

"WHEN WORRY TAKES HOLD"

TEXT: "But immediately He spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; have no fear.' And He got into the boat with them and the wind ceased."

(Mark 6: 51)

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was continually confronted with the problem of fear in the lives of those with whom He lived and to whom He spoke. The words "fear", "anxious", "troubled", "afraid", "worried" were often on His lips. "Fear not". "Do not be anxious about tomorrow". "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". Often He spoke in this fashion; often He met worry and fear in the lives of those He loved.

DEVELOPMENT

On one occasion when Jesus and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee, a severe storm suddenly arose. The disciples were frightened, terrified, fearful. But Jesus wasn't!

They had every reason to be worried for the winds and the waves were rapidly filling their small boat with water. When Jesus asked them why they were fearful, their patience must have been seriously taxed. And when He went on and asked them how it was that they had no faith, they must have felt like asking Him how it was that He had any faith at all in the face of the facts.

For worry and fear, as you know, are always based on an admitted fact - an ache, a pain, a lump, an overdrawn account, an empty refrigerator. And worry is always conquered - not by a denial of those facts - but by a faith that out-runs the facts.

JESUS KNEW MORE THAN THE DISCIPLES

The disciples were worried, anxious, fearful. Jesus wasn't. Jesus didn't worry because, in the first place, He knew more than the disciples. For instance, He knew that worry never accomplishes anything. No matter how dangerous the storm might be, no matter how little likelihood there was for a safe landing, the anticipation of the disaster would neither stop the storm or make possible a happy landing.

Jesus knew that a person cannot prolong life one second by worrying about it. He knew that worrying is a dangerous tendency for people to slip into. The fisherman in that boat need all of their strength and energy to fight the storm. Worry simply drained away some of that strength and vitality. The sick man who worries about his health stands less chance of getting well than the man who leaves all the mechanism of his mind and emotions to work for health. The person who has lost his job will not get another one by worrying about it. By worrying about it, he will wear out his nerves, distort his faith, lower his reserve. A doctor....

Jesus knew that worry is not only futile, but it is also dangerous.

JESUS WANTED MORE THAN THE DISCIPLES

As you examine this incident, you come to see that there is a second reason as to why Jesus wasn't worried. Let me work in to this way. Jesus wanted more than

His disciples. They simply wanted to get safely over to the other side of the lake, to get their feet back on solid ground. Jesus, on the other hand, wanted the Kingdom of God.

I believe that the further a person sets his goal away from himself, the more power, the more creative energy he has to overcome serious obstacles. The immediate wellbeing of the disciples was threatened; therefore, they were anxious and apprehensive. On the other hand, Jesus wasn't particularly interested in their immediate welfare or His own. Therefore, this storm didn't threaten or upset Him the way it did His disciples.

When we begin to worry only about our own problems, we can be sure that our goal is too close to ourselves. If our aim is simply to think only of ourselves - our own happiness, or our own health - then every little ache or pain is going to cause us worry. If our aim is to be an effective agent of God's will in the world where we live, then the storms that we encounter along the way will be incidental to our major undertaking. Jesus wanted more than the disciples.

JESUS SAW MORE THAN THE DISCIPLES

Thirdly, Jesus saw more than the disciples. They saw the winds and the waves filling up their small boat with water. They saw themselves in danger of drowning. On the other hand, while Jesus saw the storm, He also saw the wind carrying the storm away as quickly as it had brought it. He saw the care of the Great Spirit which was like the care of a good father for his children. He saw, too, that while we are not spared every hardship in life, we are promised the necessary strength to meet them.

He saw that there are resources beyond our own from which we can derive strength - strength that is sufficient for the demands that life does place upon us. This somehow was in the original contract. God did it for the birds and the flowers. Would He do less for man? He saw a divine pledge implicit in all life and trusting that He did not worry. (monarch of the East)

He saw the storms, but He saw something above the storms, something that enabled Him to ride above them time and again. It was His faith. A faith that was nourished by prayer. William James, the great philosopher said, "The cure for worry is prayer". Jesus knew more than His disciples. He wanted more than the disciples. He saw more than the disciples. His faith kept his life free from worry, from fear, from anxiety, from tension.

CLOSING ILLUSTRATION

Recently I heard a story of a ship caught in a storm at sea. It was one of those raging storms which occasionally sweep the North Atlantic this time of year. The great ship labored heavily; her engines holding her in the teeth of a howling gale that played with the ship as though she were a floating toy. The storm had lasted for several hours; the nerves of the passengers were beginning to give way. Huddled together in the lounge, unable to sleep, some of them wept, some prayed. They were fearful that this great ship would crack under the constant pressure and pounding of the forty to fifty foot waves.

Suddenly the captain of the ship appeared in the doorway, called there to prevent what might easily have become a panic situation. A strong, confident, weathered seaman with a kindly face, he walked to the center of the room and

talked quietly with the passengers. He told them of the storms through which he and the ship had passed on previous voyages. He told them that the engines were working perfectly, that there was no evidence of strain in the ship. Calmly and masterfully, in a voice made vibrant with emotion, he said, "We will trust in God and in our good ship and He will bring us through".

The people grew quiet, brave again. They had looked into the face of the captain - a captain who honored the master of the sea and their fears subsided.

CLOSING Perhaps this is what some person or persons present here today who are worried, uptight, fearful about things in life need to do - to take a long look into the face of the captain of our faith - a good long look.

To remember that He is still the master of life's turbulent sea. To remember how long ago "He got into the boat with His disciples, and the wind ceased" - He brought calm and peace and quietness to their lives, and He can do the same today - if only we will let Him!

LET US PRAY God, our Father, may that spirit that was in Thy Son now be in our hearts, that we may go on from here trusting in Thee.

Make us conscious of Thy nearness, Thy presence in these moments of quietness. We know that in the hour of deepest need and greatest distress Thou wilt come.

Touch our eyes that we may see Thee; open our ears that we may hear thy voice. Enter our hearts that we may experience love, peace and courage. Grant us thy healing benediction.

May we depart from here with the assurance that this is thy world, that thou canst still the troubled waters of lives, that we can never drift beyond thy care and love. Remembering how Jesus got into the boat with his disciples and how the winds ceased, we ask this in His name and spirit.