

1 Samuel 17: 32-49
Psalm 9: 9-20
2 Corinthians 6: 1-13
Mark 4: 35-41

DON'T YOU CARE, LORD?

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Have you never said it:

“Jesus, don't you care that I'm dying down here?!?”

Look at today's Gospel - at least four of Jesus' disciples

grew up fishing in boats on this very lake - the Sea of Galilee.

They would be Peter, James, John and Andrew.

They had surely seen and been in the midst of storms before.

St. Mark - as our Bible Study group has discovered was a teenager -

who, you might remember ran away from the Romans

in the Garden of Gethsemane that night.

St. Matthew - he was a tax collector, probably no fishing experience.

And the same with St. Luke, a Greek physician,

who didn't know the human Jesus.

These three record this story of the disciples crying out in fear.

St. John doesn't mention the calming of the sea at all -

and remember, he was one of the four fisherfolk in the boat.

Another piece of Biblical study is that in Matthew and Luke's accounts,

the disciples cry out, “We're lost,” not “We're dying,”

though there really isn't much difference is there?

What are you afraid of?

Being lost;

Dying;

Losing your balance and drowning?

Jesus has just finished a day's worth of teaching the crowds,
standing up in the boat on the lake, the water amplifying his voice,
just remember - he's standing up in a fishing boat
not a stable ocean-liner, just a small fishing boat.

And he's tired after teaching, creatively thinking up these parable-things.

So he falls asleep.

The Disciples, also in the boat, going across the lake see a storm coming.

And it comes with a vengeance!

They shake Jesus awake, "Don't you care that we're dying down here?!?"

One of my favorite lines:

"Don't you care, [*shaking finger towards heaven*]
that I'm dying down here?"

The disciples have seen Jesus do some magic in the past weeks,
can't he do something now?

Jesus shakes off slumber, looks at the group of guys, and replies,

"What?!"

" 'Cause we just fell out of the canoe, we're underneath the water,
all our gear is soaked, and the rapids are thrusting us downstream!

We're in 8 feet of water - under the boat.

And I don't know how we're going to right the canoe!
(And this was only two hours into our two-day trek down the Delaware).
We were preparing for an 8-day canoeing trip in far out Canada,
 three hours north of nowhere.
And here was a 2-day trek down the Delaware.
I've rafted down the Delaware and the Lehigh rivers and survived.
And here we were - two hours into our weekend.
Three adult leaders - with experience - and one youth.
And we are the two canoes that flip.
 We're in 8 feet of fastly moving water - *under* the boat.
And the canoes have our soaked gear tied to them.
At least we wouldn't lose our stuff.
But what would it matter if we drowned?
"Good God, we're gonna die!"

Somehow we manage to float to a group of rocks where we catch hold.
We get uprighted, back into the boats, take stock of our gear,
 and realize we're OK, soaked, but OK.
When we get to the next set of rapids, I'm shaking.
Is it the cold air, the cold water, or cold nerves?
All of a sudden I realize, I'm truly afraid.
I've been on this river in a canoe before.
And I know there are worse rapids ahead of us - Skinners' Falls.
Why *am* I afraid, Jesus? Just think about it!
Am I afraid of dying?

One leader, in the other cap-sized canoe says to my buddy,

“So, if I were to take odds as to who *wouldn't* tip over,

I'd lay money on me and you!”

We joked that we had planned it

and were showing the boys what *could* happen

and what to do when it does.

It was a learning, umm, I mean a *teaching* experience.

Peter, Andrew, James and John -

they were the experienced ones.

These first four of the Disciples were fishermen.

They knew what to do when a storm came across the sea of Galilee.

They could have calmed the nerves of the others.

It was these first four disciples who had seen Jesus perform miracles,

and only just before today's reading, did Jesus call the other eight.

We don't know what they have seen and heard of Jesus.

Had they witnessed the power of Jesus' miraculous acts?

Why were they, why are *we* afraid?

We have to ask ourselves that question.

And more importantly we have to ask ourselves, what are we afraid of?

The storm?

Or that Jesus doesn't care?

Or that God can't take care of the storms in my life?

Even though I've owned canoes for a good twenty years,
I'm still green and, well, "wet behind the ears,"
and on that day, most of the rest of my personage, including my pride.
Yet after the learning experience for me that trip on the Delaware,
my partner, Bruce, the most experienced one in our party,
commended me in that I was a quick learn
at pulling through the rapids.

He, however, was most gracious in suggesting that he was at fault
in those first rapids, steering us to the wrong side.

I was the motor in front, and he was the rudder in back.

And as we approached more and more rapids,

we learned to work together to ravage the waves and win - or just plain survive.

It is the need of collaboration, hard work, and trust in each other.

The disciples were learning that.

Was this Jesus' way of having a *teaching* experience for them - and us?

In our spiritual lives, yet even in our practical lives, our every day,

we need to remember that God *is* in our boat, we need to trust each other,
collaborate and win the struggles through hard work.

Just because God seems to be asleep when we are panicking,

doesn't mean that he doesn't care.

Maybe - just maybe - his sleeping in our boat is God's symbol of trust in us -

perhaps God has more trust in us than we have in ourselves
or that God has more trust in us than we have in him.

Hmm.