

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

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For those of us who live in the middle of Kansas, we don't think a lot on a day to day basis about the ocean or about seas. And truth be told, those that live closer to the oceans or a sea are so taken with of the beauty of water that they often forget the volatile nature of the sea. That was true at least until the tsunami hit overseas. And now many beachgoers always at least have in the back of their mind the destructive power of the sea.

In Jesus' time, the sea was something that always carried with it a sense of fear. The sea was viewed as chaotic, rebellious, and perilous. This was true of the Hebrews and also of the Greeks that lived in those areas where Jesus walked and talked. For instance, the mythological Greek god of the sea was Poseidon who was always characterized as a short tempered man who cast the sea into chaos. Everyone knew that the sea could turn dangerous at any point.

Many people in Jesus day made their living on the seas fishing and doing other types of trade, but the people never became completely comfortable with the sea. They knew a quiet day fishing could become a struggle for life if the sea turned rough.

Just such a change happened on the day in our gospel lesson. The disciples were out at sea when the winds and waves began to do their worst. The waves crashed and the boat rocked. And during all of this Jesus slept. How could He sleep?

Well, because Jesus didn't share humanity's fear of the sea. And why not? Well, because He knew He was in control of the seas. He was there when His father set the bounds for the seas and told them this far you shall go and no further.

And that is exactly what the disciples found out when they finally roused Jesus from His faith-filled sleep. For once He had come up from His bed, He calmed that tempestuous sea with a sharp rebuke that must have echoed all the way back to creation.

What a miracle! Jesus calmed the chaotic waves. He rebuked the rebellious waters. He put in place the perilous sea with just a few words.

But yet, this miracle is not the one I want to talk to you about today. You might have noticed that at the beginning of the sermon, I started with this text, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” What does that have to do with Jesus calming the sea?

Well, today I would like to focus on Jesus’ authority over something even more chaotic, more rebellious, and more perilous than the sea has ever been.

Did you know that at your birth inside of you sloshed a chaotic mess? Yes, even though your outward appearance was likely innocent enough to usher forth a bunch of comments about how cute of a baby you were, inside rebellion rushed forth. Yes, inside of you the sea of trouble was rushing and it was perilous in every way.

For this raging sea of sin inside of you was what we often call in the church original sin. And this fierce force knows no bounds. It corrupts the entire person, body and soul. It causes one to revolt against God and to seek anything that is contrary to the word of God. Left unchecked, it floods the entirety of one’s life with disaster.

It is something that the scriptures tell us is born inside of each person ever since Eve’s teeth pierced the meat of that forbidden fruit. Yes, each person is born into this world carrying this sin. Not you are Mother Theresa was exempt. Not me or anyone else has escaped this raging sea within.

And so there were two possibilities. The sea within could rage outside of its borders and destroy our lives and our eternity. Or else someone could speak an authoritative word over it. Someone could speak and turn those rebellious waves into still waters.

And Jesus was just that person. But this miracle would take more to accomplish than just the exercise of His godly power like He used on the literal sea in our gospel lesson. To accomplish this miracle, it would take every bit of life that He had. To stop the sin flowing within humanity, that sin had to be killed.

And so Jesus allowed the flood of sin to take His life as He died on the cross. There God calmed the sea of sin with one decisive action. Just as the snake though a tree had once overcome all of humanity, Jesus through a tree freed humanity from sin once and for all.

Jesus through a word calmed the sea that those disciples were sitting atop. Through three words, He calmed the sea of sin raging inside of humanity. “It is finished,” He cried, and claimed authority over the

raging sea of sin. There on that sacred tree, God was reconciling sinful man to Himself through Jesus. There He made Him who knew no sin the sea of sin in order that we might become rivers of righteousness.

And that authority over sin He won there at Calvary He gave to the church after Pentecost when He bestowed His spirit upon her. And ever since, the church has in Jesus' name and with His authority has calmed the seas of sin in babies and adults alike with the water and words of baptism.

Each time we bring a child to the font or an adult comes forward, the sea of sin is raging within them rocking their body and souls. And then Jesus speaks a word through the pastor and at once that sea is calmed.

Or as the words of our text put it, "the old is gone and the new is come." A new creation is made before our eyes.

And that is the reality we live in. We live as rivers of righteousness rather than seas of sin. Christ became that sea of sin so that we no longer have to live that way. We no longer have to be tossed here and there by sin, because that sea has been stilled by Jesus' death and His authoritative word.

Yes, Jesus has exercised His authority over sin in your life on the day of your baptism. And so long as you remain in His gracious rule, you need not fear the sea.

But if you are going to go out and try to float around without Jesus in your life, the sea of sin will once again began to rage. And sin will again rock your life.

Each time we stand before our God we must admit that to one extent or another, we have lived completely in the calm of His grace but have allowed the sea of sin to be stirred all around us.

And that is why we are here today. That is why we have confessed our sin. It is why we received the supper of our Lord last Sunday. In those places, Jesus has promised to restore calm to our lives. In those places, He has promised to remove the raging sea of sin. He speaks and the seas of sin are once again commanded into stillness.

So confess this day your sin and hear Jesus' words of authority again spoken to you. Let Him calm the sea of sin in your life. And as you receive His grace anew this day, know this truth.

You are a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. God has reconciled you to Himself through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.