

Sermon for 28 July 2024 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 11: 1-15; Psalter: 74: Psalm 14; Ephesians 3:14-21; John 6:1-21

Sermon

The first two lessons say, "God finally gives us a leader ... and he totally fails us."

We're honestly facing that likelihood, aren't we?

The racket of that news is everywhere.

We can't even talk about it in parts of our own family.

Sit with that awhile. Either give up on politics, or live upset by it.

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father..."

"Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.'

Plenty do that in this great land of ours.

"Like sheep without a shepherd," Mark described it for us last week.

"You give them something to eat," he also said another time, "because he himself knew what he was going to do," John says now.

Then there is a great vacant space, one we know nothing about these days, it seems, after which, from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself."

This is where we are now. He is not here.

We are unable to see him. Or, if he walks by us on the stormy waves, we are terrified. In another scripture it is told us, "He is risen."

But now, who says to us, "It is I. Do not be afraid."?

"Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going."

This is no longer Mark's Gospel. This is John. Mysterious. "Born from above." From outer space, like so much our children watch nowadays. AI. Artificial intelligence. How much of what we thought we could control the world with is proving to be beyond us, more than ever before!

Dear God, let our new-found humility be our saving grace in this season of conflict and chaos!

As we come inside, let us find the quiet center that holds, and that holds us together in friendship through the storms.

Let us greet one another with a holy kiss, and then depart to serve as those who know how to be with our risen one, who "by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."