

The title for today's message is; **The Perfect Storm**

Jesus said: ***"Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dr. William Barclay died in 1978, he was and still is, one of the most respected Bible scholar and Bible commentary writer in the world.

His life was devastated at one point when his only daughter drowned just a few days before she was to be married.

Sometime later, commenting on our scripture lesson for today, Dr. Barclay said this:

"I am not so concerned as to whether or not Jesus stilled the storm on the sea of Galilee, but what I do know is He stilled the storm in my heart."

Simon, called Peter was one of the disciples in control of the boat which carried Jesus and the other disciples in today's text. After all, it was his boat.

Now, Peter had sailed on the sea of Galilee quite often, all though usually at night, because that's when most of the best fishing took place.

Now, picture this if you will. Jesus was tired after a day of preaching and healing, so He asked Simon Peter to take Him to the other side of the sea.

Once Jesus and the other disciples were in the boat, a few of the disciples pushed the boat away from the shore, which was still crowded with people.

The sun sets as it cast a warm, red glow over the hillside, and upon the gently moving sea.

Once the boat was pushed off and away from the gravel along the western shore a sail was hoisted as they listened to the crowd on shore, faded away.

The sea was rocking the boat ever so gently, and Jesus decided to lay down and get some well deserved rest.

It wasn't long after this, the glow of the sun was completely gone, and the stars filled the dark sky, reflecting their light on the sea.

Then all of a sudden without warning, dark clouds rolled in, and the wind began to blow hard, the gentle sea became rough and dangerous.

This was an unusual storm by all accounts, causing Simon Peter's voice to no longer sound steady, and the others on board, began to fear the sea.

It was as if the dark sky dip down, touching the waves, causing the wind to rush upon the disciples as they quickly lowered the sail, bailing out water.

The only light was from the lightning, which caused shadows, highlighting the white caps of the waves, which were rushing against the side of the boat.

Yet, Jesus slept as He was rocked by the mounting waves. That's right, even in the midst of great danger, Jesus continued to sleep.

Now, its true, the Sea of Galilee is known for sudden storms, but this one was greater than the disciples had ever experienced before.

The storm was so different, Peter and the other disciples didn't know what to do. They truly feared the boat would sink and they all would drown.

Look, at one time or another, all of us are afloat on a troubled sea, causing all of us to fear, because we don't know what to do.

We too want Jesus to wake up, and quiet the churning waters that are all around us. Yes, we too want Jesus to solve all our problems!

We're seasick with worry, pain, tension, and fear, and we too yell out "Wake up Jesus, save us!"

Its clear that life for a Christian isn't always like a calm sea, were not always rested by the gentle rocking of a boat. We allow many things to disturb us!

For example, every day in the news, there are reports about another death of a child, or an adult, and how the death was literally tearing families apart.

In the United States alone, there were over 28,000 murders last year, bringing Life to a sudden, and unexpected end.

Were frightened by an unknown future, in an ever-changing world. Three years ago a professor at USC gave a report on the changing family.

He said, only 8 percent of families are of the traditional variety, with a father working, mother at home, and a marriage of lifelong commitment.

He said, there are 2,000 "step families" formed each day. And the children in step families need at least six years, to adapt to the changes in their lives!

He said, "the average married person has more parents than children because of multiple marriages."

Yes, you and I are afloat on a troubled sea, and we cry out for Jesus to wake up, and save us! But who is sleeping?

It's true were physically hurt! And the pain deep inside us, comes upon us in the dark of the night, causing us to cry out.

We worry about disease, or getting old, and we know each day might bring a diagnosis we don't want to hear, or even death.

Another thing that brings us worry and fear, is that health care costs have risen 28 percent already this year. Causing problems for many today.

And still others have another health worry, actually they're part of the 40 million Americans who have no health insurance at all!

Yes, storms swirl around us, and were emotionally and physically hurt! Were easily hurt by words others speak, or their prejudices.

Were not all Hollywood starlets, nor are we built like some Greek god, or goddess. Were not all brilliant in mind, nor quick in speech.

We don't all make friends quickly, nor bond easily. And yes, we cry out for Jesus to wake up, to save us, and make things right!

Mark's tells us that Jesus did just that, He too yelled out, but He yelled out to the storm ***"Quiet! Be still!"***

Now its important that we understand the role of the messenger, as well as the message. As for the disciples, the storm was calmed through Jesus' Words.

And so it is, when a loved one dies. Our peace and our calming also comes from God's Word, spoken through people who share in our grief.

Or the one who is out of work, here too, peace comes from God's Word through a close friend, or even a stranger.

My friends, at one time or another, we too will be the voice of God's Word, as we speak His truths to someone who is experiencing a storm.

Its so comforting to hear Jesus speak to a particular storm that has caused us to fear. Its nice, and so calming, to hear Jesus say: **"Quiet, be still!"**

Remember the New Testament story regarding Paul, who spoke words of calm to a frightened man.

Of course they weren't sailing on the sea of Galilee, rather it occurred in a dark prison just after an earthquake in Philippi!

Paul and Silas were on a missionary journey, traveling over to the European mainland. They had converted a wealthy woman, by the name of Lydia.

They had also met a slave girl who was earning her master a great deal of money, simply by telling fortunes.

Now the slave girl was changed, by the Word of God spoken by Paul, however this caused a decline in the economy of her owners.

So, because of this, the owners had Paul and Silas thrown into prison. It was in the dark of night that an earthquake shook the ground.

Causing the prison gates to fly open. When the jailer saw this he assumed all the prisoners had fled to freedom.

Thinking this, the jailer was about to take his own life, when a voice was heard from the depths of the prison, **"Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"**

To the jailer, these words were as calming and powerful as the Words Jesus spoke to the storm.

Indeed, the storms of life have, for many people, been the way by which God has opened a new relationship with Him.

This is proof that a dark cloud does have a silver lining! Jesus said, "**Quiet. Be still.**"

And immediately there was great calm. The fierce sea did not destroy. Life was not lost! Faith held, and was strengthened.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.