

Sunday 20th June

When we look at a picture or a painting of the sea, very rarely are they as tumultuous as this scene. These pictures of storm are rarely what modern people, like ourselves, use to decorate the walls in our home. Indeed, even when we consider this church of St Peter as an upside-down boat, I often imagine a boat that gently rocks as we are guided through something not unlike our gentle bay at the end of the street. But the story of the stormy sea is not an uncommon one in the time in which Jesus is living.

“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” In today’s Gospel, our Lord quells the wind and waves, and speaks to the frightened disciples. He surely speaks with intention about this link between faith and fear. The opposite of faith is not doubt or unbelief. No, the opposite of faith is fear. Fear is like the wind and waves, seeking to bring us unsteady on our solid ground, our grounding in faith in Christ.

“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” These are urgent, impatient words directed to Jesus’ disciples. Christ brings directly the opposing forces of faith and fear to the forefront. Faith is a stance; a worldview, and how we stand in the face of uncertainty and fear makes the difference. In the midst of troubles, it is our response to reach up a hand to God and say, “Help!”

We learn of the authority with which Jesus addresses God’s creation. “The LORD has made himself known.” He simply and quietly rebukes the wind, then says to the sea, “Peace, be still.”

And the sea responds. This is the “Peace, be still,” with which Jesus addresses all those he knows and loves, and who know and love him. Christ brings and inspires us to extend this “Peace, be still,” to each other in love. Christ’s “Peace, be still,” remains with us as we live in relationship with God as new creations.

The apostle Paul expressed to the Corinthian church that, in Jesus, every one of God’s promises has been fulfilled. “Now is the day of salvation.” Nearly two thousand years later, Gospel musicians sing: “Find your ‘yes’ in him.” Whatever questions confront us, we can trust God to be our answer. Our relationship with God is made possible because of Jesus’ life among us, his dying, his rising again, his ascension, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Human beings can now live in relationship to God by living in relationship to a human being who is God. And, existing in that relationship, bound to and by it, in prayerful conversation with Jesus, we become new. No longer human beings alone, but human beings in relationship with God. We become witness to new life, to a new and available wholeness that before seemed far away. All hardships, trials and storms appear less important in light of the cross, which re-creates and re-orders the world back toward God.

What are your objections? What are your questions? Which are the winds and waves you are fretting over? Who is this then, who calms the wind and sea, to you, right now? How is God’s grace breaking into the dramatic moments of storm, wind and waves?

Listen, and hear the voice who created and subdues the wind and waves in our own hearts saying “Peace, be still!” Hear God’s voice, know it, and respond to it. Discover, and call on, the one

who calms the sea. Live the new and restored life of relationship with God through Christ's saving death and resurrection.