

JESUS SPOKE AND CREATION OBEYED

This past week five of our young people went to confirmation camp. I was able to get out to the camp three days and what a joy it was. For me there is something special about being at a place like Camp Tomah Shinga - with the trees and rocks and butterflies and even the mosquitos. I feel close to God and it seems that all of nature is praising God.

Both of the Bible readings for today take us outdoors and invite us to look at this amazing world God has created. Mark Twain, in his book *Huckleberry Finn*, wrote, "We had the sky, up there, all speckled with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them, and discuss whether they was made, or only just happened." Have you ever done that - just gazed into the sky - and wondered about God? I remember as a kid how I enjoyed laying on the grass on a summer afternoon and watching the white, puffy clouds pass by. Just laying there, watching and wondering.

Long ago the Psalm writer said, "The heavens keep telling the wonders of God, and the skies declare what he has done." (Ps. 19:1)

I really enjoy this book, *The Hand of God*. It is filled with awe-inspiring photographs of the heavens taken by the Hubble telescope - pictures of stars, planets, galaxies, nebulas, black holes. These incredible photographs convey the grandeur of the universe. As the Psalmist said, "The heavens keep telling the wonders of God, and the skies declare what he has done!"

But what happens when the heavens turn black, and huge thunderclouds form, and the wind becomes violent, and the rain pounds down? Like Monday evening when the storms rolled in from the southwest - 70 mile an hour winds, hard rain, hail. I thought of the kids at camp. It can be frightening. It was just a year ago when a tornado ripped through town, damaging and destroying multiple properties. That was a horrifying evening.

Jesus and the disciples were out on the Sea of Galilee when a great storm arose. The boat began to rise and fall, and then pitch from side to side. The boat was getting closer and closer to capsizing. Some of the disciples were experienced fishermen. They had been through storms before. But nothing like this. The sea threatened to swamp the boat and cast them into the deep where they would most certainly drown.

"Jesus, wake up!" the disciples cried. Jesus was sound asleep. "Don't you care that we are perishing?"

Jesus did care. He woke up and spoke to his friends, the wind and the sea, and the storm subsided. And there was calm. Peaceful calm.

Just like at the beginning of time when the Creator spoke and there was light and earth and palm trees and elephants and people. In the same way, when this terrible storm was threatening the lives of Jesus and the disciples, Jesus spoke and creation obeyed.

The Bible doesn't answer all our questions. Why are there storms? Why do tornadoes and floods and earthquakes destroy property and take the lives of many people? We want to know. This spring some scientists undertook a project called Vortex 2. They chased tornadoes around the midwest trying to gain more insight into force of nature.

Science is helping us know more about this world in which we live. Science has made us more aware of

the scope of creation, of distant galaxies and black holes. Yet, like Job, we must humbly bow our hearts in faith before God who is the creator of all that is.

The Bible story for today teaches a valuable truth. Jesus spoke and creation obeyed! There is a power greater than the power of nature and that is the power of Jesus. While nature can be fickle, one day expressing great beauty and majesty and the next day wrecking terrible havoc and destruction, Jesus is not fickle. We know what he will do. We know he is always on our side. We know his love is sure and dependable. He went to the cross for you and me. He gave his life for us, then rose from the dead, so that he may continue to work for our good.

So put your trust in him. He will come to your aid. There may be times you think he is not interested in what is happening to you. Appearances, though, can be misleading. He cares for you deeply. And when the time is right, he will act. So put your trust in Christ. When you face a storm of nature or a different kind of storm, put your trust in Christ. When your life is being tossed to and fro, put your trust in Christ. When it seems you are about to drown, put your trust in Christ.

Remember what Jesus did with the storm when he and the disciples were on the Sea of Galilee - remember how he spoke and creation obeyed - remember and put your trust in him.