

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2024

Pacific Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church of Union, Missouri

**NINETEENTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *(from Psalm 46)*

- One: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."  
All: **"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea."**  
One: The Lord says, "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."  
All: **"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."**  
Unison: **Let us worship the Lord our God, our refuge and our strength.**

**\*OPENING HYMN** "I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art" GtG 624 *(Verses 1-3 & 5)*

1. **I greet thee, who my sure Redeemer art,  
my only trust and Savior of my heart,  
who pain didst undergo for my poor sake;  
I pray thee from our hearts all cares to take.**
2. **Thou art the King of mercy and of grace,  
reigning omnipotent in every place:  
so come, O King, and our whole being sway;  
shine on us with the light of thy pure day.**
3. **Thou art the life, by which alone we live,  
and all our substance and our strength receive;  
sustain us by thy faith and by thy power,  
and give us strength in every trying hour.**
5. **Our hope is in no other save in thee;  
our faith is built upon thy promise free;  
Lord, give us peace, and make us calm and sure,  
that in thy strength we evermore endure.**

Words: *Psalms*, Strasbourg, 1545; trans. Elizabeth Lee Smith, 1868  
Music: TOULON, Genevan Psalter, 1551  
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## UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Saving God,  
we confess that our faith is too small,  
our fear is too great.  
When we are overwhelmed,  
we think you do not care enough for us.  
When life is uncertain and risky,  
we are not sure we can trust you with our whole hearts.  
Even when you move among us in powerful ways,  
we question who you are.  
Forgive us and calm our fears, we pray.  
Teach us to trust in your power to save  
and guide us in every circumstance.  
Draw us back into your steadfast love  
and shape us into the likeness of your Son,  
Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

## SILENT CONFESSION

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON *(from Psalm 103)*

One: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."  
All: **"As a parent has compassion for the children, so the Lord has compassion for those who revere the Lord."**  
One: As the shepherd searches for the lost sheep, so the Lord seeks us out.  
All: **The One who is the Way comes to show us the way.**  
One: So rejoice and be glad, and give thanks for the grace of God.  
All: **For in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen!**

## THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.  
All: **And also with you.**

*(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, etc.)*

## THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READINGS Mark 4:35-41  
Mark 6:45-52

*(next page)*

MARK 4:35-41 (New Revised Standard Version, updated edition)

<sup>35</sup> *On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."* <sup>36</sup> *And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.* <sup>37</sup> *A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.* <sup>38</sup> *But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"* <sup>39</sup> *And waking up, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be silent! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.* <sup>40</sup> *He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"* <sup>41</sup> *And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*

MARK 6:45-52 (New Revised Standard Version, updated edition)

<sup>45</sup> *Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.* <sup>46</sup> *After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.*

<sup>47</sup> *When evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land.* <sup>48</sup> *When he saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, he came toward them early in the morning, walking on the sea. He intended to pass them by.* <sup>49</sup> *But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out,* <sup>50</sup> *for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."* <sup>51</sup> *Then he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded,* <sup>52</sup> *for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.*

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON "In the Storm" by Pastor Bill Vincent

The obvious storm may not be the most disturbing.  
The voiced question may not be the only one at play.

The rain pelts. The wind buffets. The waves crash. The floods rise.  
And I'm not simply talking about Hurricane Debby.  
But life itself, where we experience the flood of demands, the waves of misfortune, the changing wind of the times; and everything, and everyone, raining on our parade.  
And we cry out, "Do you not care?"

We spoke last week about power: the power that Jesus exudes with his mighty deeds.  
We crave that power.  
We yearn for that power.  
But let us confess: we also fear that power.

The disciples, in both stories, are afraid.

In our first story – calming the storm – they first are afraid of the storm itself...understandably so. But then, when Jesus demonstrates his power and his authority, they are afraid...of him: of his power, of his authority. There is a holy terror in coming face to face with the very power of Almighty God.

Our second story – walking on water – doesn't mention their fear of the "*adverse wind*." But when they see Jesus walking on the water – in the Old Testament an indication of the power, and presence, of God – when they see Jesus "walking on the water," they are afraid.

Yes, we may crave this power – the power to save.

We may yearn for this power – to be with us.

But when we actually experience it, or it comes near to us, it frightens us.

Do I really want to give myself over to this one who calms the storm and walks on water?

For if I do, not only am I in his hands – as a sign of protection and provision (which we like) – I am also in his hands, as in 'my life is in his hands', as in 'my life is not my own', it is his – I am his.

And such a realization is a storm of a different sort. The stark realization that I am not my own master is a 'disturbance in the force' of my own self will, my own self-determination, my own "This is my life and I can do with it what I please."

We may very well ask, "*Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*"

This is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God who has at his disposal the very power of God Almighty.

But there is another question that warrants voicing: "What does he want with me?"

And the answer is clear: he wants faith – he wants me. All of me. He wants me to be 'all in'. He wants me to follow him, wherever he goes, wherever he is, wherever he leads, wherever he sends.

