

Sunday Thought

20th June 2021 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings

1 Samuel 17:57 – 18:5,10-16

Psalm 133

2 Corinthians 6: 1 - 13

Mark 4: 35 - 41

World of Many Storms

Last Sunday it was good to learn of a considerable measure of goodwill among world leaders. There was a tone of peace like summer daybreak in Carbis Bay as they talked together, searching to promote reconciliation and peace about major world issues – the pandemic and fair sharing of vaccines, climate change, trade issues etc. They will have been aware of how many, many more and greater stormy issues world-wide are crying out for peaceful resolution. It was good that Cornwall was bathed in sunshine with no prophetic coastal storms brewing.



Our Bible readings this week have an overall theme of life-storms. They touch on many of the other issues the G7 leaders could have worked on ... and a little psalm among them expressing a vision for world peace. Central to them all is the Gospel reading. It's the well loved and well preached account by Mark of Jesus stilling a raging Galilee lake-storm. We could have a lot of discussion about what went wrong on that occasion, apart from the well-known vagaries of Gennesaret weather. Jesus was obviously worn out after a full day of preaching to large crowds and teaching his disciples deeper truths. At the end of the day, with people lingering for even more of him, Jesus had already retreated to a boat waiting at the water's edge. He invited his disciples to join him for a short break by themselves on the farther shore. Did they all go!? In one small boat!? Perhaps 'overload' was a cause of instability in the storm! Maybe they all wanted to go, and few wished to miss out on the trip? Fear obviously disabled the crew, some of whom were experienced fishermen. Water from crashing waves quickly filled the boat, and greater fear was fuelled by incredulity that the Master slept on – even on a wet cushion. That has ever since raised the perennial question - *Doesn't God care enough to notice us and do something to help?* Once awake and actively saving the hour, Jesus pinpointed the real problem – *'What happened to your faith? You believe in me, but when it comes to the crunch do you really trust me?'*

Our Old Testament reading is a stormy one as well. Set against the background of war between Israel and Philistia it tells of David's contest with Goliath bringing victory for king Saul's armies. I recall a little girl at school being very supportive of Goliath after she read of David meeting Saul with the giant's head in his hand, swinging by its hair! She was surely on her way to learning conflict resolution! The reading is the beginning of a long saga over many stormy years ahead. That is the story of Saul's insane jealousy of the popular young hero and of the joyous and painful friendship between his son Solomon and David - and much more. Last week's G7 leaders were not dealing with any different world storms, except perhaps for the subject of climate change?

Apostle Paul had experience of many storms too, including three shipwrecks! In this excerpt from his letter, he is facing another kind of storm - division in the church at Corinth. A group of new leaders are questioning his authority as an apostle of Jesus. Paul, while not wishing to boast, presents his case with a long list of proofs telling the cost of his love for Christ and the Church. He has endured many stormy times of trouble and hardship, beatings and imprisonment, poverty, overwork, hunger etc. etc. But *'In everything'*, he says, *'we have, by our Christ-like lives, shown ourselves to be true servants of God.'* In the strength of this he appeals to his readers for peace and reconciliation so that God's love for them all shall not be wasted.

Storms come for us all and the story of Jesus' Lake storm is still our help. At times he may seem to be asleep, but he **is there with us** in the moment. God is greater than the storm. He accepts our mistakes which may contribute to the problem and continues to say, *'Trust me! Trust me!'*

A Prayer [with Psalm 133 in mind]

*Lord, our God, we repeat the psalmist's prayer:
How wonderful you are! How pleasant when God's people live together in harmony!
Peace is like dew, turning to water, running into streams, irrigating the world:
Peace is words, thoughts, acts of love,
which merge into reconciliation and harmony everywhere.
In our stormy times help us to hold on to you in complete trust until we hear you say
Peace! Be still!*



Mount Hermon