**Job 38:4-18 August 9, 2020**

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

Our text for this morning comes from our Old Testament lesson, Job chapter 38 here re-reading these words. “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements – surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I was sitting in the band room my junior year of college. It was a typical band rehearsal for the symphonic band at Concordia University Wisconsin. We were practicing different pieces of music as our band conductor called them out. Everything was pretty routine. I wasn’t the first chair trumpet player in our section, that honor was held by the best trumpet player in our school who had a very interesting relationship with the band’s leader. He worked with the band leader more often and they had a somewhat antagonistic relationship. The first trumpet player would make comments during rehearsal and they would be in a joking manner, but at times they would be directly against what the band leader wanted to do. The rest of the band, myself included, really didn’t know the full story of how they interacted until that fateful day, when we were all sitting there, and moving to another piece of music, and the first chair trumpet player made comments about disagreements he had regarding this music. And this was so routine I didn’t think much of it, until the band leader, clearly frustrated said loudly in front of the entire band, “I do not have to **prove** myself to you!”

He was the authority. We were in his symphonic band. He didn’t have to prove anything to us, his decisions were final. The miracles of God are proof of his power and authority, his omnipotent power that isn’t limited. Last week in our Gospel lesson it was the story of the feeding of the 5000 how Jesus used 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed 5000 men, not including the women and children who were also gathered there. This week in our Gospel lesson, Jesus famously walks on water out to the disciples in the midst of the wind and waves. As Jesus goes out to them, they are terrified, and he calms them by saying, “Take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid.” “It is I” is the English translation of the Greek words “*ego eimi”* which is the same words that God gave to Moses to say about who sent him to do the miraculous things he did in the presence of Pharaoh when freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. So when Jesus says, “Take heart, it is I” he’s saying “Take heart, I am God” So think about this scene for a moment, and it’s important to understand it in it’s full context to see how it relates to our Old Testament lesson and this whole idea of proof. Jesus Christ had just multiplied the loaves of bread and the fish in the presence of the disciples, they knew what had happened because they were the ones who saw the initial amount of food and then distributed it. This miracle happens immediately after that event, as Jesus had gone by himself to pray, so in a span of about 24 hours they had seen the multiplication of food, and now they were witnessing Jesus walk on water out to them. They also hear him saying distinctly, “Take heart, I am God, don’t be afraid.” And the very next thing that Matthew records that is said, is Peter answering from the boat, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”

*If it is you?!?* They need more proof? Are you serious? This is another in a long line of looking at the Scriptures and applauding Peter for his faithfulness, in his solid declaration of Jesus as the Christ, and hearing him preach so clearly the Law and the Gospel in the Pentecost sermon, and then in the same way shaking your head at him for when he rebukes Jesus to not go to the cross, when he denies his name 3 times, and even here as he seems to need more proof from a man who is literally walking on water in front of him. What more could he need? What more would it take?

There was a song that came out in the 80s from a singer who recently passed away named Eddie Money. The song is literally called, “Walk on Water” and the refrain goes, “Well if I could walk on water, and if I could find some way to prove, if I could walk on water, would you believe in me? That my love is true?” This catchy pop song from 1988 was about a man who had messed up and was trying to prove his love after unfaithfulness, asking if he had to be perfect in order for this girl to believe that he truly cared about her. And I make reference to it, to point out the absurd standards that we have as God’s creation, when it comes to God the creator and his authority. Because Jesus literally does, walk on water. He has given substantial proof of his divinity, his power, and ultimately his care for his disciples. And Peter in that moment, doesn’t believe in him, but still needs a demonstration of Jesus allowing for Peter to walk out on the water in order to know for certain that this is the same Jesus that they were traveling with.

It shows that when it comes to our sinfulness, we make ourselves the experts, and there is never going to be enough proof. We are surrounded by the proof of God in our world, in the natural knowledge of God that comes from his creation. That’s really what our Old Testament lesson is all about. We’re the ones who go to God demanding proof, and there are two fundamental problems with this. First is the idea that proof doesn’t exist, when the world around us is proof of his omniscience, his knowledge and wisdom, the care that went into creation and the world around us. The fact that we are questioning if something is right or wrong in the innate morality and ethics that we understand through our conscience is proof that there is an all good or holy God that gives us the very definition of good and that certain actions are evil and wrong. This is a proof that is given to every human being on the planet just in the fact that they are alive. But the second problem is the idea that we would go to God demanding proof of any kind. Who are we to ask for such proof? There is a joy in our lives as God’s children that we are familiar with God. Luther writes that we are to approach God not in fear but as dear children approach their dear Father and make requests of him. This isn’t a wrong way of seeing our relationship to God, but it also at times can be a detriment to our true understanding of the power of God and his relationship to sin. God doesn’t have to prove anything to us. Jesus didn’t have to feed the 5000 in order to prove anything to the disciples, or to the crowds. In the midst of the wind and the waves as the disciples were struggling in the boat to make it to the other side, as we find in our Gospel lesson, Jesus didn’t have to walk out to them on the water and calm their troubles to prove anything to them. They weren’t owed proof. To think that we are deserving of some kind of supernatural evidence of God and His power in some kind of miracle today, when we have the proof of Him all around us and in us, shows our lack of faith. When we have the revealed knowledge of God in His Word, that can be accessed on a smartphone or a computer, that has been translated into your language, where you have a building where you can come and hear this Word read and preached to you, and to think that we would still come to God wanting proof of his love, and his care, and his existence, just shows our lack of faith.

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements- surely you know!” Is God angry in these statements? Do we see his wrath upon Job and his friends in this challenging book of the bible? No. We don’t see an immediate smiting by our all-powerful God. We simply see in these words, a reality check. “Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this.” No…we haven’t. But he has. Have you walked on water? Have you fed 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish? Can you? No. But he has. But he can. Would you sacrifice your life, for the sins of the entire world? For those who constantly put themselves in a higher authority when in fact you created them and gave them life? If we are honest we would answer no. We wouldn’t die for them, if anything we’d see our own impatience and frustration by lashing out at them. But God didn’t lash out in anger. He loved them. By ending his Son, to feed 5000, to walk on water, to die for the sins of the world. To die for the sins of the doubters, and those who demand proof. To die for them even when they will deny him until the day they die. To die for them and provide them with proof of his love even in the face of their rebellion and hatred. Jesus says, “Take heart, I am God, do not be afraid.” Look at him revealed to you this morning, what is the message?

Peter comes out on the water, actually does walk on the water and gets his proof that this was truly Jesus Christ, and then Matthew records that Peter saw the wind, and he was afraid, and he started to sink. He wanted the proof, he wanted to walk on the water too, and now he calls out to Jesus “Lord, Save me!” Any of us would probably let him sink, but Jesus reaches out his hand, takes hold of him, and saves him. My dear friends in Christ, when you look at our world, and the struggles we face, it can feel like no one is in control. It can lead to demanding proof from God as to why these things are happening. We can get so easily distracted that we lose sight of all that matters. But take heart. God is here. God is real. And God loves you. He lifts you up, and reveals himself to you in many and various ways, through creation, through your body, through His Word, and through His Sacraments. Don’t be afraid. Don’t lose sight of what really matters. You are his forever. He loves you. And the proof is everywhere for you to see, to read, to mark, to learn, and to know with certainty in your heart.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.