



GOD PROVIDES PROTECTION:

Sunday June 20th.

Scripture: Psalm 133 and Mark 4:35-41.

Have you ever been on a boat in a storm? When I was running tours on French Island you had to catch the ferry from Stony Point across. On one trip, Missy the captain of the ferry warned us – we had lost use of the rudder.

Here we were, in heavy waves heading straight for the Tankerton Jetty. As a Tour Guide I tried to maintain my composure for the tourists on board, however it was very scary. Thankfully Missy was an excellent ferry captain and she landed us safely at the jetty. Created great discussions whilst on the tour.

So I wonder what the disciples spoke about after Jesus had calmed the sea and they reached – the other side?

There are a couple of things I wish to cover this morning from our readings.

The first one is that the storm on the Sea of Galilee reminds us all that none of us is exempt from life's storms just because we follow Christ.

The second one, which we often miss, is that this is the only place in Scripture where Jesus is said to have slept and He did so in the middle of a storm.

Storms in our life. They present us with a test because it is during the storms that we discover what we really believe.

If we read back in **Chapter 3** we see that Jesus had had a very busy day – He had been confronted by the Pharisees; His brothers thought He had lost His mind and He spent the rest of the day teaching the crowd in parables and privately explaining them to His disciples.

Notice verse 35 Jesus says – let's cross to the other side of the lake. Now you might just read over that but it struck me that we are often led to the other side of life where things may not be going as well, but we are led through it.

On the Galilee side Jesus had performed miracles and taught about the Kingdom of God. All was looking good and the disciples' faith and trust in Jesus had been easy.

But Jesus was inviting them to cross to the other side where things were going to get tough. And the reason for this was twofold – Jesus knew the storm was coming and He also was leading His disciples into Gentile territory – Decapolis. Unfamiliar – a place where their Jewish customs would be challenged and Gentile life somewhat confusing.

The other side of good health is illness; the other side of a marriage is a shattered relationship; we may have friends and the other side is that we have none and we are lonely. How will you respond? How will your faith stand as it is tested?

Storms can happen very suddenly. One moment all is going well and the next, your world is turned upside down. It may be a phone call you receive; or a visit to the doctors; or a demand notice – whatever it is you are now in the midst of the storm.

Verse 37 says “soon a fierce storm came up and high waves were breaking into the boat and it began to fill with water.

The Sea of Galilee is 700 feet below sea level and surrounded by mountains. The warm air over the lake and the cold air coming down from the mountains mix and you get a storm. This sudden storm was so severe that even the experienced fishermen amongst Jesus' disciples were afraid for their lives.

As I said – none of us is immune to life's storms – the disciples were near Jesus; they were doing nothing wrong and doing everything right; there was no sin that was separating them from Jesus and they were perfectly in His will.

2 Timothy 3:12 tells us that storms must come our way if we want to live a Godly life.

When Jesus told the disciples to set off from the shore that day He knew the storm was coming yet He didn't prevent it. Why? Because He knew that He would be with them through it and He knew that a life without turmoil has no real meaning, no real joy and produces no real faith.

I am sure many of us would prefer not to have to experience life's storms, but I wonder what our life would be like if everything was perfect all the time – there would be no challenges to face; no learning; life

would hold no excitement or anticipation, every day would be like Groundhog day.

You see we must remember that Jesus is in the boat with us. He is present with us. He is in control. Nothing surprises Him. He has not forgotten us or our plight.

If we know this, we can trust that He will bring peace into every situation – no matter how tempestuous our surroundings – He will land us safely at His intended destination.

We often miss the teaching and truth of this story – but it contains the incredible picture of both the humanity of Jesus and the deity of Jesus.

Verse 38 says Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with His head on a cushion.

This is an incredible picture of the Incarnation of God – we see the humanity of Jesus in this verse. He is exhausted and He was sleeping so deep that the storm didn't even wake Him up. This is a picture of the humanity of Jesus. We have God in the flesh.

The disciples were scared and I think anyone of us would be in the same situation. The fishermen among them had handled a boat during many storms, but this storm was so fierce and violent they believed they were going to die because of it.

When we are in the midst of life's storms, it is hard to see our way clear; we feel surrounded by it with no way out. The disciples would have felt the same way.

But Jesus was going to use this storm to teach them the incredible truth about Himself. This was a real spiritual educational moment – amongst the storm.

You can sit here each Sunday and hear and read about God but it is when you are in the middle of the storm that the lessons are offered to help you grow and mature in your faith.

Verse 39 says When Jesus woke up, He rebuked the wind – silence, be still and the wind and the waves obeyed Him.

What powerful truth this is about the Divinity of Jesus. Jesus had just demonstrated His authority over nature itself. The disciples were beginning to learn more about Him. But notice now the fear they had

over the storm has now changed to fear about Jesus Himself. Who was He that the wind and the waves obey Him.

They had seen miracles happen but prophets of the past had also performed miracles but this was completely different. They asked themselves – **Who is this man?**

Jesus had authority over the elements of nature because He was fully God and not just a man. He didn't discount the danger the disciples faced but He did rebuke them for their doubt. After His rebuke they were even more terrified than before realizing that Jesus was far more powerful than the sea.

Our faith grows through our storms.

What happens for you when a crisis or storm comes into your life?

Do you then judge God as either good or bad for allowing it to happen? Do you see Him as caring or uncaring based on How He answers your prayers?

Storms reveal whether you are living by fear or by faith – whether you have a heart filled with trust or one filled with doubt.

The fact is – all of us here today are either headed into a storm; in the middle of a storm or coming out of a storm.

God teaches us something about Himself and about ourselves as we experience our storms. There is always an opportunity to grow closer to God through them.

If you reflected on some of the storms you have experienced, I am sure you can recognize how you have changed, what you learned and how your view about yourself, life and God is different.

God often uses storms to clear a pathway for us so we can continue on this journey, growing more like Jesus every day.