For he calls me – as he called those first disciples – he calls me to follow him, through thick and thin, in good days and in bad; from days of parable teachings that are hard to hear and harder to understand, to days of impossible tasks of feeding 5000+ crowds; to follow him through wind and waves and storm to all sorts of places on "*the other side*," even the other side of the tracks.

And yes, this may stir up all sorts of storms – around us, within us.

But notice that this power – this One – is responsive to us and our need: "*Do not be afraid*," he says.

In that second story – walking on the water – there's a curious note that Jesus "*intended to pass them by*." It is an allusion to other stories where God "passed by" Moses to reveal God's glory and "passed by" Elijah to reveal God's power and presence. But when the disciples cry out in fear, Jesus changes direction: he turns toward them, and he says, "Do not fear." Not simply a manifestation of his power, but his presence.

Even when we feel like he is unaware and indifferent to our plight, remember: when the disciples cried out, he awakens...and calms the storm. Responsive...even when we may not see it.

Yes, he is responsive to our plight, and our fear.

Though not necessarily in the exact way we would like.

We might like to think, as Jesus walks upon the water, somehow “riding above the storm,” that he might carry us with him, above the storm, that is.

But the help given may not be to take us out of the storm, but to help us through it.

Even as Jesus himself traveled through the storm in Jerusalem where, yes, he was scarred by that storm, but also, ultimately, victorious.

This one who is the Son of God.

This one who continues to beckon to me and call to me and come to me despite my lack of faith and my lack of understanding and my lack of trust.

He comes to me despite my fear, despite my confusion, despite my hesitancy – despite me.

He continues to come to me, and calms the storm – without and within – with a word.

And, yes, he reveals my fear and reveals me...and reveals himself: his power and his grace, his compassion and his way, himself and his love.

And, yes, I may feel like he is sleeping during my storm, or far away and absent. But he is not indifferent to my plight. And he is here, always here.

And I may feel afraid of all that is about me and all that is going on. But he is here, always here.

And, yes, I may even be afraid of him and what he is about and what he intends and how he might challenge me. But he is here, always here.

And he calls me – this one who is the Son of God, this one who commands the wind and the sea and they obey him, this one who walks on the chaotic waves of life – he calls me to follow him, and trust him, and be with him, even in the midst of the storm of life.

The hope, and the prayer, is that I will come to the point of being able to say, “There’s nowhere else I’d rather be, even in the midst of a storm, than with him.”

**\*HYMN** “Give to the Winds Thy Fears” GtG 815

- 1. Give to the winds thy fears;  
hope, and be undismayed.  
God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears;  
God shall lift up thy head.**

*(continued...)*

2. **Through waves and clouds and storms  
God gently clears the way.  
Wait patiently; so shall this night  
soon end in joyous day.**
3. **Leave to God's sovereign sway  
to choose and to command.  
So shalt thou, wondering, own God's way,  
how wise, how strong God's hand!**
4. **Let us in life, in death,  
thy steadfast truth declare,  
and publish with our final breath  
thy love and guardian care.**

Words: Paul Gerhardt, 1653; trans. John Wesley, 1737, alt.  
Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1872  
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#### **\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**In life and in death we belong to God.  
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,  
whom alone we worship and serve.**

**With believers in every time and place,  
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death  
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

*(from A Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)*

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**One: Saving God,...**  
**All: ...hear our prayer.**

#### **THE LORD'S PRAYER (Contemporary)**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

*(continued...)*

**Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

*Invitation*

*Reflection*

*\*Unison Prayer of Dedication*

**We give thanks to you, O Lord,  
for your sustaining presence and abundant grace.  
Receive now these gifts we bring to you  
out of your generous provision in our lives.  
May all we return to you  
be used faithfully  
to promote the peace, justice and healing  
you desire for us and your world. Amen.**

## **SENDING**

**\*CLOSING HYMN** “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” GtG 8

- 1. Eternal Father, strong to save,  
whose arm has bound the restless wave,  
who bade the mighty ocean deep  
its own appointed limits keep:  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea.**
- 2. O Savior, whose almighty word  
the wind and waves submissive heard,  
who walked upon the foaming deep,  
and calm amid its rage did sleep:  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea.**

*(continued...)*

~ 7 ~

3. **O Holy Spirit, who did brood  
upon the chaos wild and rude,  
and bade its angry tumult cease,  
and gave, for fierce confusion, peace:  
O hear us when we cry to thee  
for those in peril on the sea.**

4. **O Trinity of love and power,  
all travelers guard in danger's hour;  
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,  
protect them wheresoe'er they go;  
thus evermore shall rise to thee  
glad praise from air and land and sea.**

Words: William Whiting, 1860, alt.  
Music: MELITA, John Bacchus Dykes, 1861  
*Public Domain*

**\*CHARGE AND BLESSING**

One:           ...And let the gathered people of God say...  
All:            ...Amen.

**POSTLUDE**

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