

Fourth Sunday of Pentecost, 24/6/2012, Holy Trinity

Mark 4:35-41

I think that you will agree with me when I say that our lives, our feelings and emotions do not stay on the one track for very long.

Rather our lives are oscillating all the time between good and bad, health and illness, joy and sadness.

Then there are times when we can choose between taking on new challenges and sticking with the known, in the situation where we feel comfortable.

On other occasions we face uncertainty about the future, about our faith and even about the future of the Church.

The first disciples of Jesus found that their lives likewise oscillated in the affairs of the world and their lives within it.

This applies in this morning's Gospel reading.

Here they are taking a quiet boat trip across the sea of Galilee when a sudden afternoon storm hits the boat.

The boat starts to take water and as fast as they bail out there is more coming in.

In their desperation and in fear of the unknown they cry out to Jesus who is asleep on the bottom of the boat.

In this incident, like us, they discover that God is with them, Always, in the person of Jesus.

When we look Jesus' life oscillates in a similar fashion to ours except that his is between his humanity and his divinity, his Godhead.

First, in this morning's narrative there is his humanity.

Like us on many occasions he is tired, in fact, so tired that he can sleep, not like me in front of the television, but by lying down in the bottom of a rocking, moving boat.

He was working so hard that he could lie down and sleep in the bottom of a boat as it crossed the Sea of Galilee.

Another statement about Jesus' humanity that really strikes me is when the opposition say to him, "you are not yet fifty years old and have you seen Abraham?"

Would you like that to be said to you when you were thirty?

Is the person who is saying it not a very good judge of age, or have you not worn so well that you look to be in your forties?

This seems to be the case with Jesus as far as outward appearance is concerned.

In this regard his humanity has not served him well.

When it comes to his Godhead, the incident makes a statement about Jesus, the Son of God.

The disciples are rescued but they do not understand.

Who is this?

How do you answer this?

Mark invites you to answer.

In rescuing the disciples we have the extraordinary image of Jesus commanding the elements and the elements responding to Jesus' call.

This, however, has less to do with God controlling the elements than with portraying the gospel as struggle against demonic and destructive powers and the powers of darkness and of the unknown.

Mark's Gospel as a whole is about Jesus coming to liberate people from such forces.

Jesus is the embodiment of God's power, the bearer of God's Spirit.

We may not be caught up in demonic powers in 21st century Australia, but we can certainly identify with the powers of darkness, the powers of the unknown and the powers that destroy, distort and endanger and can see salvation as overcoming, liberation from such powers.

It is the power of Jesus that liberates us from such powers.

In Jesus heaven and earth meet.

In the events of our everyday lives we encounter the powers of darkness, the powers of the unknown and the powers of greed, lust, selfishness, individualism and consumerism that destroy, distort and endanger our individual lives and the corporate life of the world around us.

It is the power of Jesus that liberates us and the world as a whole from such powers.

This is the Good News of the Gospels that we proclaim.

There is hope in the midst of trouble.

As our lives oscillate Jesus' presence will gently soak into us and is with us whichever way our lives oscillate.

