**Mark 4:35-41 June 20, 2021**

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 Gospel lesson, Mark chapter 4 here re-reading these words. “And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling. But he (meaning Jesus) was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A Blessed and Happy Father’s Day to all the Fathers who are in attendance and to all men who have taken the charge and responsibility given to them by God seriously and cared for, provided, and loved their children through raising them. Father’s Day is traditionally a day when Dad gets recognition for all of the wonderful things he’s done in the lives of his children. I highly encourage you if you have the opportunity this day, to see your Father in person or talk to them on the phone and thank them for all that they do. And what sorts of things does Dad usually get credit for? Well a few examples are usually getting a child out trouble, rescuing them from some form of danger, providing something for them when they really needed it, even teaching them something that stayed with them the rest of their lives. Fathers have a distinct responsibility to prepare their children for this world and what they will face, it’s something that I personally have learned in my time as a Father and raising 4 children. And one thing I’ve learned about being a Dad, that I realized very early on, probably it hit me when Sarah wasn’t even 1 yet, and I certainly still believe it now, is that on Father’s Day, Dads around the world won’t necessarily be thanked for the difficult times when they had to prepare their children in ways that they didn’t enjoy, like, or even appreciate. Dad’s don’t get a lot of thanks for exercising discipline, for harshly teaching life lessons, for being the one to curb behavior, or for enforcing punishment. And even though they may not receive a lot of thanks for that, they have the authority to do it. Think about it, what’s the biggest threat that a Mother or teacher can give a child? “If you keep this up I’ll tell your Father”. This threat worked in the past and hopefully still works today because Father’s have authority in their home, authority to give the things their children want, and authority to take them away. They wield an authority that leads to respect, if it is used appropriately and responsibly, and the appreciation for wielding that authority is what Father’s Day is all about.

Authority is more than just a theme of Father’s Day but it’s also something that we see exercised in our Gospel lesson this morning. In Mark chapter 4 we see recorded a famous miracle of Jesus where he rebukes the wind and the waves in order to calm them, while he and the disciples are traveling by boat across the sea. Mark already teaches us that Jesus has the authority to speak and teach, as he does in Mark chapter 1 on the Sabbath where the crowds were astonished by his teaching because he taught as one with “authority”. And here he shows both the disciples and us that he not only has authority to speak and teach, and heal the sickness of this world, and cast out the demons and evidence of his evil adversary Satan himself, but he also has authority over creation. Over the wind and the waves. His authority is unlike anything they have ever seen, because at the sight of his calming of the wind and waves they remark to each other in great fear, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”

It was clear that Jesus had power over creation and could perform miracles, yet they had not made the connection that He was the Messiah, the Savior of the world. That was a lesson they truly didn’t grasp completely until He was raised from the dead. They did know that he had to be someone who could help them, or else they wouldn’t have even bothered waking him, but these were men who were panicking. As it says earlier the boat was being tossed, the waves were breaking in, and water was filling it up. They were sinking. They were panicking. And in their panic they had only one question for the one who was speaking for God and teaching them with heavenly wisdom. “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

It’s a question that is reflected in our Old Testament lesson in a sense because Job is all about the attitude of the one who is suffering and his relationship with God. For us, God’s children, and ultimately God’s creation, when we encounter hardships and hard times in our lives it’s easy to question God’s love. It’s easy to question if God even cares. It’s easy to question if God is even aware of what’s going on. For certainly if he has the authority to stop these things from happening, then he should immediately stop them! And since he doesn’t, he doesn’t care about me. He doesn’t love me, I’ve obviously done something to upset him and I must make up for it. Or even he delights in my suffering and is a vengeful God, who I want nothing to do with.

