

1. He is in control
2. He does care

The introduction references two lessons appointed for Pentecost 5: Job 38:1-11 and Mark 4:35-41.

Did you catch the problem? It looked as if Jesus didn't care!

A few hours ago the disciples were thinking about a pleasant ride across the Sea of Galilee; making plans for the next week; thinking about all Jesus had said and done and about His love and care. The last thing on their mind was danger.

But then a furious squall came up as the cool air from the Mediterranean rushed through the hills and met the warm air from the Sea of Galilee and their thinking changed. Now they are thinking how they can stop the water from filling the boat; how they had to hold on to the railings for dear life; how there was no help because the boats nearby were in the same boat.

And there Jesus is sleeping on a cushion; napping, oblivious to danger. What's more, he is their leader, the One who is supposed to help, who loves, who guides them – and now he's sleeping. And their charge? "Don't you care if we drown?"

It's the same charge Job brought against God. Now granted, Job isn't speaking in our lesson for today, but you can tell what he was thinking by the way God addresses him. "Where were you when I created the earth? Where were you when I laid its foundations? Where were you when I told the seas they could only go so far? Who are you to say I am not in control? Who are you to say I don't know what I am doing? How dare you question whether I care?"

It's the same problem the people of Israel had. "Why do you say, O Jacob? Why do you complain, O Israel? 'My way is hidden from my LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God.'" The present was difficult (they were in captivity to their enemies in a foreign land) and their future looked dim, and their charge against God? "You don't care."

Here's Jesus' answer to the disciples: "Do you still have no faith?"

Here's God's answer to Job: "Who is it that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?"

Here's God's answer to his people through the prophet Isaiah: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God."

And he says the same thing to you: Do you still have no faith? Don't you still get it? How dare you charge me with not caring? And let's face it. We need the one who rebukes the winds and the waves to rebuke us... when storms and difficulties come up in our life, we commit the same sins of doubt, of worry, of fear, and a lack of faith. And that is a problem that can have eternal consequences.

The problem is big but the solution is bigger: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God." The answer is in God's name, "The Eternal God." The more literal translation of this verse would be something like, "The Eternal God, namely the LORD, is..." The name used here sounds like this in Hebrew: El Olam. El – is the name for God that points to his might, strength and power. Here it's even in the plural form, the Hebrew way of elevating God's might, strength and power above all others. And he's the *Eternal* God – the one who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.

- This is the name Abraham used for God when he bought his first piece of land in the Promised Land. He could have boasted about his accomplishment. He could have said, "Look at what I did." "Look at what's mine." Instead, there at his well, "Abraham called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God." (Genesis 21:33)
- It's the name Moses used for God when he contemplated death and the short time we have here on earth in Psalm 90: "LORD you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth

the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (God Eternal, Eternal, Psalm 90:1-2)

It is a name that says God is in control and that He does care.

1. He is in control

Isaiah lists three reasons to show that the God of Eternity is in control:

1. He is the Creator of the ends of the earth.
2. He will not grow tired or weary, and
3. His understanding no one can fathom.

It's the same thing he reminded Job. The God of Eternity created the world and laid its foundations. The God of Eternity is the One who stands up in a boat and uses one word to quiet the storm, “Quiet! Be still!” He is the one who tells the seas they can go only so far and then no farther. And if it's true of the seas, then it is also true of fires sweeping down on houses in Colorado Springs and Fort Collins.

The God of Eternity, the One who always was, who is, and always will be, doesn't grow tired. He doesn't take breaks from ruling and controlling. He doesn't slumber or sleep or take naps (Psalm 121). He sees the police officer get hit on the side of the road or get hit by a stray bullet in a park, and we can be sure He'll be with their families and co-workers in the future.

And beyond that, He is the One whose wisdom goes beyond our understanding. In another place in Isaiah, the prophet tells us that God's ways are above our ways. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul simply says that God's wisdom is unsearchable (Romans 16). We may not have healthcare or immigration figured out, but God does. We may not understand why a jeep rolls over and threatens the life of a husband and 3 children, but God does and he knows how to use it for eternal good.

2. He does care.

Make sure you catch this contrast too. “Even youths grow weary and tired and young men stumble and fall...” The young man can have a Jeep roll over on top of him. A young police officer can be hit by the side of the road. Beautiful homes built by successful people can be swept away by fire. The God of Eternity is in control and we are not. Understand too, that's not just physically, but spiritually true of our lives as well. We will stumble and fall, we will sin and fail – no matter how young or old, weak or strong.

It's for that very reason, the God of Eternity entered in time into our world. He lived under the control of His heavenly Father's will, never doubting, never worrying, never stumbling. And then the one who has control over the winds and waves, who could calm storms with his voice, gave up control and willingly was led to a cross where his death paid for our worry, our doubts, our fears, our lack of faith and every one of our sins. But don't ever doubt that he is not in control. For his is the Eternal God, the one who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. And by his rising from the dead he assures us he has total control in all things – even death itself.

And so in love, this God of Eternity, the One who has forgiven our past and who rules our future, is the One who “gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak... Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow faint, they will walk and not be weary.”

Conclusion:

This week we celebrate another birthday in our country's history. I'm thankful for wisdom and work of founding father's such as Benjamin Franklin who helped establish this great country of ours, a country where we have so many blessings. At the same time, I'm thankful that we didn't listen to Benjamin Franklin when it came to our choice of the national bird. Imagine seeing pictures of a turkey in front of the red, white and blue this week instead of an eagle?!

Now granted a turkey can see pretty well. By turning its head just a fraction of an inch it is able to see 360 degrees. But did you know an eagle can see a rabbit from up to 2 miles away.

Turkeys too, have beautiful colors, but is there anything more beautiful than a soaring eagle, whose feathers molt each year so that it always looks strong and majestic.

And yes, turkeys can fly, at least wild turkeys. They can fly short distances at 55 miles per hour. But that's nothing compared to an eagle who can dive at speeds between 100-200 mph from distances as high as a mile in the air, to snatch a fish out of the water.

Turkeys do run – something eagles don't do. But they run because they are prey and an eagle soars because it is a hunter.

So the big question for you this week is what will you be, a turkey or an eagle? There's the heat, the fires, the economy; there's routines, the overwhelming work or the lack of work to deal with; there's relationships, trips to the hospital and who knows what other storms will rise up this week... but I prefer to face them as an eagle who soars. Place your hope in the Lord and you will too – for the God of Eternity is the God who is in control and the God who cares and his boundless, timeless power will lift you up as well. Amen.

VVV

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