

## THE BIGGEST STORMS IN LIFE

The Rev. Corinne Hodges, Sunday, June 21, 2009, SJOC

- I. Today marks the first day of summer, what began at 1:45 a.m. the Summer Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere, the longest, brightest day=sunshine, calm, leisure. Elsewhere in Southern Hemisphere, the first day of winter=cold, storms.
  - A. Winter weather-road report: the worst storm was a whiteout. Thank goodness for the white van in front of me.
  - B. Worst storm of the winter, but in all honesty, the worst storms in my life, haven't been weather related at all.
  - C. Storms in our lives—react to circumstance beyond our control with great anxiety, when fear takes over.
  
- II. A couple yrs. ago Mike and I were caught up in such a storm
  - A. We knew Mike's work situation was going to change, as a result so would our entire lives
  - B. He was looking at possible jobs all over the country, from TX to NY, CA to WI—there were no openings for his work in Chicago
  - C. I remember August of 2007 real well as we made a trip out to PA—a place where neither of us had spent any real time Only time for me was an 8<sup>th</sup> grade youth trip with my church, shoveling out possessions of a woman's house from a mudslide.
  - D. Recall the first day, spent touring the nearby towns looking for places to live, downtown/local areas to eat, shop, exercise, meet people—everything seemed so difft. than what we were used to in Chicago
  - E. While we tried to keep our minds open, at end of day, there was little we had seen that looked good, inspiring or exciting
  - F. Driving through terrible thunderstorm, recall sitting at hotel restaurant for dinner depressed; food had arrived cold and completely unappetizing. Nothing felt good...fear set in and took over my entire being. I did not want to be there, neither of us wanted to leave our home, our "crowd" our friends and families, our life—it was unsettling, uncertain, and down right frightening
  - G. Like the disciples in the boat, our lives were rocked in a big way, we were shaken, looking for safety on the other side and we did not yet see it—the storm got the best of me that night. After outburst, tears, talking and complaining, we were out of words and a stillness took over.
  - H. What happened the next day was really quite amazing. A realtor took us around town and quietness continued, just trying to listen
  - I. Have to tell you that after a couple hours, Mike and I looked at each other and at a possible move with much brighter eyes. Overnight, the

anxiety and fear had subsided, the storm had calmed and the boat had become steady

- J. We still could not see the shore (and little did we know it would be in Northern IN!), but we knew it would appear in time. We had to trust God and that God did care what we were going through and would see us safely to the other side.

III. Quiet! Be still! Jesus speaks these words to the sea in our Gospel reading today, but I wonder if it was for the benefit of the disciples as well.

- A. We hear of the great fear of the disciples when a storm hits and the boat they are in starts to fill with water
- B. Several of the disciples were experienced fisherman so we know it must have been quite a storm
- C. In their fretful, frightened state, chaos was taking over and they realized they were not in control of the boat or the storm
- D. In our OT lesson today, we see the same sort of thing with Job. Job has hit rock bottom. He's lost his family, his wealth and his health. He's scared so out of this stormy time in his life, he dares to demand a reason from God.
- E. Out of the whirlwind, God responds with a rhetorical question about creation back to Job. By highlighting the mighty works of the Lord, God silences Job. Job is human, like us, and cannot understand God's order of the universe or why things happen the way they do. Job, like us, cannot control the happenings of his life—the seas of change

IV. What have been the biggest storms in your life and how did you weather them? Perhaps you are in the midst of one right now...

- A. "Quiet! Be still!" If chaos, worry and fear are getting the best of you, remember Jesus' words. This will help you
- B. Jesus yells out the instruction to get a grip, breathe, calm down. Be still.
- C. Words I know I need to hear in moments of panic and fear, desperation when worry takes over and my mind goes in all kinds of directions
- D. Do not forget what the disciples did. Jesus is right there with us when the winds picked up and waves started to break
- E. God does care and will act when the time is right
- F. When unexpected turbulence hits, when you don't know which end is up, feel like you are being tossed up in the waves or sinking in the ship, remind yourself that God is with you. We need not be afraid. In time, God will calm the rough waters. As the Psalmist says, God will "quiet the wind down to a whisper and bring us safely back to the harbor."