

Who is He? In the verses just before today's Gospel, Jesus says that while **"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests...the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head"** (Matt 8:20). He is poor. His mother had to use the two turtledoves for the sacrifice of purification. She could not afford a lamb. He is homeless, not just when He is born in a stable because there was no place for Him, nor just as a young child when He is forced to flee with His mother and guardian to Egypt, but the beloved Son of the Father, identified as such in the waters of His baptism, the worker of signs and wonders such as the water made wine at Cana's wedding, the leper who was cleansed, and the servant of the centurion who was healed, has no home. And as further testament to His poverty, having died on the cross, He is laid to rest in a tomb that is not His own. Yes, He must even borrow His grave.

He is not just without a home, He is tired. He is a man. His human flesh did not come down from heaven, the Divine Son who did come down from heaven took on a human nature, body and soul, like all the fathers of Israel, save that He is without sin. As God He is, as we confess in the Creed, "Of one substance with the Father." He is not God Jr., a lesser God. He is "very God of very God." But as man, He is of one substance with us. He sweats. He hungers and thirsts. He gets overwhelmed and tired. It is not just during His sorrowful Passion that we see our Lord as true man at His limits. Three we see the depths of Him suffering. But all throughout His life, His whole ministry, we see Him as a real man. His miracles require something of Him. We see this when He groans in agony as He heals the deaf mute.

Even His teaching the Word of God costs Him something. He needs a break. Again, a few verses before the Gospel today we are told **"when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to go over to the other side"** (Matt 8:18). And after a few questions from a scribe and a disciple, Jesus is finally able to get into a boat with His disciples and set out to sea. It is not because He is mean, that He hates people or was having a bad day. He is without sin. But He is God in human flesh. God having come as a man. And men get tired. He must go away and rest.

He sleeps in the boat. He finally has a moment to rest. He is so tired, that the storm does not wake Him. It isn't pretend sleep. He is not a five-year-old pretending to sleep and fool his parents. He is not tricking His disciples to see how long they will last before they have to wake Him. He is a man. He is worn out by doing good to His neighbors and by proclaiming the Word of God. He is genuinely tired. He was genuinely hungry when He was tempted by Satan to turn stone to bread. In Gethsemane He genuinely sweat in terror of what was to shortly come. It was not pretend blood that ran from His back, head, hands, and feet. And it was no pretend body that descended into hell to proclaim His victory over the devil. It was a real body. It was a real body that rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now fills all things. He is a real man. With a real body.

He is a real man. A real friend. A dear teacher and master to His disciples. So they rouse Him from sleep. This much the disciples get right. They do not understand perfectly, but they know to rely on Him, to beg Him to save them. Because they know He loves them. They know He cares for them. We see that in Mark's account, where we see the disciples express that mixture of statement and question, of faith and doubt, as they say, "Teacher, You do care, don't You, that we are perishing?"

He does care. He not only cares, loves His creation, those whom He has come to redeem by His blood, He also shows that as much as He is like us, knowing all that we must bear, endure, and suffer, here today He shows that He, a man, is also true God. He rises and **"rebuke[s] the wind and the sea,"** and the **"great storm"** gives way to **"a great calm."** He is the boss because He is their very Creator. **"All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made"** (Jn 1:3). Who is He, **"that even winds and sea obey Him?"** He is God. Not just God, but God come as a man. The Creator, the one who does all this, who rules wind, and sky, and sea, is our Brother.

It's interesting, though, that before Jesus calms the storm by commanding it, He speaks to the disciples. He tells them: **"Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?"** Why are you afraid? That's a silly question, Jesus! Anyone can see! Look at the waves swamping the boat, drenching their clothing, the wind raging, ripping the sails to shreds. These are fishermen, experienced sailors of the sea, and everything they know is telling them they are perishing! Their faith was little, in that it was overcome by what the eyes saw, the ears heard, what the feeling of soaking wet clothing all told

them. This teaches us the danger of basing faith on feelings, on experience. Because it only takes a storm, a rough day, a bad diagnosis, one Sunday morning where you just don't feel particularly anything when the readings are proclaimed, or the hymns are not your favorite, to make you think you are perishing, that you are not being fed, not receiving what you need.

But Jesus speaks His Word to the disciples. "Why are you afraid?" He rebukes the wind and waves, but He speaks to the disciples. He is not berating them, He is bringing them to a realization. He is redirecting the gaze of their faith from what they see, what they feel and experience, to Him. It is Jesus, God with Us, who asks, "Why are you afraid?" There is no need to be afraid. The One who is with them is not just the God-Man who has the power to command storms to cease, but He is the One who is headed to the cross. That is why God has come as a man. For His perfect, holy humanity to atone for sin. To be utterly forsaken and abandoned by the Father. Jesus experiences in that hour what no one else has. There is no one there with Him, to comfort and sustain Him. No relief is given to alleviate the terrible burden of sin. He dies for it. He suffers the torments of hell. He perishes. And that is how He saves.

Who is He? He is the God come as a man, the God who still is a man, who has saved us because He has perished for us. You all know the passage: "**God so love the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not PERISH but have eternal life**" (Jn 3:16). Who is He? He is the one who is at work in all things, all things, to speak His Word to you. Not to berate you for weakness, for little faith, but to speak to you. To direct your gaze, your eyes, your faith to Him. His Word does what it says. Hear Him! He has claimed you as His own, you've already died with Him in baptism. That's where you were drowned. And that's where you rose from the dead. You shall not perish. There is nothing in this world that can annihilate you. He has saved you.

He speaks once more to bless bread and wine, making them His true body and blood. There again, He speaks to you, calling you to direct your gaze, your faith, to Him, to hear His Words, where what was given and shed for your salvation is given you to eat and to drink, to strengthen and preserve you in body and soul unto life everlasting. You shall not perish, you are saved. Because of who He is, God and Man, because of what He has done, and because of what He says to you.