

June 29, 2018

## **Peace, Be Still – Hear the Promises, Hope, and Love of God**

### Prayer

May the words of my mouth be meditations of our hearts and be always acceptable unto Thee. O Lord our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

### Sermon

I am one of those strange people that really like the book of Job. And the reading this morning comes right at the end of the book. It is God's response to Job and to truly understand what is going on and what God is saying to Job you need to be familiar with the rest of the story. You have to remember that Job was a really good guy. He followed God. He did everything that he understood God wanting him to do. He made the right sacrifices. He was good to his family. He had a place within his community. He was sought after for his judgements as an elder. Really good guy.

This is exactly what gets him in trouble. Because God says to Satan, "Have you seen my servant Job? Have you seen how good that guy is?" Because Satan had been walking around the Earth. Satan said to him, "Well why wouldn't he be? You've given him everything. You've blessed him with a large family. You've blessed him with herds and flocks. You've blessed him with friends in his community. Why would he not do what you wanted him to do. But if you take that away he will turn his back on you very quickly. It will get to the point that he will actually curse you."

And God says to Satan, "Go ahead and give it a try." In my opinion, not God's finest moment. And so, Satan inflicts terrible things on Job. His family is killed. His flocks and his herds are taken and every social

standing that he had was taken away from him. His wife is confused. He is confused. His wife says what in the world have you done. And Job says that line that most of us are familiar with. "The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." He is standing steadfast just like God said he would. And so, God has another conversation with Satan. God tells Satan see I told you so. My servant Job is hanging in there even with all that you've inflicted on him. Satan said yeah but if you took away his health too he would turn on you. Again, God says yeah okay, you can't kill him, but you can take his health away. And suddenly Job is inflicted with disease. He has boils and they itch and he's miserable. He's lost his family. He's lost everything that he's owned. And so, his three friends come to cheer him up. And they do this by saying what in the world did you do against God.

This has to be the biggest sin of all time. And Job says back I didn't do anything. I was good. I was following what God wanted me to do. I did not sin. Oh, but you had to sin, God would not inflict this on you. We know that God is not inflicting it but it's going on anyway. God would not inflict this on you if you hadn't sinned widely. And they are convinced that he has sinned. He is convinced that he hasn't sinned. And we go on back and forth for a while. Job is just so frustrated, so miserable. And he finally says to his friends, "You know if there were a judge that could be set up between me and God, that judge would find me righteous."

Wrong thing to say. Because he is now putting himself even with God. He's now placed himself in a superior position. God would find me even more righteous than God because I have been unjustly inflicted with these things in my life. And that's where we get to the point of the reading this morning. Where God now has had enough. He says, "Okay Job. Gird up your loins like a man and we're going to have a little

conversation here. We're going to straighten up what's really going on here. And he does this by asking him questions. Now tell me where were you when the world began. Tell me because obviously if you're righteous and know all things like God does, you know these things. You know who measured out how far the land would go. How far the seas would go. You know these things, go ahead, tell me about it.

And Job finally understands and realizes that he has let his pride and who he had become get in the way of his relationship with God. And he repents. Now the final part of the story is that Job has more family. He recovers flocks and herds. He regains his status in the community. Now we all know that when you've lost family, new family can't take away that hurt and pain. But he has been blessed by God again because he understands his position. He understands that God is holy other. And that it was his pride that didn't allow him to continue to bless God even through affliction.

Now as I was reading that and then reading the gospel for this morning it kind of came together for me a little bit in that the disciples are kind of suffering from the same kind of thing. They had been traveling with Jesus for some time now. He has just finished a long day of teaching and casting out demons and healing those who were sick. And it says in the Gospel reading that they decided to go ahead and cross the Lake of Galilee. The took him just as he was. Now it's important because normally Jesus would just go apart. He would go off on the mountain to pray. He would set himself apart from his disciples and everybody else while they were being sent home so that he would have this time of refreshment. And this time he just gets into the boat. And he is so tired that he actually gets into the stern and he goes to sleep on the cushion in the stern.

