



Dear Church Family,

I have recently been reflecting on the story of Jesus calming the wind and the sea in Mark 4:35-41. We preachers tend to like this passage because almost everyone can relate to a storm. We all have been there. Everything in life is just fine and things are comfortable and calm. Troubles are trivial, manageable and easily forgotten. However, without warning trouble begins to stir on the horizon greater. What that trouble looks like is different for each of us. A phone call with bad news, a diagnosis, or perhaps an accident happens. Life seems to be caught up in a storm that we cannot see our way out of. So we read that as Jesus and the disciples were traveling by boat a great windstorm arose. The waves beat against the boat so much that the boat was already being swamped. Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. Imagine being on that boat, at the mercy of every massive swell and wave. As the boat is tossed about it is no more than a scrap of wood in a great sea. The boat rises, lifted high, then plummet down only to be caught up in the swell of another wave. The disciples cried out to Jesus, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Teacher don't you care? What a striking question. A question that is being asked all over our world at this very moment and here after the recent hurricanes Florence and Michael. "Do you not care that we are perishing." Just watch the news one evening and you might find yourself saying, "Lord, do you not care?" "Where is your justice, your power to prevail?" "Do you not care we are perishing?" All we want is the very same thing the disciples wanted, we want peace. We want our prayers to rouse the God we often believe is asleep somewhere, the God who has the power to stop the chaos, and order our world. We look on and feel as though that our world is being swamped with bad news and misguided people. We long for Christ to wake up and command all that threatens us to "be still." We often believe that if our faith is strong enough then God will answer. It is often believed that this passage suggests that very thing, after all Jesus rebukes the disciples saying, "Have you still no faith?" But that is not what Jesus is saying. We fixate on the power of Christ that can still raging seas because for us it is impossible. We miss the greater point. Jesus did not rebuke the disciples because they lacked faith in his power. Jesus rebuked the disciples because they still questioned whether or not he cared for them. Isn't that the more difficult thing to believe? We are awed in the same way as the disciples, "who is this that the wind and seas obey him?" Perhaps, from our side of the timeline, knowing what we know of Jesus in his life death and resurrection...perhaps a more fitting thing to say is....who was that man that loved us so much, that despite our failures and sin, died for us, rose for us, and remains **with us so that we might have life?** We struggle to believe that we can make a difference. We watch from a distance pointing out the problems yet we all fail to step out of our excuses. Instead, we could imagine new and creative responses. If the question arises, "What can I do?" I have a few suggestions. First, be witnesses of the truth of God's love. Don't bring chaos to chaos but be peacemakers. Be a balm to those who suffer. Seek reconciliation and heal with love and compassion. Be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. Pray without ceasing and do not cease to act, to serve and to do whatever you can to build up, serve, lift, shine on, and bless those in the world who need Jesus' love and care.

Grace and Peace,
Natasha

Next Week's Daily Bible Readings

<i>Growing with God's Word and Pursuing Justice and Peace</i>					
			Wednesday	October 17	Isaiah 32:1-20
Sunday	October 14	Isaiah 24:1-23	Thursday	October 18	Isaiah 33: 1-24
Monday	October 15	Isaiah 29: 9-24	Friday	October 19	Isaiah 56: 1-12
Tuesday	October 16	Isaiah 30: 8-26	Saturday	October 20	Isaiah 57: 1-21