

Sermon - June 17<sup>th</sup> 2018, Father's Day

## Storm Stiller...

Mark 4:35–41



Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. This is Father's Day.

It is said that a good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and unappreciated heroes in all humanity.

One time a little boy was asked to define Father's Day and he said, "It's just like Mother's Day, only you don't spend as much on the present."

The greatest number of long distance phone calls are made on Mother's Day; the largest number of collect calls are made on Father's Day!

Regardless what the world thinks or does on Father's day, we the Church need to focus what counts on this Father's day, the honoring of our parents according to God's command and purpose, as the Fourth Commandment teaches us to honor our fathers parents. That applies to both young and old. Even if your father is no longer living, you can still honor what he taught you.

And to honor our fathers today, I would like to meditate on the vocation of being a father, something our world has lost or misunderstood. Some men even push to have their unborn children aborted because they don't want the responsibility of raising children. Some fathers leave the mothers to raise the children without them. Some dads are workaholics. Some dads are destructive and violent to their families.

And most importantly many have abandoned their God given spiritual roles in their families. We fathers have a have a spiritual role in our families. The Scriptures tell us that a husband is the head of the family; a father is the head of the family, the spiritual head of the family. And as the Catechism teaches us, fathers are to teach their family the Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, and to quiz them weekly on how well they know it. Fathers are to teach psalms and hymns to their kids so they learn them by heart.

But many Christian fathers have believed the world that manly men are not religious. Religion is not for true men. But by believing so, men have lost their ability to be spiritual leaders their families even of their communities. But the Lord bids us hear what He says about fathers and receive the grace He gives for Fathers to do these important vocation.

And on this Father's day we would like to meditate on the Gospel of Mark chapter Mark 4 which tells us: "On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."<sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.<sup>37</sup> And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.<sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"<sup>39</sup> And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said

to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

### **I. Jesus teaches us the role of fathers by modeling trust in God even in trouble.**

The first lesson is that Jesus models for us a good role of a father by example of trust in God in times of troubles.

In this Gospel reading teaches father's some important lessons.

But first let me tell you that research shows that when fathers actively lead their families to church, their kids are more than 90 percent likely to be active, faithful Christians as adults. But if fathers stay home from church, then, even if Mom goes, the children have a fifty percent chance of staying Christian later in life! For whatever reason, the faith of children seems to be directly related to the spiritual guidance of their fathers. Now, there are exceptions, of course. But the research shows how important the father's spiritual role is.

Many dads teach their kids how to work and support themselves in life. They teach them how to have fun, to fish, to drive a four-wheeler, to play sports. This is all fine and good. Fathers should do these things. But how many dads are also spiritual leaders for their kids? How many dads speak to their children at home about death becoming life or teach them to pray in all circumstances? How many dads lead their families to church, instead of sending the wife and kids they stay home? Or do some other activities themselves, fishing, hunting, golfing?

In today's Gospel, Mk 4, our Lord Jesus miraculously stills the mighty storm. That's obvious. But Jesus does something else that isn't so obvious. Jesus teaches the vocation of fatherhood, teaching by doing what a father should do. After all Jesus is the ultimate Father, a spiritual Father, and the disciples are his spiritual children.

The text says that a howling storm came upon the boat. The disciples were afraid. What was Jesus doing? He was sleeping, curled up, oblivious to what was going on. That doesn't sound like a good example for fathers, does it? It seems like Jesus was looking after his own interests and not helping his frightened children. That's not what fathers should do!

The disciples' faith was shaken. Like children sometimes do, the disciples got upset at Jesus, their spiritual father. "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (v 38). Like some children, the disciples didn't think their spiritual father, Jesus, was taking care of them.

Are you like this sometimes? When times of trouble come, do you doubt that Jesus is acting for your sake? Are you so sure that Jesus just doesn't care or that he's off looking after his own interests and is clueless to what's happening to you? In times of trouble, do you get upset at Jesus and think his Word doesn't really apply to you?

Of course, Jesus wasn't forgetting about his children. Jesus was teaching them that when trouble comes, they, you, can keep trusting in God, your loving Father. Like a good earthly father, Jesus teaches his spiritual children to fear, love, and trust God above all things. He teaches the disciples that faith in God leads to a peaceful heart. The storm threatens, but Jesus' heart is set on God, so he sleeps peacefully through it. And so, our Lord sets a powerful example for the disciples to trust in God, just as fathers also are called to do for their children.

