

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
August 12, 2020

"WEATHERING STORMS"

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" Mark 4:14

I've been doing some storm watching the past few days. On Sunday we drove down to Fort Lauderdale and back, to drop off a few pieces of furniture for Beth, and to drop off her too. On the way back we, no I, decided to head north on US 27 to Lake Okeechobee, and then west over to Fort Myers on SR 80. At the time of our return departure there was a lot of rain falling on Alligator Alley. After a gas stop in LaBelle we were in and out of rain and thunderstorms almost to Punta Gorda. From there we barely outran another developing storm home. Once it hit the winds gusted to about 50 miles per hour and the waves on the Myakka River were higher than I'd ever seen them. I also noticed that the storm pushed a whole bunch of water up the river...a mini "storm surge"...raising the surface well above that of high tide which was still 3 hours away. I noticed all of this because I was sitting outside watching it all under the cover of the roof over our lanai. This storm passed quickly with not very much rain at all. Late yesterday afternoon I was back out there watching another storm blow in a little after 6:00pm. This one didn't pack the same winds and waves as Sunday but there was a whole lot more lightning and thunder, some right on top of us. It was also a slower moving storm with a whole lot more rain...nearly 2" in my official National Weather Service approved rain gauge. On the news this morning I heard of a violent storm system called a "Derecho" that streaked across the Midwest from South Dakota to Ohio sporting straight line winds up to 100mph and doing a lot of damage. Power was still out this morning for about a million and a half homes. Storms can certainly do a lot of damage. I probably didn't need to tell you that. I also don't need to remind you (but I will) that storms aren't always of the weather variety. They come in financial form, relational, health, family, behavioral, etc...just about in any manner than you can think of. From whatever direction they come from, and with whatever destruction they have the potential to bring down upon us we can always be sure of one thing. We are not alone in them, not any of them. The quote above, Mark 4:14, comes from the account of Jesus calming the storm out on the Sea of Galilee, a storm in which he spent most of His time sleeping in the back of the boat. The disciples, His close friends and followers, were doing everything they could to keep themselves from capsizing, sinking and drowning. "Thunder roars...Jesus snores." (I borrowed that line from Max Lucado's book "Fearless". You should read it if you haven't. If you have, you should read it again) The disciples finally get the bright idea to wake up Jesus for help. After questioning His character, "Master, don't You care if we drown?" (Mark 4:38) Jesus immediately rebukes the winds and waves bringing about an immediate calm, to which the disciples ask each other, "Just who are we dealing with here?" We know that we're dealing with the very Son of God, who is God Himself. The Almighty power that created and controls the universe is in Him and He is always present with us...right here in our boat...wherever that may be and in the middle of whatever storm might be pounding us. In the storms of our life we can always find an unstirred, unafraid Savior with us. He invites us to go to Him, ask Him for help, and then stand back and watch Him go to work for us. He may not bring that particular storm to an immediate end like that night in the Sea of Galilee, but He will bring calm into our lives, a calm that comes through faith and trust in Him as the Lord and Savior of our life. The title of that Max Lucado book is "Fearless" because faith and fear are complete opposites. Faith drives out fear, and where faith is missing fear fills the space. Trusting God in the person of Jesus Christ releases us from the terrors that the world experiences. Yes, the troubles and concerns remain, and always will until Jesus comes again in power and judgment to bring about the end of this sinful fallen age and establish the eternal age of peace and paradise for those who believe and trust in Him. While we're in this boat of life we can curl up on the cushion next to Jesus and rest in His unchanging love and grace.