

Wednesday, May 23, 2018: Discussion Guide for “From Calm to Chaos”—Sermon preached by Merv Prince on Sunday, May 20

Text: Hebrews 2:14-18

Brief summary (what’s the point of this text/sermon?):

What should we do when life goes from calm to chaos in an instant? The answer and point of the lesson is this: In our darkest hour we can approach God’s throne of grace with confidence knowing that we will be received not with judgment, but with sympathy and mercy. Why should we expect such a reception?

1. In Hebrews 2:14-18 we learn that: (a) He was made exactly like us: fully human in every way; (b) This qualified him to be the perfect high priest providing for us the perfect sacrifice; (c) He could give the gift of mercy and sympathy in our time of need; (d) He was tempted in every way like us, and although he did not sin he did suffer greatly because of temptation, just like us. It wasn’t easy for him; (e) In short, in any and all circumstances Jesus knows exactly how we feel.

2. Since Jesus knows how we feel by walking a mile in our shoes let’s take a walk with him for just one day: 24 hours in Jesus’ shoes. That day is recorded in Mathew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9, and John 6. (a) The day begins with Jesus alone by the sea of Galilee, in peaceful tranquility; (b) Then his peace is shattered by the news that John has been beheaded; (c) Then the 12 apostles comes back from their first missions trip full of excitement over healing the sick and casting out demons, and they brought a crowd; (d) Jesus immediately puts the 12 in a boat and they escape to the other side of the sea; (e) When they arrive there is a crowd of over 5,000. He tends to them, heals them, and teaches them all day long and feeds them with 5 loaves and 2 fish; (f) At the end of the day he teaches the 12 in private, then sends them in boats back across the sea; (g) Jesus then sends the crowds away and retreats to a mountain to pray all night; (h) He then begins walking across the sea in a storm. The apostles spot him and are afraid. Peter tries to walk on water but fails; (i) When they reach the other side, Jesus gets no rest . . . another large crowd awaits them.

What a 24-hour-period! Can there be any doubt that the Jesus knows how we feel when life goes from “Calm to Chaos”?

How do we live out the implications of this passage? (Discussion starters for applying the sermon)

1. Has your life (or the life of someone you know) ever gone from “calm to chaos”? What did it feel like?
2. Think about how these experiences in the Lord’s life during the “24-hour walk with Jesus” gave him the experiences he needed to relate to our struggles:
 - a. The calm of his early morning was shattered by news that his friend and relative John the Baptist had been murdered. (Ever lost a loved one?)
 - b. While he’s trying to process the news about John, the apostles interrupt his thoughts with their excitement about evangelistic success. (Ever been frustrated by others’ excitement when you’re struggling?)
 - c. He tried to get away from people, only to find thousands of people who needed him. (Ever needed solitude, but too many people need you?)
 - d. He was exhausted at the end of a long day. (Ever been so tired you couldn’t sleep?)
 - e. He had taught his disciples over and over again, but they couldn’t (or wouldn’t) learn to trust him. (Ever been frustrated by the people around you refusing to learn what you’ve tried to teach them?)
 - f. The next morning he faced the prospects of more pressure, more work, more time demands. (Ever wondered if you’ve got the energy to face another day?)
3. But since Jesus never sinned, how can he relate to the chaos created in our lives as a result of our sin? (Hint: see Galatians 3:13 and 1 Peter 2:24)
4. Merv emphasized that Jesus is not ashamed of our weaknesses. The Lord doesn’t help us in spite of our struggles, but rather *because* of them. How does it help you to know that even though you struggle, Jesus is not ashamed to call you his brother or sister (Hebrews 2:11)?
5. What can we do to draw strength from Jesus’ experiences? How does knowing that Jesus knows what you’re going through help you face life’s challenges?