

Worship at home – 20th June 2021

Key Scriptures: Mark 4:35-41

Key Themes:

Jesus calms the storm

Call to Worship:

God of our ups and downs, we come together in your name with concern in our hearts and question in our minds, with troubles in our lives and fears for our world. We come trusting that you never give up on us, that you never abandon us, never dismiss us. For you are a God of love, of peace, of power – you are our God.

Hymn: Eternal Father, strong to save

Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:

*O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.*

O Christ, whose voice the waters heard
and hushed their raging at thy word,
who walkedst on the foaming deep,
and calm amid the storm didst sleep;

*O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.*

Most Holy Spirit, who didst brood
upon the chaos dark and rude,
and bid its angry tumult cease,
and give, for wild confusion, peace:

*O hear us when we cry to thee
for those in peril on the sea.*

O Trinity of love and power,
our brethren shield in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect them wheresoe'er they go;

*And ever let there rise to thee
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.*

William Whiting (1825-1878)

Prayers: Adoration:

Eternal God, we praise and adore you for all that you are:

For being bigger than even our biggest questions;

For caring more than we can fully comprehend. We praise and adore you

For your strength and your silence; for your power and your peace.

We praise and adore you, for being in control and yet not controlling;

For being in the storms and beyond them.
We praise and adore you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we praise you for ever.
Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

God of our questions and our struggles, when we too quickly mistake silence for indifference:

Forgive and help us.

When the voice of our own needs silences the voice of others;

Forgive and help us.

When we abandon others in their storm and watch safely from the shore:

Forgive us and help us.

When we lose faith because things get tough:

Forgive and help us.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness:

Lord Jesus, you do not let us sink when our faith is going under. You do not let our boats overturn when the sea of our life gets rough. You do not let our questions swamp us or our failures destroy us. Rather, you forgive us, you save us, you encourage, challenge and calm us – and for this we are thankful.
Amen.

Psalm 107, 1-3, 23-32

107 “Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good;
his love is eternal!”

² Repeat these words in praise to the LORD,
all you whom he has saved.

He has rescued you from your enemies

³ and has brought you back from foreign countries,
from east and west, from north and south.^[a]

²³ Some sailed over the ocean in ships,
earning their living on the seas.

²⁴ They saw what the LORD can do,
his wonderful acts on the seas.

²⁵ He commanded, and a mighty wind began to blow
and stirred up the waves.

²⁶ The ships were lifted high in the air
and plunged down into the depths.

In such danger the sailors lost their courage;

²⁷ they stumbled and staggered like drunks—
all their skill was useless.

²⁸ Then in their trouble they called to the LORD,
and he saved them from their distress.

²⁹ He calmed the raging storm,
and the waves became quiet.

³⁰ They were glad because of the calm,
and he brought them safe to the port they wanted.

³¹ They must thank the LORD for his constant love,
for the wonderful things he did for them.

³² They must proclaim his greatness in the assembly of the people
and praise him before the council of the leaders.

Reading: Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus Calms a Storm

35 On the evening of that same day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." 36 So they left the crowd; the disciples got into the boat in which Jesus was already sitting, and they took him with them. Other boats were there too. 37 Suddenly a strong wind blew up, and the waves began to spill over into the boat, so that it was about to fill with water. 38 Jesus was in the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The disciples woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?"

39 Jesus stood up and commanded the wind, "Be quiet!" and he said to the waves, "Be still!" The wind died down, and there was a great calm. 40 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Why are you frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

41 But they were terribly afraid and began to say to one another, "Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Meditation: Waves – be still – the voice of Andrew

The crowds had been pressing us for days. Hemming us in, almost to the point of suffocation. I was tired, and beginning to wonder if I should have stayed a fisherman. Life was so much easier then, I am not sure if I am really cut out to be a revolutionary, or even a disciple.

He arrived, out of what seemed like nowhere. He was smart, charismatic, with a real sense of awe about him. He sucked us in, like bees to a honey pot. We got caught up in the whirlwind, and before long we were traipsing up and down the the country hanging on his every word.

People knew of our arrival in advance of our appearance, and Jesus was the hot topic in town, in every town. The days of teaching and preaching were long, but he never complained, never got angry or frustrated. Not with the masses anyway. Maybe with us from time to time, and with those that should have known better, but not with them. They were like flocks who had lost their shepherd, and he would gather them in, he said.

