BIBLE STUDY
June 17 and 20, 2024

THE TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Job 38: 1, 8-11
Mark 4: 35-41
2 Corinthians 5: 14-17

1. **Job 38: 1, 8-11**
   - The book of Job is a work of fiction, not an historical account, written to try to answer the question of why the innocent suffer. God brags on Job's righteousness, but the devil challenges Job's sincerity by claiming that Job will turn on him if misfortune comes. God allows several catastrophic events to happen to Job. Three friends came to console Job. Job complains about the misfortune that befallen him. The friends insist that it must be due to some wrong that Job has done, and he must repent. Job rejects their answer to his sufferings and challenges God to answer him. A young bystander, Elihu, gives several speeches in support of the friend's explanation. God answers Job plea that he presents his case directly to him, and hear God's response, God describes the wonders of creation and the inscrutable judgement of God.God is so powerful and so mighty, how can one not accept whatever he sends our way. Job accepts God's explanation and God restores his well-being. In the end, the book of Job does not answer the question of evil but encourages each reader to find their own answer.
   - 38: 1: In this chapter, God answers Job. He answers Job out of a storm which displays the power and the might of God.
   - V. 8: Who has the power to contain the sea when it tries to burst forth from its boundaries, but God? The image of the womb is of the waters being born. God is like the midwife at the birth of creation.
   - V. 9: God had the power to clothe the sea with clouds and make darkness its swaddling bands (the clothing of a newborn).
   - V. 10: Who could make limits for the waters and lock the door to its powerful force, but God?
   - V. 11: Who could give a command to the ocean to come no further and for the ocean to obey, but God?
2. **Mark 4:35-41**
   - After Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God in parables that showed that the Kingdom was present but not always visible, Mark presents a series of stories in which the power of Jesus as'" the stronger one" over the power of evil is displayed. Jesus will show his power over nature, possession by a demon, a life-threatening illness, and death itself.
   - **V. 35:** In the evening, after a day of teaching, Jesus tells the disciples to cross to the other side of the sea of Galilee. The sea of Galilee was known for sudden storms or squalls that could overturn a boat. A boat is a symbol of the church. Going to other side of the sea is crossing over to Gentile territory

which symbolizes the church's future missionary trips to include the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God. The church will always be traveling on stormy seas.

- **V.** 36: They set out to the other side. They take him "just as he was" means that he stayed in the boat after having taught the parables from the boat. Other boats are with him. To be with Jesus means to be a disciple. These other boats could refer to a wider circle of disciples who accompany Jesus.
- **V.** 37: The storm suddenly comes up and the boat is ready to fill up with water and to sink. In the Bible, storms at sea, the water in chaos, is a symbol of the presence of evil in the world. At creation God put order into the chaos. As it says in Job, he set the boundaries that the water may not cross. A storm is a symbol of evil on the attack.
- **V.** 38: Despite the storm Jesus is peacefully asleep in the stern of the ship. Who could sleep through such an experience but the One who power over the sea. Jesus' sleep is a very human trait that will contrast with his power to calm the water and the wind. The disciples wake Jesus up with the charge that he does not care about them. His sleep is also symbolic of how we often feel that God is far away and that he has left us on our own. Their waking him up is symbolic of prayer in which we present our need to the Lord.
- V. 39: Jesus wakes up and immediately rebukes the wind and tells the sea to be quiet and still. His actions remind us of the speech of God to Job. God has the power to command the sea and it obeys him.
- V. 40: Jesus rebukes the disciples for being afraid and for having little faith. The disciples still have a long way to go in grasping who Jesus is. We find comfort in the disciples struggling faith, because we, too, become afraid and lack faith in the storms of life.
- V. 41: The disciples are filled with awe—contrasted to their previous feeling of fear. Awe is what one feels in the presence of God. They feel a deep reverence for the one who is so powerful and mighty. Although they lack faith, they know the right question to ask: Who then is this whom even the wind and the sea obey? Who is Jesus? He must be God to do the things that he does.
- In this story Jesus is revealed as "the stronger one." Jesus said that the devil is a strong man, but that he is stronger. His power of the wind and sea—a symbol of the presence of evil on the attack in the world—reveals him to be stronger than the evil.

3. 2 Corinthians 5: 14-17

- Vv.: 11-13: Continuing the contrast between what is seen and unseen, Paul says that since we know that we must give an accounting of ourselves before God, we also try to convince others that they must live a godly life to be saved. Paul says that he is apparent or "seen" by God for who he is, and he hopes also to the Corinthians. He is not boasting but hoping that his example gives them something to refute those preachers who are more show than substance---who are seen but are not of the heart—what is unseen. Out of our minds refers to the charismatic gifts of speaking in tongues and being caught up in ecstatic states. Paul says he does that privately for God, but he displays rationality to them, i.e., reasonableness, self-control, and moderation.

- V. 14: Once we believe that Christ died for us and for all, our chief motivating force is the love of Christ.
- V. 15: Because Christ died for all, we no longer live for ourselves but for Christ who died for us and rose from the dead for us.
- V. 16: Now we see the spiritual side of all men and women. We do not just see their mortal selves, but we look for their spiritual selves. Just as we once saw the humanity of Christ but now only see his divinity, we see others differently too.
- V. 17: Christ's death and resurrection have made us completely new—we are a new creation. What we were is past. God has created us anew. The old order has passed away; the new things of the new creation have come to us.