

## Stilling the Storm

I speak to you in the name of He who Is, who Was, and who Is to come. Amen. PBS

We begin this week with Psalm 29. A beautiful psalm, believed to have been written by King David. In this psalm he writes of the strength of the voice of God. "The voice of God is under the waters...the voice of God breaks the cedars...the voice of the LORD, flashes forth flames of fire...the voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl and strips the forest bare". That's a lot of power in a voice!

We hear of a storm flashing with fire, thundering over mighty water. And all of this to speak to the glory of God. Indeed, there is might and majesty in storms. We have experienced thunderstorms that have uprooted trees, dropped golfball sized hail and damaged windows, buildings, fields and cars in this community.

We have experienced winter storms that have buried the Elk Valley in a matter of hours and shut down the Crowsnest Highway. We have seen Mother Nature at her best and at her worst.

The Earth is in crisis...climate change is real and is seen in every corner of Creation. From hurricanes to tornadoes, from tropical storms to tsunamis, the might of Nature is indiscriminate. The polar ice caps are melting, the ice roads that used to be built in the high arctic can't be made because it's not cold enough. Icebergs are melting and breaking apart. Winters are warmer, summers are warmer. Storms of the century are happening annually.

Which brings us to today's Gospel. In it Jesus gets into a boat with his disciples and tells them to sail across the lake. While they are crossing he has a wee nap. Except there is a gale which swept across the surface of the lake and was filling the boat. It was in danger of sinking. So his disciples woke Jesus up shouting "Master, Master, we are perishing" and Jesus woke up and rebuked them. Kind of like when you would make too much noise while playing and would inadvertently wake your Dad from a nap. "Knock it off" your Dad would say. Jesus said, more or less, the same thing.

Now, to be fair, Jesus had been working a lot and was likely tired. He has been speaking with groups far and wide. He was teaching, preaching and proclaiming. He needed a rest. And when he finally got a chance to rest a storm swell threatened to flood and capsize the boat. He was NOT best pleased at being woken up and let his disciples know about it.

Verse 24 "He said to them 'where is your faith'? They were afraid and amazed". The disciples were afraid because Jesus had shouted at them, and with the wave of His hand, Jesus has stilled the storm. Wow! That is some kind of cosmic power is that.

With a wave of His hand, Jesus made the gale dissipate and they were able to cross the lake with no further incident. That is a lot of power to have.

If you look at the state of the world today, we see that there is a great deal of hurt. There is dissaray. There is sexism, tribalism, homophobia, xenophobia, racism, so many "ism's" it's frightening. We need for Jesus to come, wave his hand and say "enough" so

that order may be restored.

We will be voting in a federal election in 6 weeks time. And yes, it matters. I don't care who you vote for, but you MUST get out and vote. Change is realised through people working together for the greater good. Speaking to the candidates who are running. Researching what each party stands for and how that aligns with your beliefs. Casting a ballot an election day. Yes, EVERY vote matters.

Yesterday Christ Church hosted the Anglican Clergy and Lay Delegates from the East Kootenay Region. I was asked to prepare Morning Prayer. I used the Gospel reading from today and posed the question "How do you still the storm in your life"? The answers were quite astounding. For some it's keeping physically busy through needlepoint, woodworking, gardening, quilting to keep the mind from racing. For others it's walking or being present in God's Creation. Grounding oneself in the forest. For one attendee it's engaging in debate of political issues online or in person.

Each of us faces storms in our lives; be they physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual or mental. How we face and still those storms is important. Jesus was taking a nap, perhaps to still his own mind from the need and busy-ness that surrounded him.

One of my favourite things is a Sunday afternoon post-liturgical nap. I don't get them every week, yet when I do I enjoy them. The opportunity to put on my nightwear, slip into bed and sleep. I may sleep an hour or several. I try not to set an alarm. And I generally wake up feeling refreshed.

How do YOU still the storms in your life?

In this Season of Creation we are reminded this week of Storm. We have a responsibility to care for Creation. To do our small part in this beautiful corner of Creation, to make the Earth a better, cleaner and healthier place. To collect garbage when we see it. To make better choices when shopping. Re-using rather than trashing. Recycling, upcycling, making better choices for our planet today and for the future.

Today, at Christ Church, I baptised a Baby girl named Quinn. She is the 5<sup>th</sup> generation baptised at the font in Fernie. She wore the Christening gown her mother, grandfather and great-grandfather wore when they were baptised.

In the hurt and trouble of the world, we had a moment of God's clarity and love as a baby girl was welcomed to the family of Christ Church. She has been a part of the family of God since before she was born. When Quinn was born she had a rare complication that caused some distress in both her and her mother. Thanks be to God and to the doctors and nurses they both came through and are healthy and thriving.

Jesus stills the storm and astounds and comforts the disciples. They say to one another in Verse 25 "who is this then, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?" Who is He, indeed.

We have a Covenanting Service happening on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September beginning here at 10:30. We will have both Bishop Lynne McNaughton from the Diocese of Kootenay and Kathy Davies, Regional Minister from the Pacific Mountain Region. Our celebration will be

joyous and uplifting. We will have people attending from the Elk Valley, from Kimberley and throughout Fernie. There will be parishioners, community leaders and friends coming together as we bravely embark on something greater than ourselves.

There will be promises made, symbols presented, scripture read, a sermon proclaimed, an anthem sung and likely much laughter and perhaps a few tears. It will be the start of something greater than any of us. Something that will, with God's help as well as our determination, bring us closer together as the United Church and the Anglican Church. It will be a shining light in the world which seems to be increasingly dark.

Remember, storms have factored in our sacred story for millennia. One of the first storm stories is that of Noah who was asked to build an ark. He had never built anything before. He trusted God enough to know that God would give good and proper counsel. And God did. God provided instruction on what to do and how to do it.

Then the storm came that wiped out the known civilisation at the time. People, animals, vegetation all perished. The storm ended and Noah sent out a dove three times. The third time the dove returned with a leaf in its beak, signifying that there was land. Once Noah and his family left the ark they saw a rainbow, God's promise that a storm of that size would never happen again.

Now, there have been some earth-shattering storms since that time. And they seem to be increasing in frequency. And urgency. Yet even after the most violent thunder storm there is a rainbow. A colourful, beautiful promise of God's love for each and every one of us. That we are not forsaken. That we are not alone. That we are, each of us, God's beloved children. We can take comfort in knowing that we are never alone. And we will never be forsaken.

We can, with God's help.  
We can, we Jesus' example.  
We can, through the comfort of Holy Spirit.

Let all God's children say Amen.

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15 October 2019 – Creation 3C – Storm  
Job 28.20-27  
Psalm 29  
1 Corinthians 1.21-31  
Luke 8.22-25