus fast asleep. They weren’t very impressed. They woke Jesus up and reprimanded him
“Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

Jesus wakes up and immediately rebukes the wind and said to the sea
“Peace! Be still”

And there was a dead calm.

Sailors know and experience many storms at sea.’. Some of these storms could be very dramatic, others quite frightening. The disciples of Jesus were terrified as they were afraid they would die. But Jesus is there with them in the storm and knowing how they felt said those words: *‘Peace. Be still’*. And there was calm

We do not know how it took place.

We cannot explain it. – neither do we need to.

What I find more important is that Jesus calms the storm in our hearts.

“Peace be still”

We tend to think of the word peace in a purely negative way – opposite of war – absence of worry, trouble, hardship, distress.

But that is only part of the meaning.

Hebrew Shalom -- Peace, is a positive word.

It conveys a sense of wholeness, forgiveness, of unity within oneself, with others and with God.

Peace conveys stillness, tranquillity --- a feeling of complete contentment, deep happiness.

When we are at peace, we can cope with whatever should come our way for the Peace of the Lord gives us strength, comfort and reassurance.

The Christian peace is something quite independent of outward circumstances.

Everything in a worldly sense may be going wrong, but we can still be at peace if we experience the peace of Christ.

People may live in luxury, have the finest of houses, biggest of bank balances – but they have no peace.

Others may be starving, in prison, suffering from some ghastly disease, dying – and yet be at peace.

For there is only one true source of peace, and that comes from God and from doing the will of God.

God's peace was and is a gift.

In John 14 Jesus speaks of this gift of peace – *'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you'*. – so Jesus meant his gift of peace to be much more than worldly peace.

Peace which the world offers is the peace of escape, the peace which comes from the avoidance of trouble and from refusing to face up to things.

Jesus offers the peace of victory.

In the sea of life there are many storms of one sort or another. At times life goes along smoothly and calmly, but at other times problems crop up and it can be difficult to know how to cope.

The death of a loved one can be a major storm in the midst of life. One can feel lost and bewildered, not knowing where to turn.

'Let not your hearts be troubled', Jesus said. *'Trust in God and trust in me.'*

But Jesus is always there in the midst of us. And he is the one who will restore peace and calm to our troubled hearts.

So just as the disciples were told to trust, we, too, must trust ----- trust that the Lord Jesus will help us through.

At times life can throw many troubles at us.

We can find it difficult to cope with the normal things of life – our whole world may be falling apart and we don't know where to turn. As Jesus was sleeping in the boat, we may feel he has gone to sleep and is not bothered about us.

But he is waiting for us to turn to him.
He tells us to listen to his words of Peace. – *Peace. Be still.*

We, who are still in the storms of life, need not be afraid. For the Lord will help us in all our troubles.
He is always with and will be close to comfort and strengthen us.

So the miracle of the Calming of the Storm becomes a kind of Parable, but a Parable with a difference.
For the storm on the lake really happened.
But we can compare the physical storm with the troubles that blow up from time to time in our daily lives.
And just as Jesus calming the storm, gave reassurance to the disciples, he will calm our troubled hearts and minds and fill us with his wonderful peace.