

***MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!*****Luke 8:22-25****(Read Luke 8:22-25)**

**Intro:** Yesterday was May 1st. For hundreds of years it has been a pagan holiday to mainly celebrate the arrival of spring and female fertility and was known as May Day. According to my research, it was huge in Europe, and still is, but was never a big thing here in North America because of the aversion our Christian forefathers had for it.

In the late 1800s, May 1st, or May Day, gained a different kind of significance when it became the day to commemorate the Haymarket Massacre when labor union organizers and police faced each other in Chicago in 1889. Many people died in the ensuing violence. This affair, as it was called, was inspiration for socialist and communist groups in their struggle for legitimacy and sixty-six countries have May Day as an official holiday, some for its pagan roots and others for its socialist roots. Interestingly, even though May Day was first celebrated in the United States, it is not a holiday here – because of our longstanding religious aversion to it. Instead we have our Labor Day in September to celebrate workers and keeps us safely away from being associated with socialists and communists – we hope . . .

That being said, many people think that we aren't safe from socialism and communism, or from paganism, for that matter. Many think that we, here in the States, are dancing around the edges of these issues and in real danger of falling in. This is not vivid imagination. Indeed some in society are dabbling in socialism and communism, proving that we have short memories and no appreciation for history because both systems have more than proved to not be workable. Add to that the fact that paganism is making a comeback, it is becoming more and more obvious that being Christian, or religious in any way, is closer to being a minority position. In poll after poll the category of “none” is coming up more frequently. This is when people are asked for their religious preference and their answer is “None”, as in no religious preference.

It's true, our country is falling into sin and falling away from God. But the problem is, we only have ourselves to blame in so many ways. If fewer people are interested in Christianity or religion in general a big reason is that too many Christians have been occupied with things other than serving Jesus.

This is distressing indeed and brings up another use of mayday. It's the distress call, repeating the single word three times, “MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY”. Since the 1920s when the wireless radio was coming into greater usage this has been the message that is used to signal a life-threatening emergency, usually on a ship or a plane and it's followed by relaying the information that rescuers would need, including the nature of the emergency, the location or last known location, current weather, type and identity of craft involved, fuel remaining and the number of people in danger. The MAYDAY! distress call has absolute priority over all other transmissions. It shows extreme desperation.

Our present culture has many Christians thinking they are in a sinking ship and they're crying out MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! while right here with us we have the master of the wind and the waves. Like the disciples, we only need to call out to him. Let's not allow desperation to rule us ABC. Let's learn from some frightened men who were reminded of the mightiness of the one they followed. So let's look at those few verses I read as I began this talk. First . . .

**Be prepared for storms if you link your lives with Christ**

- Following Jesus is not a cakewalk. I think American Christians expect it to be that way, and we've been spoiled – because it has been. But we're having indications that it won't last – that being the dominant belief system is a thing of the past. And if it is we'll join saints from around the world for whom being a Christian is like having a target in the middle of their back. I'm not trying to scare us or depress us, I'm preparing us and, better yet, I'm daring us to lean into Jesus when the storm roars up and the waves get dangerous.
- Commentator, Donald Miller, says this incident on the wild Sea of Galilee is not designed to awaken faith of unbelievers by a marvel but to deepen the faith of those who have already believed. The disciples had been with Jesus for some time now. They had seen him at work and they had heard his amazing message. He was no ordinary man and even as a rabbi he was extraordinary. That's why they had been following him. He had been so intense in his ministry that he was exhausted and they were traveling across the lake to get some rest time. His exhaustion caused him to immediately fall asleep in the bottom of the boat.

- Many of the disciples were fisherman . . . on this very lake! They knew how, with its elevation at 700 feet BELOW sea level, wind could and would often suddenly roar down the ravines and cliffs around it and stir up the waves. We live in Ohio – we know what this is like – we can have every season in a single day, so we know how storms can come up with ferocity and danger. But this storm caught them by surprise and they thought it was curtains! And Jesus was sleeping.
- But at least they knew who to turn to. Or they had an idea. Joel Green says as they wake Jesus, the disciples refer to him as master, using a title that grants him the status of the authoritative leader of the group, but hardly suggests but that they understand him fully. And they don't. But they knew enough. They had a start. And it was all part of their learning process. He was teaching them about faith, and we need to learn it too. Jesus doesn't call them faithless, but he is wondering about their faith. When we face storms, when we see the craziness and faithlessness of society, do we try to shake our fists at the waves and fight the hurricane under our own power, or do we cry out to the master who is the only one who can calm the sea? Here is the answer: we need to go . . .

### **From fear to Faith**

- F. B. Meyer is always good for a powerful quote and he doesn't disappoint with this passage. "*Men and demons will rage against you; but there is a limit to their power. Jesus rules the waves. "The sea is his and he made it."* What are we worrying for? No matter who is in the White House, Jesus is still the ruler. When a pandemic threatens humanity, Jesus is still the Great Physician. When the tornado siren sounds and it's not Wednesday noon, Jesus rules the winds and the waves. *Our God is an awesome God, he reigns from heaven above, with wisdom POWER and love, our God is an awesome God!*
- We know this, right? After Jesus wakes up, rubs the sleep from his eyes, and tells the wind and waves to behave, his next question, "*Where is your faith?*" (v. 25) implied that they should have known that, even if he was asleep, no harm would come to them. He still took care of the problem for them but the question remained – and they should have known. Green rightly points out that this incident and the one after it (where Jesus cast the demons out the Gerasene demoniac "*are examples of a time of testing for those who are already disciples.*" In other words Jesus calms our storms, and we need to believe that as his followers. Do you believe that?
- It reminds me of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus and he is being confronted by Lazarus's grieving sisters. He tells Martha, "*I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?*" John 11:25-26. Martha's answer is in the affirmative, but she didn't quite know the half of it – but she soon did. We have some advantage – we are looking back on this from 2,000 and we have the bird's eye view from scripture, but we need the reminder – Jesus is the master of the wind and the waves, the demons and the demagogues, he's master of everything. With the disciples we need to move from fear to faith.
- Let's not be too hard on ourselves though. The disciples were with Jesus day in and day out and they witnessed his power. And when the storm roared in they knew who to turn to. But, they still needed their fear turned to faith. We might have the advantage of learning from their example, but we are just as human as those twelve frightened friends. So it's understandable when we falter for a moment and stumble in our faith. But we need to know to whom our MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! is directed, and that he WILL calm our sea, and he will make sure that all is well. "*Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?*" (v. 25). He is Lord. He is King of kings. He is our Savior. He knows our name and he will be there for us. Amen.