We’ve all been where these disciples were at points in our lives when our faith was pushed to the brink. Job faced it, as he lay in bed a broken man, beaten down by Satan’s temptations and the death of his family, and his own physical pain. We don’t have to look far into God’s Word to find examples of suffering and pain. Of those who bear the name of God’s own children and God’s own people facing physical pain and destruction. Stephen was martyred, the disciples were in prison, Noah was surrounded by godless people, David was hunted by the government of that time in King Saul, Elijah on trial for worshipping the one true God, and it goes on and on. One thing is for certain being a follower of Jesus and being a believer in Jesus Christ isn’t a pass for your life to be easy. If anything it’s a promise that suffering and pain will come your way. Here they faced it, and death itself, and wondered if God even cared?

That’s the temptation. To face these sufferings and persecution, to face the storms that this life will bring to your doorstep with anger, worry, and even panic. To lash out at God, as Job’s friends urged him to do, and question His love for you. And we’ve all given in. And we’ve all sinned in that way and countless others. We’ve failed. Failed to remain steadfast in all that we say, and in all that we do. Failed to bear Christ’s light in times of worry, anxiety and fear. Failed to be worthy of the redemption and eternal life that God so freely gives. We are failures. We are sinners. Even Father’s on this wonderful day can remember times when they didn’t exercise their authority perfectly. When they weren’t a perfect parent for their children. They can remember the times when they lashed out in anger, when they thought of themselves, when they weren’t up to the responsibility of being a Dad. And it’s the same for Mother’s who did the same things, for children who were disobedient and disrespectful and the list goes on and on. No matter what vocation you have in your life, no matter what you have done, you can’t escape your sin. You can’t escape your imperfection. For none of us are perfect. None of us have remained faithful to God in everything we’ve done, in all that we’ve thought, in all that we’ve said. But that’s where God’s Word comes in to show us His forgiveness, love, and care for us.

For while we remember and thank our earthly Father’s today we also thank God our Heavenly Father. Our Heavenly Father, who sent His Son, to destroy the corruption of sin in our lives and this sinful world. Who has the final and ultimate authority in this world? God does. While the world seeks only to question the clear teaching of God’s Word, which states that all things came into being on account of the Word spoken by God our Heavenly Father at creation, the Lord sums it up in his words to Job “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the world?” He reminds Job that His omnipotent power supersedes anything that this world can hope to put up against it. Just as Christ demonstrates his authority over the wind and the waves by speaking to it as if it was just another person. “Peace! Be still” he says, he rebukes it and speaks against it. And the amazing sign of God’s authority is that the storm that swirls and rages with such power that it was making the boat sink, is immediately stilled. It wasn’t a gradual slowing down of the wind and the rain getting smaller. It was instant. The text says that the wind ceased and there was a great calm. It can be compared to a family fight or a loud commotion that is going on that is immediately silent when Dad walks into the room and says “Quiet!”. In that moment his authority is exercised, everyone understands and respects it. So it is with Christ. He has authority over creation and he shows it to his disciples, so they can see exactly who He truly is.

Just as his authority is shown in the forgiveness he freely gives. When Jesus forgives our sins, here at his altar the forgiveness is instant. We don’t have to worry about a gradual period of forgiveness where we must continue to work toward a state of perfection. We don’t have to worry about him overlooking us or forgetting us, or not caring about us. He shows his care, in his ministry. In his journey, across the sea to Jerusalem. To the cross. Where he exercises his greatest authority over sin itself, by taking upon himself our sin, our shame, our failures and our mistakes. Our worries and cares, our anxiety and panic, our imperfection and unrighteousness. And he dies, as one with authority to absolve it by his death, since he is God’s own Son. He shows his authority over sin, by dying and cleansing it, forgiving it, and giving that forgiveness to us through faith. He shows his authority over death, by not remaining in the grave but by being raised from death by His Heavenly Father who shows his love for His Son and all of us by providing that victory over death.

That’s how much God cares for you as His child. That’s why God provides for you in this life, through the work of many special people, and today we remember our Fathers. Fathers who wield authority from God to take care of you and provide for you, reflecting the love of God your Heavenly Father. So give thanks this day, for your Father, for your life, for the forgiveness that comes only through God’s own Son, and for the authority of the Savior, who calms the wind and the waves, and who saved you from death.

Amen.

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

Amen.