

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost (Proper 7)

Sunday, June 20, 2021 Devotion

In the storms that rage about us, do you wonder where Jesus is? Why doesn't the Lord do something about all of the mayhem in this world? God will not destroy the world by a flood. Wickedness does reign in this world. This is something we see. But there is something greater going on here. Our Lord is saving folk, one at a time. He calms the storm that is in each one of us. This is the age of salvation.

Many know the story of David and Goliath. David, the boy who will be king, is lifted out of obscurity, the least likely, and made king over Israel. He, small in comparison to the physical prowess of mighty men, he had a heart that was unafraid. Yes, in some ways that got him into trouble, but we are reminded that every gift of God can also be lead in the wrong direction if we are not careful and do not keep our eyes upon the Lord.

People are afraid of things they think are too big to conquer. Whether it is a raging storm, or a giant foe, we are intimidated by our circumstances. David was willing to face the giant. Who was Goliath compared to God? Who are any of us compared to the Creator of all things? We fear in our unbelief. The disciples were angry with God, yes, Jesus is God in the flesh. They were angry and asked Him, "Do you not care that we are perishing?" How often do we let our emotions and fears take over? We react based upon how we feel. Fear rises and in our weakness and unbelief, we react.

Our Lord desires that we have the peace that surpasses all understanding. We are called to not live in fear. Yes, the world around us is a mess. We live in communities, families, and with people who are a mess. I am one of them and sometimes, so are you. The raging storms and the Goliaths of this age are all around us and sometimes in us. So what? Does our Lord not know the place where we are? Will He not fulfill His promise? Yes! Our Lord is more than able to do all that needs to be done. And Yes! He will do what needs to be done right here amidst any foe or storm that comes our way. The question is, why do you and I doubt and fear?

Look at the list of Saint Paul. Timothy and Paul had indeed endured many hardships – things we may not be able to comprehend in our experience – all for the sake of sharing the Gospel so that those who heard and believed would be counted amongst the saints. It takes boldness to face the obstacles that are before you, but, like Paul says, our ministry is not to place any obstacles before anyone else, nor to be stopped by the obstacles before us. There are enough in this age that must be faced. The final obstacle is death itself.

What do these stories have in common? It is facing the giants that are before us. They will come. They have come before. Are you terrified of death? Why, it comes to us all? Are you fearful of the outcome? We know that our gracious Lord is weaving all things together for good for those who love Him. He has given us the hope that surpasses all understanding. You and I can be tossed about by the fickle nature of this world, or we can be willing to go in the power of the Lord, wherever He leads, to face whatever may come. We need to be reminded often that greater is He who is in us than anything that is in this world.

Paul told the Romans that there is nothing in all of creation that is able to separate us from the love of God which is in our Savior, Christ Jesus. You have experienced storms in your life. They will come. You have faced giants who will taunt you and declare that you are a loser and cannot prevail. A simple reminder here is very important – and do not forget this point – you have already overcome through Christ Jesus, your Savior and Lord. It is not you who overcomes, but He who has already done this for us. The strong man of this world has already been bound, but for the remaining time in this age, he rages against those who turn to the Lord. He is just so

much hot air. Be about the Lord's business and leave behind the old things.

Why do we listen to those who blow their steam in order to seek to intimidate us? We fear and do not practice the faith which we have been given. Like David, any battle that we will face, the Lord already knows the outcome. Here's the amazing thing: our Lord has already prepared us for what lies ahead. We are a people in training and absolutely everything prepares us for what is to come. Of course you and I cannot rely upon what we think we know. Our Lord knows what we need even before we ask. This is why it is not good to believe that the Lord only gives us what we can handle. Of course there are times when it is more than we can handle. This is where faith is so important. You know the truth. "I can't, but Lord, You can through me." Trust then that our good and gracious Lord has prepared you for whatever you will face. Know that He has been working in You the whole of your life. Our part is to stand firm in the faith that we have been given.

You say, "But I am not David." No, you are not. Do you see that David, being trained as a shepherd to protect the sheep, no matter what, did not realize that his training prepared him to meet any foe. It wasn't physical strength, but the intelligence God gave him. Work smarter, not harder. Look back on your life and you will see there were many times when what you now know about how to do things, is easy when before it was not. The impossible became possible. In part, God often works this way in each of us.

We have heard the Gospel. We have heard the stories. Is it that you still have no faith? Jesus asked this of His disciples. When we doubt and tremble in fear over what, to us, is the unknown, hear this and learn from the disciples. "Who is this, that even the wind and sea obey Him?" Who, indeed? The One through whom all things have their being is here and with us. He is the One who makes our salvation possible. He is the One calling us to come with Him. The object of our faith is Holy Trinity who is in us, leading us and calling us. He who knows the number of the hairs on your head, knows all that lies before you. He desires to prosper you and keep you from evil. But do not make the mistake some make.

The way of the cross is the way of suffering. In this world, we will suffer. We are not kept from difficult circumstances, but, by grace when we walk in faith, we are led through all circumstances. As Jesus told James and John, so we hear that we will drink of the same cup as Jesus. We will suffer in this age. But know that the promise of the Lord also tells us that no matter what we experience, the Lord uses all things together for good according to His purpose. That means that we do not need to ask, "Why?" We will, but we already know the answer. He who is faithful and just is creating in us the very image of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Through all of this, our Lord desires that we open our hearts. Open your heart to Him and to one another. Seek good and seek to do good. Learn to love the Lord and follow Him in all of your ways. Know that He will take whatever you offer and make of you more than you can imagine. As our Lord made David a king after the Lord's own heart, and each of the disciples from timid fearful fishermen into bold fishers-of-men, so also, with God, all things are possible and He will make of us bold witnesses of the truth of the salvation which is ours through Christ.

The world out there is a mess and the answer is Jesus. He has come to set the captives free, bind up the broken hearted, and heal us of the disease of sin and death. Do not fear, nor be unbelieving, but trust the Lord through the grand adventure of the salvation He has given you in faith, redeeming you through grace. Our good and gracious God has prepared the way before you in order that you may hold fast to Him through all of the storms and challenges in this life. Amen.