One day, as the evening drew in, he reached for refuge in us. He suggested that we took a break, and boarded a boat for the other side of the lake. We borrowed a wooden vessel and set out, leaving the multitudes behind for the solitude of the water. It lapped gently at the sides, embracing us, luring our master into a deep and peaceful sleep.

Nearing the centre of the lake, our fortunes changed. The wind whipped the quiet waters into a frenzy. They clawed at the boat, breaching its defences and swamping the decks, sending us all into panic. As the breakers hit, the hull filled with water and most of us through we were done for.

While the storm raged round us, Jesus slept soundly in the back, he did not even stir. “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re all going to drown?” Someone shouted shaking him out of his slumber. He awoke, stood up, rebuked the wind and told the waves to “Be still”. Suddenly, there was a great calm, the tempest was struck dumb, by its creator. Order had been restored at brink of chaos.

He looked at each one of us in turn. Not with anger, just with disappointment in his eyes, “Why were you so afraid” he asked? “Do you still have no faith?” Now, we were even more terrified than before, who was this man, that even the wind and the wave obeyed him?

As time rolled on, we would remember the events of that day, as dark clouds gathered around him, and torrents of hatred could not be stemmed. As we, his friends and followers, took flight again, leaving him to stand alone, to face judgement and death. However, he promised us then and now, that he would never abandon us, that our gales would be hushes and our swells defeated, as long as we held firm to him. So, let the world’s storm swell, for in him there will always be a safe haven.

Reflection:

- The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by hills, except for a valley dip at one end, which can act like a funnel for the wind.
- This means that the water can go from glassy calm to choppy white horses very quickly, as the wind whips up the water.
- As seasoned fisherman, this will not have been the first time that the disciples have experienced this phenomenon, but this time it was particularly severe.
- The question the disciples ask Jesus is not a question of theology.
- They are not asking him to do something, they perhaps only want him to stop napping and help baling.
- But Jesus meets their question with a word that stills the raging storm.
- Then he asks them “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”
- Jesus turns the tables again, and I guess the miracle scares the friends more than the storm itself.
- For who was this man that can speak calm and even the wind and waves obey him.
- Perhaps many of us has experienced storms in our lives.
- Times when it feels like everything is closing in around us and we are being pulled under the waves.
- This is the point when the disciples wake Jesus up.
- And we are invited to do the same.
- In the midst of our trial and tribulation when the dark clouds are beginning to gather, it is then that we as followers of Christ can reach out to him.
- It is then that we can turn to him and allow him to speak into the storms that are set to derail us and can help us to discover a safe haven in Him.
- Where are your storms today?
- Will you reach out to Jesus who not only claimed the seas but created them.
- Will you allow him to become your safe haven so that you can find rest and a place to call home.
- A place where you are loved and accepted for who you are, warts and all.

- A place where Jesus is King and hope is there for the taking.
Amen.

Intercessions:

Lord God,

When the storms of life surround us and seem as though they will overpower us, remind you that you still the storms on the lake and you can still those of our souls.

We hold before you those who are experiencing Storms.

- Those in Governments – trying to hold people together
- Those in our NHS – pushed to the limits with Covid-19
- Those in the teaching profession – trying to juggle all the restrictions and guidance.
- Those in the hospitality industry – how have lost income and momentum.
- Those who are sick – as they wait to see what lies ahead.
- Those who are dying – as they struggle with their diagnosis.
- Those who are bereaved – as they walk through the shadow of death.
- Those who are representatives of the Methodist Conference - as they meet together to discuss the “God In Love Unites Us” report.

We continue to pray for:

Sarah and Brain Margetts – Dalwood

Gill and Geoff Nicholas – Axminster.

Amen

Hymn: Will your anchor hold in the storms of life

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

It is safely moored, 'twill the storm withstand,
For 'tis well secured by the Saviour's hand;
And the cables passed from His heart to mine,
Can defy the blast, through strength divine.

It will firmly hold in the straits of fear,
When the breakers have told the reef is near;
Though the tempest rave and the wild winds blow,
Not an angry wave shall our bark o'erflow.

It will surely hold in the floods of death,
When the waters cold chill our latest breath;
On the rising tide it can never fail,
While our hopes abide within the veil.

Priscilla Jane Owens (1829-1907)

Blessing:

Go in peace.

May the whisper of God's wisdom go with you today and remain with you and those
you love now and forever more.

Amen