

Lent Day 7
Wednesday February 17, 2016

Reading: Mark 4.35-41

Reflection

Is God good? That seems to be at the heart of this section of Scripture. Jesus has awesome power (demonstrated over the very elements of the storm itself), but does he care, is the question. Power without compassion could be monstrous — see many sci-fi villains — and compassion without power is futility. Which is Jesus?

Many of us have suffered and asked the question, “Where is God?” Is he good but weak, unable to address my situation? Or, is he powerful but not good that he does not intervene for my sake. These seem to be the boiled down two options. But this story of the disciples and the boat point to a third option. Overcoming our suffering through weakness, not strength.

Jesus is pictured as sleeping in the boat, seemingly oblivious to the storm, the sinking of the boat and the disciple’s fears. Only when he is roused does he take action, and that action when analyzed is not all that impressive. He simply says, “Quiet! Be still!” Just two sharp commands. There is no battle — it wouldn’t make for good film — just words. Of course this points forward in the story.

All of Israel was hoping that the Messiah was coming from God to militarily overthrow the foreign powers who oppressed her. Jesus did not fit the model. He who had power over wind and waves, life and death, sickness and health, did not try to save himself from the suffering of the cross. He chose weakness as his power, over raw invincible power. And, in so doing, paradoxically he overcame the true powers which have held all humanity in bondage, namely sin.

The key in all of this is to know Jesus, “Do you still have no faith?” Another way we could say this is “don’t you trust me yet?” God is good. He may not rescue us from everything we suffer with but we can trust him. Our suffering is not needless, when given to God in faith it is a power which overcomes evil in the world.

Prayer

Lord of the storm, would you increase our trust of you. Help us to stand firm in the storms of our lives knowing that you have overcome the powers of sin and death and you will use even our pain for your purpose and glory. Amen.