There is the story of a Christian man whose young son had become very ill. After the boy had undergone an exhaustive series of tests, the father was told the shocking news that his son had a terminal illness. The father had instilled in him faith in Jesus Christ, they all trusted him, but now wondered how to inform his young son that he would die soon. After prayerful thought, he went with a heavy heart through the hospital ward to the boy's bedside.

First he read a passage of Scripture and then prayer with his boy. Then he gently told him that the doctors could promise him only a few more days to live. "Are you afraid to meet Jesus, my boy?" asked his dad. Blinking away a few tears, the little fellow said bravely, "No, because you trust him, I trust him too!"

This little boy's dad was the storm calmer for him, but for the dad Jesus was the real Storm calmer!

## **II. Jesus teaches us the role of fathers by protecting his family.**

The second way that Jesus teaches the role of fathers is by protecting the family. After Jesus woke up, he commanded the storm to be still in order to protect his spiritual children, the disciples. "And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." (v 39).

Not only Jesus has authority over nature, but has the authority by his miracle to teach human fathers to protect their families from outside dangers.

Once, a father told a neighborhood bully to stop picking on his son, and the bully did stop from then on. The reason the bully listened was because the father spoke with much force and authority. One could even call it roaring. By this, the father protected his son.

The words of human fathers do powerful things. Fathers' words protect their families from outside dangers. They comfort and give good counsel. But even more powerful are the divine words of Jesus, our spiritual Father. He speaks to protect you, for you are his dear spiritual children. The Gospel you hear protects you from every false and dangerous teaching that would hurt you. For the Word of Jesus breaks and hinders the satanic forces that threaten your soul.

Jesus is our spiritual Father. With him, we feel safe. Where he promises to be with us, he takes away fear. And where he promises to be with us is particularly in the Means of Grace. Christ embodies what it means to be a father to us. By the preaching and Sacraments, he comes to be with us and for us, and therefore, we, like beloved children, are safe.

## **III. Jesus teaches us the role of fathers by bringing us peace.**

The third way Jesus teaches the role of fathers is by bringing peace. "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Jesus brought peace to the storm and peace for his disciples. Think about that peace that Jesus brings to you by his forgiveness. It is God's peace that passes all understanding. It is a powerful peace that faith alone knows, a peace won by Christ's blood and sealed for immortality. Jesus speaks peace by the Gospel, which is found in preaching, absolution, and Sacraments. Through faith in this Word, you have God's peace. Jesus' Word calms every troubled conscience, making it calmer than the sea was after he stilled the storm.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was sleeping while the storm was on? It was so that we begin to trust in him. It was to teach us that faith in God brings peace, even in times of trouble. No matter if it's a howling storm, a shaky economy, family

problems, a guilty conscience, or an uncertain future—faith in your loving God brings peace. For Christ was crucified for your sins! His blood was shed for your forgiveness. Through faith in him, you are at peace before God. Do not look inside yourself for peace, but outside yourself. Look to Christ, who was crucified for your sins. Look to the Word that declares you justified. Look to the Sacraments that carry forgiveness to you. Here is your peace and comfort.

Thus Jesus here teaches human fathers to bring peace. Despite the weaknesses and failings of human fathers and regardless the age of their children, whether young or adults, children simply feel safe just being with their dad. It makes sense. When our earthly fathers show us the same selfless love and compassion in their fatherly vocation as Jesus does, it shouldn't surprise us that we feel safer with them. Just think how many ways human fathers bring peace. Earthly fathers help resolve arguments. Earthly fathers help us figure out life's problems. Fathers help raise us to live in a peaceable way, showing kindness and respect. Christian fathers also model what it means for their children to be sinners forgiven by Christ and faithful to Jesus.

There are many good reasons to honor and give thanks for our earthly fathers. Fathers are to be our temporal and spiritual leaders, by modeling trust in God, by protecting their families, and by bringing peace. In this way, they reflect the love of Jesus, who is our ultimate spiritual Father. Let us trust the forgiveness of our sins for those times we have failed, and in that forgiveness embrace God's grace and transfer that to our children as well.

What a blessed day is today. To God alone be the glory. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the true faith until life everlasting. Amen.