

Mark 4:35-41

Pentecost 5; June 24 & 25, 2018

There comes a time in every person's life that you have to put into practice what you have learned. Many years ago, as a teenager, I couldn't wait to drive. As soon as I could, I took the Behind the Wheel class at school. I learned everything that I needed to know to get that coveted "Beginners Permit." I went to the DMV here in Milwaukee, and took the test. There was no problem passing the test so that I could get the permit to learn how you actually drive on the road.

I can still remember one of the first times that I drove sitting behind the big blue family station wagon. It was a monster of a vehicle to learn to drive on. Backing out of the driveway went just fine. We started down the street of the subdivision that we lived. It didn't take long that another car came right up behind us, because I wasn't going as fast as they wanted to go. I have to admit, that there was a little bit of panic that went through my mind. Now what do I do? Yet, over the next months, I learned to drive. It became easier to drive on busy roads. I learned to get more comfortable driving on the freeway.

Finally, the day arrived to take the test. I was ready and I was nervous at the same time. I did great for most of the test. Then I did it. I cut the left turn that I was told to take, and my front tires crossed the center line on the road on which I was turning. That's all it took. I drove in the wrong lane, even though it was by inches, that was the end of the test. I flunked. I felt terrible. I felt humiliated. So, now it meant more practice. Once again, it came time to put into practice what I had learned and took the test again. This time was different. This time I passed.

It isn't easy to put into practice what you have learned. That was the lesson that Jesus wanted to teach his disciples this morning. Jesus had been teaching his disciples and a large crowd on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. They had learned about how the Word of God works and grows faith in the hearts of people. For the whole day, Jesus taught. When evening finally came, Jesus said to his disciples: "**Let us go over to the other side.**" They got in a boat and began to make their way across the Sea of Galilee. Even though the disciples had already learned many things from Jesus, there were still plenty of things that they didn't understand. But sailing in a boat across the Sea of Galilee, this they knew. You can almost imagine the disciples getting into the boat with Jesus and saying to Jesus: *Why don't you get some rest, Jesus. There's a cushion in the back of the boat. Go lay down. We got this!* Many of disciples had been fishermen who had been on the Sea of Galilee hundreds of times. They didn't get the whole disciple thing yet. This they did. Little did they know that they were about to learn a lesson that the never would forget. They thought they were in control. Jesus, however, was going to teach them they weren't in control at all.

What makes us afraid? Not having control. We often fear what we cannot control. For example, we fear the economy. If you have been paying any attention to the stock market in the past year, you have seen just how unpredictable it can be. Experts tell us what is going to happen. One day, you think the world is coming to an end. The next – everything is great. Reality is no one knows exactly what it is doing or where it is going. It just seems to be out of control.

We fear health problems. There are things going on in us or in loved ones that no one can seem to control. God has given us some wonderful medical tools to use today. But even as amazing as medicine is, it has limits. We can do everything "right," yet there are things that happen that cannot be controlled or stopped in our bodies. We fear that things are not under control.

If Nancy and I are going somewhere in the car, I like to be the one driving. It's not that she can't. It's not that she is a bad driver. I like to drive because I like being the one in control. It is really hard for me to sit in the passenger seat. Someday, it is really going to be hard for me to lose the control of driving.

We like control. When WE can't control it, we fear it. The disciples liked to be in control. But it didn't take them long to figure out that evening that they had lost control. Mark tells us: "**A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.**" That's a scary feeling. Years ago, I took my boat out on to Lake Michigan. It didn't look at that bad as we launched the boat. As we came out from behind the break wall, I thought we were going down. My kids are still convinced that I was trying to kill them. For a moment, I was worried that I might not get it

turned back around. These are seasoned fishermen who knew how bad storms could get on the Sea of Galilee. No doubt, they tried everything that they knew. Nothing was working, and they thought they were going down.

What do they do? Our text says: **“The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”** Let’s at least give them credit for going to Jesus. They did the right thing, but they said the wrong thing. **“Teacher, don’t you care.”** They forgot who Jesus was. They forgot everything that Jesus had taught them. They forgot to put into practice what they had learned just a few hours earlier that day. **“Don’t you care?”**

Ever felt that way? Ever question God? Ever think that God doesn’t care about you? Sound familiar?

- *Jesus, don’t you care that my marriage is falling apart? I’ve tried everything, but nothing seems to work? I feel like I’m drowning.*
- *Jesus, don’t you care that it seems like I’m drowning in bills. I work harder and longer, and we can’t seem to get ahead? I feel like I’m drowning.*
- *Jesus, don’t you care that I’m losing my mind, and things are slipping away? I just can’t remember things like I used to. I feel like I’m drowning.*
- *Jesus, don’t you care that I feel so alone. I feel like I’m drowning.*

Storms can show up at any stage of life. We look at those storms, and we see that it is hard to put what we have learned into practice. We sit here in church and agree with everything that God says, and then we forget so easily during the week. It isn’t easy to trust Jesus to fix the storms that we face, is it? We want to fix what wrong in our life. We think we know how. I can’t even count how many hours of sleep that I have lost worrying about things.

Yet, the truth is – no matter what kind of storm that is going on in our little worlds, we are not going to fix on our own. It isn’t going to work. The harder we try to fix things ourselves, it only makes it worse. We begin to feel like we are downing.

But it doesn’t have to be that way. That’s the lesson that Jesus wanted his disciples to learn that night in the boat on the Sea of Galilee. You see, Jesus is the only one who can fix it. Fixes it, he does. **“Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.**” Just like that – DONE. The disciples thought that Jesus didn’t care about them. We think that Jesus doesn’t care for us, think again. We might have lost control. But Jesus doesn’t.

You want proof? Look at the cross. On that cross we see the worst storm this world has ever seen. Yet, what happens? **Be still. It is finished!** The innocent died for the guilty. The most unfair thing in all of history happens. He does it for you. Every sin forgiven in the blood of Jesus. Jesus cared about his disciples. He cares about his Church. He cares about us. Put the words of Jesus into practice. Trust the One who commands the winds and the waves. You are saved by Jesus! Amen.