TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor Opening Prayer by: Robert Ward
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#716 Sing to Me of Heaven
#431 Break Thou the Bread of Life

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#313 The Old Rugged Cross

Communion Devotional by: Bobby Rader
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#867 To Canaan's Land I'm On My Way
Sermon: "Faith Works"
Acts1:12-14

#650 Send the Light
#957 This World Is Not My Home
Closing Prayer by: River Lucy

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet tonight. Ken Coleman's group will meet at the building at 5:00 p.m. If you have signed up and not been contacted, get with Bryant or one of the Elders.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Feb. 5, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

When Upon Life's Billows…

Storms have been in the news a great deal in recent weeks. Thankfully here, we have just had to deal with unrelenting rains for several days. But only a few miles away, it was not long ago that a dangerous tornado ripped through parts of Greater Houston. And this past week, a bit further away but still close to home, much of the state experienced ice that caused tremendous damage.

These storms got me thinking about a familiar story in **Mark 4.** It had been a busy day in the life of Jesus. It began with the Pharisees accusing him of being in league with Beelzebul. Then his family had basically tried to kidnap him and take him back to Nazareth, because they thought he was nuts. He left the house they were crowding around and went down by the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where he began to teach the multitude in parables. They were so vast that he ultimately got into a boat and taught the rest of the day from it. Finally, as evening approached, Jesus gave the order to pull out: "*Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.* **(Mk 4:35-36)**

There's a sense of urgency indicated here. Maybe Jesus was so tired that he had hit a wall. The shadows were getting longer as dusk settled across the land. He is weary and worn at the end of a long, hard day. Mark says they took him just as he was. That means with no extra baggage, without even an extra cloak. He makes his way to the stern, where he lies down in the broad seat there. He rests his head on a piece of sailcloth or a coil of rope or whatever was handy. And almost immediately, he falls asleep.

One of the disciples gives the boat a shove down the gravely beach, leaping in when the boat was in deeper water. The horizontal sail is hoisted. They set course for the dimly lit hills on the eastern shore, some five miles away. It is a perfect night: the stars shine brightly, the soft wind fills out the sail. They move slowly across the calm water, surrounded by the other little boats.

And then suddenly—without warning—everything changed.

The sea of Galilee lies in a basin 600 feet below the Mediterranean. Colder wind rushes down from the mountains and uplands, roaring down through the gorges like a funnel. When that colder air meets the warmer air in the sea basin, there is convulsion and commotion. That's what happened this night.

Consider that Peter, Andrew, and others were not novices, but seasoned navigators. Yet before they could make any adjustments, the storm is upon them: the sail cracks like a rifle shot, the seas rage, the winds roar, and on every side the great waves rush in, smashing against the sides of the tiny sheep and sweeping over the deck. And despite their experience, the disciples were all frightened. This must have been some kind of storm!

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Susan McCain

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister meeting Monday, Feb. 6th at 6:30 p.m..

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Feb. 7th at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will be having a Valentines party on Tuesday, Feb 14 at 6:00. Bring your husbands favorite dish or your favorite dish and come for a sweet party and games. Sign up please on sheet on the bulletin board

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
Office Phone Number (936) 336-2213; Fax (936) 334-8280;
Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737
Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

And yet, Jesus slept through it—interestingly, the only time we find Jesus portrayed as sleeping in the gospel accounts. We see him walking, resting, eating, drinking—but this is the only time we find him sleeping. That is not coincidental: the wind and the waves are fearsome to the disciples, but they are only white noise to the one who commands them.

This voyage across the lake had been undertaken at Jesus command, and the disciples had responded in unquestioning faith and obedience. But that only makes the coming of the storm harder to understand. And how can Jesus be so relaxed in this moment? Finally, they can stand it no longer; they wake him and cry out, "*Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"* **(v. 38)** There's more than a hint of reproach in that question. Why had he allowed them to enter this situation in the first place? Jonah's storm had been a punishment for disobedience. But they had obeyed! This made no sense!

We remember what Jesus did in response. Picture him in your mind, standing up majestically in the ship. He speaks to the elements, rebuking the wind and the sea: the wind ceased to blow, and the waves fell flat. A great calm ensued. And then he spoke to the disciples: *Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"* **(v. 40).**

Of course, the primary point of this story is that Jesus is the Lord of nature: even the wind and the seas obey him! But it has practical relevance to us, too. Because life has storms like this; often, they come upon us just as suddenly and unexpectedly as this one. For an example each and every one of us can relate to, remember just how abruptly all of our lives changed just about 3 years ago due to COVID—and how we are STILL dealing with the consequences. And that's to say nothing of the personal storms each of us face. The storms of life have a way of cutting us down to size. After that initial blow, we are left stunned; we wonder what has hit us, and it shakes us to our very core.

But the same Jesus who stilled the storm that night rules over our lives. As this story demonstrates, he is the Lord of the universe. Like the disciples, we are often afraid. We might not understand why the storm has come; we might even wonder why God has led us into it. But whatever the storm, Jesus can calm it.

His sleep here not only shows his natural weariness; it also demonstrates his faith in the face of adversity. Fear and faith are mutually exclusive in Scripture. It was a lack of faith that caused the 12 to feel they would drown, and so it was for lack of faith they were rebuked. But no command is more often reiterated in Scripture than *fear not.*

That is the message that Jesus speaks to us today: rather than being afraid, we need to trust in him. In life's storms, we need to do as the disciples did. We must call on Jesus. And we can rest assured that he will calm the storm.

Bryant Perkins