

## *Epiphany IV Sermon by Bishop Michael Hawkins*

by the Right Reverend Michael W. Hawkins

Bishop of Saskatchewan

Peace, be still. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

There is this flotilla of little ships or boats out on the sea, or lake, of Galilee. They are making the crossing with this new Rabbi, Jesus, who had been preaching the other day on the kingdom of God. In the middle of the night, a sudden storm whips up. It is dark. The wind howls around them, and the waves are coming in over the side, rocking the boats almost to the point of overturning. They're taking on water, and despite desperate attempts, they are sinking.

Have you ever had that sinking feeling, that sinking experience, nightmares of drowning, whether in water or debt, or guilt, or work, or doubt?

## ***Epiphany IV Sermon by Bishop Michael Hawkins***

---

Things could only have been made worse by the fact that Andrew and Peter, James and John, life-long sailors and fishermen who had worked and traveled this body of water, were with them. When the other disciples saw the fear and panic in their experienced eyes, what must they have thought and felt? When the experts are concerned, when the veterans are afraid, you know you're in real trouble.

Have you ever had that experience? You can see the real concern on the face of your doctor or banker or dentist or mechanic, and the one you thought could help you doesn't, won't, or can't.

In these moments, in the storms of life, when we are scared and in the dark, when there doesn't seem like there is much we or anyone can do, we may look to a higher power, and that's exactly what happens in our Gospel. The disciples turn to Jesus.

## ***Epiphany IV Sermon by Bishop Michael Hawkins***

---

But what do they find? Jesus asleep on a pillow in the stern of the boat. And it seems as if he doesn't care.

Has it ever seemed to you as if God is asleep at the wheel of the world or of your life? Have you ever wondered or doubted: "Does Jesus care?"

This Gospel story is the only record we have of Jesus sleeping, and it is an odd picture. There he is, in a storm-tossed, sinking boat, quietly and comfortably asleep on a pillow. They ask him, even rebuke and challenge him, "Don't you care?" But Jesus sleeps, not because he doesn't care, but because he doesn't fear. Instead, he believes. This is the sleep of the innocent and faithful.

There is an important dialogue there. The disciples ask the perennial human question in the midst of the storms of life: "God, don't you care?" That question comes to all of us at some time, and usually when we are storm-tossed. Jesus answers with

## ***Epiphany IV Sermon by Bishop Michael Hawkins***

---

another question, “Don’t you believe?” They see their external dangers, but he points them to their inner weakness. The opposite of fear is faith, and Jesus invites us so to trust in God, that we, too, might even sleep during the storms of life. While we do have troubles in the world, we may find peace and joy through him who has overcome.

It is that peace, that stillness of soul, that Jesus gives to the sea, and that he would give to our hearts and minds. It is to our souls, all turned and churned up, that he speaks today, “Peace, be still.” Be still, and know that I am God. But it is a peace we can know and receive only by faith, by believing and trusting in him.

The two most dangerous powers in the ancient world, the two biggest threats to peace and life, were natural and political power. Jesus tells us that the antidote to fear of this power is faith. Paul tells us that it is to do that which is good, a clear

## ***Epiphany IV Sermon by Bishop Michael Hawkins***

---

conscience. When Paul says that there is no power but of God, he is speaking from a fundamental faith and trust in the providence and rule of God. We would be foolish to trust in power. It is often corrupt, and it is often deadly. But we are invited today to trust in the higher power, to trust in Him who is greater than wind and sea and storm, greater than all the rulers of the earth, the highest power – the All-Mighty, the All-Powerful God. And more than that, we are invited to know Jesus Christ to whom all power is given, to know Jesus Christ, the Lord of wind and sea, the Lord of Creation and the King of Kings, and to trust ourselves to him.

To the guilty, he says, “Peace.” To the anxious, he says, “Peace.” To the dying, he says, “Peace.” For he has overcome sin and doubt and death. His power - God’s power - is supreme over it all, victorious over everything. And what is the Power of God, but the love of God, known in Jesus Christ who died for us

***Epiphany IV Sermon by Bishop Michael Hawkins***

---

all, and poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us all. Real power is love, and the strongest person, the most powerful man in the world, is the most loving, Jesus Christ...to whom with the Father and the Spirit be all honour, glory, power and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.