August 13, 2023 **WHEN ALL SEEMS LOST**

The story for this Sunday’s meditation comes from the gospel of St. Matthew 14:22-33. It’s the story of the disciples being out on the water and Jesus coming to them in the midst of the storm. Few years back my wife and I had the opportunity to sail in a boat on the sea of Galilee, there were more than 25 people with us. I read this passage from the Bible and had a short meditation bringing back the memories to our group of what happened 2000 years ago. Jesus was in the midst of the disciples while they were hit by a storm during the night.

Sailing on the Sea of Galilee is still fresh in my mind and the first thing I want to point out is that all of us have storms in our life. Each one of us has had our sandcastles blown away. Occasionally, we back up and ask, "Why am I being hit with this storm of life?" Sometimes these storms are caused by the devil, sometimes by other people, and sometimes by ourselves. Sometimes they’re allowed by the Lord. They come from different sources, but they do have a purpose in our life.

In fact, for many of you right now, the clouds have already gathered. Many of you, perhaps, are in the worst storm of your life, but what I want you to realize is everyone has storms in their life. In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 5, "He makes the sun rise on both good and bad people. And He sends rain for the ones who do right and for the ones who do wrong." You can see storms, problems, difficulties, trials come to all of us. There’s no exclusion. Just because you’re a believer, doesn’t mean you’re going to be excluded from the storms of life.

Now, some storms come because we are out of God’s will. An example of that, of course, is Jonah, who deliberately disobeyed God’s will. But some storms come because we are in God’s will. Just because you’re encountering a storm in your life, does not necessarily mean that you’re out of the will of God or willfully disobeying him. In fact, there are beautiful examples in the story we’re looking at right now.

If you look at verse 22 it says, "Right away, Jesus made his disciples get into a boat and start back across the lake." The New American Standard translation reads, "He prevailed upon his disciples to get into the boat." In other words, here these guys are out in the middle of a lake in the midst of a terrible storm. They’re fishermen and they’re still afraid, so you know it’s got to be a bad storm.

Here they are out in the midst of the storm, but Jesus is the one who put them in the boat. He’s the one that told them to get out in the middle of the lake. They’re right in the middle of God’s will but they’re having the storm of their life. Job, of course, is our perfect example. Joseph is another example. In fact, Job and Joseph in the Old Testament are probably the only two characters that the Bible records as being pretty much perfect. And yet we can see Joseph as he’s being sold off into slavery and goes into Egypt and spends years in prison and is slandered by the wife of Potiphar. Joseph is in a very difficult time of his life, but he’s in the center of God’s will.

It is possible for you to be obeying God, doing the right things, loving, and serving Him, living right in the center of God’s will and yet at the same time encounter a terrific storm. You can never look at a person, see what they’re going through, and say, "This person is doing right, and that person must be doing wrong because this person is being blessed and that person is being cursed." That’s just not true.

There are a lot of wonderful people who really do love God, who really do obey Him. And yet because of life’s uncertainties and the sin of the earth, life gives them a tough blow. When we have that difficult time, we have to have our feet on the ground and understand that storms happen to people in the will of God as well as outside of his will. If you would like to learn more about who to lean on , please join us in our worship on Sunday at 11:00 AM.

Peace!

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