And this great windstorm comes up. And they do that in the Lake of Galilee. It's in a little bowl and once a storm gets in there it can be ferocious. Now Peter, James, John they're all fisherman. They're familiar with the Lake of Galilee. They know what these storms are like. They know that you want to get off the lake as fast as possible. But it has come up so fast and so hard. They're in the middle of the lake. The winds have come up. The waves are crashing over the side. They're afraid and these are experienced fishermen that their boat is going to sink.

I just had this picture of them kind of looking back to see when Jesus was going to get up and do something. He's sleeping. Finally, they can't take it anymore, they're scared. Jesus wake up. Don't you care that we're perishing here? And I just have this picture of Jesus opening his eyes and asking what in the world they're talking about. What is going on? And he gets up. He sees the wind, he sees the waves. There's water in the boat. And he says, "Peace be still." And the waves stop, and the winds stop. Then he asks them what were you so worried about? I was here with you. Yeah, I wasn't awake. I wasn't worrying like you were. You shouldn't have been worrying either. Where is your faith? Don't you understand that we are on a path and it's laid out by God and God is not going to allow anything to come in and take that away. We are not going to perish on this lake. I also get this vision of this dead calm. I wanted to see the disciples faces when they realized they were going to have to row the rest of the way. A little wind would be okay Jesus.

Now having seen all that. I think that when Jesus said peace be still. He wasn't just talking to the wind and waves. I think he was talking to the disciples. Peace be still. God is with you always. I am present with you even if you don't hear me speaking at the moment. Even if you don't understand how I am present. Just as Job didn't understand how God was present throughout all the turmoil that was going on in his life. Just

as the disciples didn't understand that God was present even amidst the wind and the waves. He's there and he's helping them through. He's present with them. And Jesus says peace be still so that everything can get back to it's right order. So, they will understand that he is leading them. That it was as much for the disciples as it was for the natural order.

Now all of us I think can identify a little bit with Job and the disciples. It seemed from time to time that we have a good relationship with God. We're following as well as we can. Doing what we can and yet things come into our lives that are completely out of our control. It may be health issues, it may be relationship issues. Lots of things that come that seems like the waves and the winds of life come against us and we are afraid we are losing our balance. Losing our place even losing our relationship with God.

And we need to remember like Job should have, like the disciples should have that even though we may not hear that voice speaking to us at the moment that God is there. That the promise that God made to be with those who follow and commit their life in faith. God is there. Walking with us even if we don't feel the presence that we really want. The disciples wanted Jesus to be present in saying calm down wind. Job wanted to hear from God you're doing the right things hang in there. This will pass.

And too often we get so caught up in the wind and the waves of the world around us. The turmoil if it happens to be about health, if it happens to be about job, if it happens to be about relationship issues. And we forget that Jesus is right there. And that is when Jesus says, "Peace be still." And sometimes that means that the turmoil that is going on around us comes to an end and ceases for whatever reason because it has run its course, because it has worked itself out. Or it

could be peace be still that wherever we are we need to be peaceful and hear the voice of God. Leading us through and strengthen us to walk the path that we are walking. Sure, that it will not be broken because it is God who is leading us to the place where God wishes us to be.

We're not ever told that it's going be easy. We're not ever told that there won't be turmoil. We're never told, the disciples were never told that it would be an easy course to follow especially after Jesus was killed and then raised from the dead. They are warned that it is going to be difficult from time to time. And yet they are called to keep going. Hold on to that in those times of turmoil. The promise to the disciples is the same promise that God will be with us. That the voice of Jesus will lead us on. And will give us that sense of peace. That feeling of calm. Wherever you are in your life right now. Hopefully it's a time of peace and tranquility where things are going well. But if you are in that time of the winds and the waves seem to be beating against you, listen for that voice of God. Peace be still. For in those words we hear the promise of God, the hope of God, and the love of God.

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