

***CRIBB<S>NOTE – June 21, 2009***

Have you ever been really frightened? What happened? What did you do?

There are so many unexpected things taking place around us. Sometimes it feels like nothing is safe. Everyday there is more news about the economy. Friends and family members are ill. It seems there is no escape from events that are most unpleasant and beyond our control. It is not surprising to hear about people who are afraid.

The Biblical story about Jesus' disciples becoming scared while floating in a boat during a horrific storm is filled with wonder and awe. It is not unusual for storms to come up suddenly on water.

When I was a news reporter in Reno, Nevada, I covered stories about people who had gone fishing on Pyramid Lake and got caught in the middle of storms. Some of them drowned because they could not make it back to shore. Pyramid Lake was not a very large body of water compared to Lake Tahoe, for example, but the quick and fierce climate change that stirred up the water happened too fast for the boaters to make it back safely. It was very frightening.

So, when the disciples became afraid and panicked, they thought they were doomed. Meanwhile, Jesus was asleep and undisturbed by the violent sea. His ability to remain calm puzzled his followers. In their state of fear, they ran and awaken Jesus. They thought he didn't care about them. Their boat was swamped with water and the wind battered them. "Don't you care that we are perishing?" they asked.

If fighting to stay alive through the storm was not enough, Jesus' reaction had to have shocked his disciples even more. He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still."

Can you imagine what they may have thought? First, as expert fishers, the disciples had confidence in their ability to navigate rough waters. But, in this story their skills could not save them. They were sure they were about to lose everything, including their boats and their very lives. But, when Jesus spoke the weather changed and the seas calmed down. The disciples probably had a second panic attack.

They asked themselves, "Who is this (man), that even the wind and the sea obey him?" No doubt, they were extremely happy to be back safely in gentle waters, but what kind of person has such power?

Do we ever forget God is in charge of our lives? While the sun is shining and all things are going well, we may feel good about ourselves and the way of the world. It is when we know there is nothing we can do to stop tragedy, disappointment, or horrible news that we really need to remember God has ultimate say; the final word.

Our faith informs us of God's love and mercy. Jesus teaches us not to worry, but to place our faith in God through the good times and the hard moments. Even during the storms of life, God is always there.