

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! We are now in the 8th Sunday after Pentecost and we will be meditating on the theme, "God upholds us in times of trouble." Most of us go through times of trouble in our lives when we do not know what the future holds for us. When we face severe storms in our lives we are sometimes ravaged by these storms that we do not know who to turn to or whom we can trust. It is in these times that God truly upholds us. The Psalmist says that the Lord neither slumbers nor sleeps but watches over us every minute of the day. This morning we will look at one of the incidents where Jesus shows that he upholds us in times of trouble.

Mark arranges three incidents one after the other to illustrate the vanquishing of powers hostile to God. In the first incident there is a storm, when Jesus was on his way from Galilee to Gergasenes where he vanquishes the powers of nature that were raging against them (Mark 4:35-41). In the second incident, Jesus displays his authority over demonic power (Mark 5:1-20), and finally his authority over sickness and death (Mark 5:21-43).

Mark gives us an eyewitness account which is probably that of Peter in this incident where Jesus calms the storm. The precise details regarding the time, the reference to the other boats present, the vivid detail that the 'boat was filling', the precise location of Jesus – in the stern, sleeping on a cushion, the harshness of the rebuke – Be Quiet! Shut up! The subsequent calm – all are part of an eye witness detail.

Jesus tells his disciples that they should go to the other side of the lake. Mark records that they left the crowd behind and took Jesus along in the boat. Jesus was probably tired and wanted to get some rest and so he was lying down on a cushion in the stern of the boat. As they were sailing along a furious squall broke out, and the waves filled the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. The disciples were outraged that while they were facing a storm, Jesus was sleeping and resting. They woke him up and said, "Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?"

Many a time our own situations are similar. The storms of life take charge of our lives. They can be financial storms, emotional storms, storms of relationship, storms of sickness and storms of enmity and threat. These storms rage and rock our little boats that we tremble with fear and anxiety. We fear that we will be wiped out by the forces that are against us. Many of us are calling out like the disciples, "Teacher, don't you care that we are about to die?"

What does Jesus do in the midst of the storm? He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. Jesus has authority over all of creation because he is the Creator. All of creation is subject to the Creator and therefore we need not go to anybody else. Sometimes we tend to go to astrologers and soothsayers when we are in trouble.

Jesus also asked his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Jesus had been with them for three long years and they had seen all the miracles that he had done before them. The reassuring presence of Christ makes all the difference. In the same manner Jesus is with us no matter what our storms are. He has control over them and he will tell them to be quiet because you are a child of God. God's word for us in our various storms of life is, "Do not be afraid! I am with you to uphold you." The disciples were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" God is sovereign over history and nature, and therefore intervenes in the experiences of human beings, with the revelation of his power and his will through his Son Jesus Christ. The disciples still did not comprehend his saving power in the face of danger and death. They were afraid and asked this question, "Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" Mark shows that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God who vanquishes powers that are hostile to him. May we take courage in the power and authority of Jesus as we face the storms of life.