

God Can Speak in Windy Moments

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.” ~William Arthur Ward

As February comes to an end this year, after rain and cold, the winds came early, and remind us of the power of God. Last week I saw the ruins of a church in Mississippi which was leveled by a tornado, and neighborhoods devastated by the wind. For the first time ever, I saw a story on an ice tsunami in Niagara, New York. Large blocks of ice were blown by the fierce wind onto the road from the river, pushing over streetlamps and telephone poles, covering a nearby road.

Here in Virginia we have had wind gusts up to 50 miles per hour, and hourly reports of huge trees which have fallen are common. Many lost power last week simply because of the rain and the wind.

Each week preachers hold forth with hot air and Godly pronouncements, and the wind of the holy spirit works grace in the lives of worshippers and those with whom they interact. The holy spirit is described as a mighty wind in the book of Acts, on the day of Pentecost.

If we, every time we feel or experience the wind, whether a gentle breeze in the woods or in the midst of a fierce thunderstorm, think of God, we will find a blessing. God has spoken and acted with wind over the centuries. Some recognized this. Others did not. And sometimes things did not turn out well for the non-believers.

One of the most memorable windy moments in the history of Israel is when they were backed up against the Red Sea with the Egyptian army in hot pursuit. “The LORD swept the sea by a strong east wind and turned the sea into dry land. The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and their left.” ~Exodus 14:21-22

They went through, but when the Egyptian army tried to cross the waters closed up and drowned them all. Those who listen. Those who don't.

Jesus was a part of the fishing industry of Palestine as he grew up in Nazareth, not far from the Sea of Galilee. He had seen the boats many times, and had possibly ridden in them. Sailboats, row boats, not motorboats that we see today.

One day he was out on the sea in a small boat with his disciple and a mighty storm came up. The disciples thought they were going to die. When Jesus calmed the storm with a word, they said, “Who is this that even the winds and the waves obey him?!”

Who is he? He is God. Speaks through the Holy Spirit, and through the beauty and might of nature. He speaks through the words which come up from us like the wind, as the words are formed and spoken.

Amos writes about this. "For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind and declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness and treads on the high places of the earth, The LORD God of hosts is His name."

Our lives can be compared to the voyage of a sailing vessel. God is always moving things along the way he wants them to go, and the wind makes boats able to go forward, sometimes side to side. Sometimes we can divert the wind for a moment or two and make small journeys as the wind continues to blow, but we must come back to the main wind if we want to make substantial progress.

The key to growth and progress in the Christian life is that we must sail, we must move forward, and never remain still. A sailboat is meant to sail.

Oliver Wendell Holmes thought about this imagery as he wrote, "I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving: To reach the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it - but we must sail, and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

So, dear reader, let us look at the seas of faith as a trip with our Savior who is in charge of the wind and the waves, who sends them to save us when we are in danger and to move us forward when we tend to want to remain in place.

God can indeed speak in windy moments, whether they are times of seeking and searching, moments of danger and fear, or in moments when we just want to travel wherever he happens to be going. Sail on, brothers and sisters, and see where God takes us next!