

Mark 4:35-41  
June 20, 2021

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Ok – so let’s do a little experiment.

On the count of 3, we’re all going to yell as loud as possible. Yes – really. If there is someone in your house who is not at worship with us right now, this will come as a surprise to them, but we’ll chock it up as evangelism.

Ok – are you ready? On the count of 3 we’re all going to yell as loud as we can. No words, just “ugh!” Ready? 1... 2... 3... <yell>

How did that feel?

It’s cathartic, don’t you think?

I know when I have a lot of pent up anxiety, it feels really good to just yell. Kind of like on a roller coaster. At certain points, you just need to yell, and often it’s something you don’t even have any control over. It just comes out.

Our everyday lives shouldn’t be any different.

Yelling, for the sake of yelling, is a good thing. It’s not really good to yell at someone in anger, but if you’re just yelling, because you have to get it out, there is no shame in it. It’s actually good for you.

Contrary to the Brits’ advice of keeping a stiff upper lip and to staying calm in all circumstances, yelling is so much more satisfying – not just for us, but for God as well.

Has it ever occurred to you that God may actually need us to yell out? To yell when we are afraid, uncertain, and filled with anxiety?

Take a look at Jesus in the boat. The waters are raging, but Jesus is asleep. He’s not worried about anything. He’s not worried about the storm, because he knows it’s not going to kill him. He’s totally at peace.

The disciples, on the other hand, do not know that this storm won’t kill them. And so they yell out – Teacher! Wake up! Don’t you care that we are going to die?!

Of course Jesus cares, but Jesus, not being afraid of the storm, didn't realize that the storm was that big of a deal for his disciples, because he was at peace.

Upon realizing the fear of the disciples, after hearing them yell out, Jesus calms the storm and brings them peace, and also a heart attack because that is not the solution they were expecting.

They thought Jesus would jump up, yell to God, and start bailing the water out with them, but instead Jesus himself calms the storm. He calms the storm by dissecting it into its parts. Jesus brings the wind and water to a dead calm and explains - See - it's just water. See - it's just air. Don't be afraid.

When we cry out, Jesus takes all of our chaos, dissects it, and then calms it. He reduces all chaos down to its component parts so that we needn't be afraid, so that we can see more clearly who is really in charge. It's not the wind and the sea. It's God who created them who is in charge.

God is more powerful than any and all chaos. That's Jesus proclamation and his ministry.

In the dead calm of the tomb, Jesus quiets all of our fears and in the resurrection he transforms them into good news for the entire world.

And so we are baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection. We are baptized in the water and then blown out into the world in service by the Holy Spirit (2x).

Instead of being afraid of water and wind, we are harnessed to them to do God's work in the world, to bring peace to chaotic places. To be with those who are crying out and showing them there really isn't anything to be afraid of. God is with us and for us.

With cross eyes, we are able to see things differently. Often what is seen as a curse, is really a blessing - a gift to be transformed or resurrected for the sake of the world.

It's been over a year now of worshipping on line. It was very stressful in the beginning, but now we see how many people we have been able to reach because we went on line.

Things that scare us are often opportunities just waiting to be discovered, and if we yell out to God in our fear, Jesus will calm the storm and help us see more clearly.

A strong wind is scary, because we feel as if we cannot control it, but a strong wind gets us to where we are going a whole lot more quickly. We need only weather the storm and ride it out trusting that God is sending us where we need to be.

God is not trying to kill us, or anyone else. God is not vengeful or full of wrath. God is merely sending us out into the world to bring the message of peace – peace in Christ – the peace which surpasses all human understanding.

But, because we are human, and God’s ways are not our ways, we sometimes need to yell out and say – “Hey – Jesus - Wake up! I’m freaking out here!”

What often appears to us to be death is actually life and creation to God, and we need God to help us see that. We need to wake Jesus up to understand it.

He is not dead, but risen.

And so, we have the cross. What appears to outsiders to be death, we know actually to be a symbol of life, because we are a death and resurrection people.

We are a people who cry out to Jesus in what appears to be total chaos, because we know he will calm the storm. He will listen to our cries and bring us comfort.

Through the Holy Spirit, we trust in him fully, knowing that God always brings life and creation, and today God does that through us.

The Brenton fisherman’s prayer, a favorite of my grandfathers, which seems to be a reflection on today’s Gospel reading, is “O God, your sea is so great and my boat is so small.” The full poem by Winfred Ernest Garrison is as follows:

Thy sea, O God, so great,  
My boat so small.  
It cannot be that any happy fate Will me befall  
Save as Thy goodness opens paths for me Through the consuming vastness of the sea.

Thy winds, O God, so strong,  
So slight my sail.  
How could I curb and bit them on the long And saltry trail,  
Unless Thy love were mightier than the wrath Of all the tempests that beset my path?

Thy world, O God, so fierce,  
And I so frail.  
Yet, though its arrows threaten oft to pierce My fragile mail,  
Cities of refuge rise where dangers cease,  
Sweet silences abound, and all is peace.

O God, your sea is so great and my boat is so small. What you have created is enormous and what we have made out of your creation is so small.

The sea is God's. The wind is God's. The world is God's. The universe is God's.

It's important to always remember that. Creation is not ours. We didn't make it. It is God's, and we are just a tiny speck compared to the vastness of God's creation.

The good news though is that when we insignificant bits of carbon cry out from our tiny little boats, God hears us. God pays attention to us, because the wind of creation blows through us.

And when we use that wind within us to yell out to God, God's peace comes to be with us so that we can see more clearly and understand our calling in the world to be cities of refuge.

So, let us yell to God in our all of our anxieties, in the midst of every chaos, because it is actually a sign of trust – trust that God hears us and will bring us peace, which we can share with others, because in him there is no fear at all.

Jesus is God's creating force, and that force blows through us by the Holy Spirit.

In the waters of Baptism, we are guaranteed that gift.

Thanks be to God. Amen.