

## SAILING THROUGH LIFE WITH THE LORD

Though the seas of life are rough, He cares for you -- Though He appears to be asleep, He is there to answer our prayers.

Mark 4:35-41

**TEXT:** *That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Summer is the time for vacations. A time to get away, relax and be refreshed. A popular get away is the Cruise Ship. Once you are aboard a cruise ship, your vacation begins, and everything is done for you.

The boats Jesus' disciples used were not cruise ships. They were fishing boats. Boarding a fishing boat was not a vacation. It was hard work. But Jesus did board a fishing boat one day to get away. The Bible says: ***That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat.*** It appears that Jesus needed a rest from His work, and He fell into such a sound sleep that He did not realize that a terrifying storm was swamping their boats.

This is account from Scripture that offers us several lessons on how our Lord cares for the members of His Church. We are SAILING THROUGH LIFE WITH THE LORD, and we need to remember that He cares for you, so that you can always call upon Him in trouble.

Sailing through life with the Lord is less like a vacation on a cruise ship and more like the hard work of a fisherman. On the other hand, with Jesus in our boat, so to speak, the safety and security is more like a cruise ship than that of a fishing boat. So when the storms of life come upon us, we should never doubt for one moment that we are safe, because Jesus cares for you. Peter, who probably recalled this incident wrote: ***Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*** 1 Pe 5

Does he? Did it look like Jesus cared for His disciples who were rowing against the wind and waves while bailing out water until they could see that they were sinking and about to go under? They fight the storm and Jesus sleeps. How could Peter's experience ever mesh with what he would later write: ***Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*** In fact, this is precisely the issue: Jesus DOESN'T CARE! And they declare this: ***The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"*** This not a simple plea for help, this is an accusation: You don't care....!

To illustrate how susceptible we are to this faithless confession, let me remind you of those two lovely ladies, sisters, Mary and Martha, who loved Jesus and invited him over to their home for dinner. It was out of love for Jesus that they work hard to prepare and to serve. But when Jesus arrived, the Bible says that Mary sat and listened to Jesus while her sister, Martha, kept working. Finally, out of frustration, the Bible says that Martha interrupted Jesus and asked: ***Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!*** Lu 10 Once again: Lord, you don't care! If you did care, you would tell Mary to help me.

Whether drowning in a storm or drowning under the frustration of doing all the work by herself, the sin is the same: Accusing and condemning Jesus for not caring. If He did care, He would be awake, straining at the oars with us, telling others to be kind to us and to help us. He would make our lives easier and safer and we would never wonder, "Where is Jesus? Is He asleep?"

What a sin this is! In fact, Jesus told His disciples: ***Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?*** He charges them, not with weak faith, but with having no faith. NO FAITH! ***Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?*** While Jesus is true God who can see faith in the heart, He also is true man who limited His divine power in order to be man's savior. Here the Lord speaks as true man judging their actions and their confession: Don't you care?

Who can possibly say that the Lord doesn't care if they see the cross and know and believe what happened there? If God so loved the world of sinners that He gave His only-begotten Son to be the Sacrifice for our sins, how can anyone believe that and still say: Don't you care? The Apostle Paul writes: ***What, then, shall***

*we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?* Ro 8 Look at the cross where Jesus would suffer and die to win our forgiveness and God's grace! Will such a God not also graciously bless and protect us at all times? Are we not a precious treasure, the "apple of His Eye," His dear children upon whom His watchful eye never closes.

Sailing through life with the Lord is assured us by the Cross upon which Jesus died to redeem us for eternal life. The cross is proof that He cares, even when through those storms of life when instead of feeling that we are the "apple of his eye" it appears that his eyes are closed in sound sleep. His answer to your prayers is proof that He cares for you.

Psalm 50 has a verse that explains to the Lord's disciples WHY going through life with the Lord will not be a "pleasure cruise" but a cruise that will encounter many storms that will terrify us. In that passage the Lord commands us to pray: *...call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.* Ps 50 The "storms of life" will always tempt us to wonder if the Lord really cares FOR ME, a weak and undeserving sinner. They will cause us to wonder where the Lord is in our lives; is He really in our boat? Is He asleep? Where is He? WHY does he fall asleep on me? These storms will not be little annoyances of life that we can weather by ourselves so that we begin to think that we don't need the Lord or His Word. These will be the kinds of storms that will leave us with no other hope or conclusion that if the Lord isn't aroused from His apparent lethargy we will indeed be destroyed.

So he commands us: *...call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.* Ps 50 How did the Lord's disciples apply this Psalm that dark night while their boat was filling with water? *Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ... They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"* They called upon Jesus, and even though their hearts were overwhelmed with such fear that they even sin while they pray! For they accuse Jesus of not caring, and yet He delivers them! The final result however is that they honor and glorify Jesus for His power, His grace and mercy: *Even the wind and the waves obey him!"*

Can we expect the same attention to our prayers? Am I, with all my sinful doubts and spiritual weaknesses one who deserves the Lord's help? Is Jesus "in my boat"? None of us deserve the Lord's help and deliverance, but He is indeed in our boat! It is so written for us to know and believe! Jesus promises: *I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.* Mt 18 He's in our boat this morning! He is NOT asleep, but He is enjoying the praise and glory that is our worship. If He SEEMS to be asleep, He commands us to awaken Him with our prayers and pleas for mercy.

Jesus is indeed in our boat! When the waters of life's storms swamp us, remember the blessed water of your baptism! That water, as Peter also declares, saves us! *... baptism ... saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand-with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.* 1 Pe 3 And even though our sinful nature will doubt and fear, the water of our Baptism is deep enough to drown the Old Adam each and every time he raises his ugly head! So he urges us never to cease praying, but to be bold and to "wake him up" with our prayers, for his is in your boat!

Some of you have been on one of the big beautiful cruise ships. I'm told that they are a most enjoyable experience. But even mighty cruise ships have been sunk by storms at sea. Cruise ship, pontoon boat, fishing boat or row boat... it doesn't matter but to know that Jesus is in your boat. And even if it should seem that he sleeps while you weather the most terrifying storms of life, he has the power to calm the worst storms. Let us remember what Peter learned from Jesus: *...call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.* Ps 50 Amen