

Sermon July 11, 2010

Where's My Pillow?

Mark 4:35-41

Summary: Panic or pillow? What is your response when things are out of control and life is hitting you with a major storm? Take a boat ride with Jesus and see if you change your mind.

I. Pillows and Passages

A. How much would you pay for a pillow

- 1. There was a day when you traveled by air and wanted to take a nap all you had to do was ask for a pillow.**
- 2. Alas, the day of the free pillow is disappearing before our eyes, or from under our heads.**
 - a) Jet Blue, US Air and American Airlines all charge for the simple pillow.**
 - b) If you want a pillow on an AA flight, you have to ante up \$8.**
 - c) Your money gets you an inflatable pillow, a blanket, and a \$10 coupon for Bed Bath and Beyond. Wow.**

3. That's almost as bad as the budget British airline that is charging you to use the bathroom.

B. Travel Pillows

1. Traveling is hard work, whatever your means of transportation.
2. There's nothing like a familiar pillow from home on a long car trip.
3. And even a short nap in a car seat can give us fresh energy for the journey.

C. Pillows and Passages

1. So where's your pillow for the biggest journey of all – your journey through this life on your way to heaven?
2. The good news is that you don't have to plunk down \$8 for a pillow-shaped balloon.
3. The challenge is whether or not you dare to put your head on it.

II. Leaving

A. A night-time journey

1. Mark tells us a story about a journey that Jesus and his disciples took after a long day of teaching:
 - a) Mark 4:35 NIV That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side."
 - b) Mark 4:36 NIV Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were other boats with him.
2. Can you picture the scene?
 - a) It's been a long hot day with crowds of people, no down time, probably not even time for dinner.

b) Jesus springs a quick departure on His disciples:
“Let’s go – now.”

c) They take Him into the boat “just as he was” – no further preparation.

3. And the journey starts at sunset:

a) This will be a night passage from one side of the lake to the other.

B. Night-time on the water

1. Have you ever been out on the water at night?

2. I remember a nighttime canoe trip across Lake George with my cousin.

a) It was on a calm night in November and we had the lake to ourselves.

b) We paddled a mile to a cove on the other side – a wild forested section of the eastern shore.

c) Once we got there, we sat in the canoe with our paddles across the gunwales, just taking in the solitude.

d) All of a sudden, we heard a very loud SMACK on the water right next to us.

e) Never did two grown men ever turn a canoe around and paddle for the other side!

3. When you’re out on the water at night nothing is familiar – even if you’ve sailed or canoed that water a hundred times in daylight.

a) Every sound is louder.

b) Every wave is bigger.

c) You have no idea how far away anything really is.

d) And even a beaver becomes a lake monster!

C. Leaving

1. Every once in a while we find ourselves on a spiritual nighttime journey.

a) We go from the comfort and familiarity of dry land to being out on the water in the dark – far from either shore.

2. We probably feel insecure, uneasy, out of our element.

3. We're in an in-between place – a place that you can't live in, but have to pass through.

a) We're too far out to turn back.

b) We have no idea how long the journey is going to take.

c) We sense that God has called for this journey.

d) But we'd rather have it over with.

III. Panic or Pillow?

A. The Storm

1. Mark tells us that once the boat was out in the middle of the lake a storm came up:

a) Mark 4:37 NIV A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

2. The Sea or lake of Galilee was infamous for the violent storms that could come in a moment's notice.

a) Many of the disciples were fishermen who had made living on the lake.

b) They knew all too well the danger of such a squall while crossing the lake in an open boat.

c) To face such a storm in the middle of the night was their worst nightmare.

3. What a picture of what happens when we're out there far on our life-journey:

a) The thing we most feared breaks on us like a thunderstorm.

b) We see the boat filling with water around our feet.

c) We feel like we're fighting for our lives.

B. The Two Responses

1. Mark tells us that there were two responses to the crisis:

a) Mark 4:38 NIV Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

2. Fishermen carried bags of sand in the stern of the boat to use as ballast.

a) They called the bags "pillows."

b) Jesus had taken one of the pillows out, and stretched out in the back of the boat, and had fallen sound asleep.

3. The disciples, on the other hand, were madly bailing the boat or rowing to keep it pointed into the waves so it wouldn't get rolled over and go down.

a) They were in full panic mode.

b) As far as they knew, this would be the last boat ride for all of them!

C. Panic or Pillow?

1. So which response was the right one? Panic or Pillow?

2. They couldn't both be right:

- a) Somebody was “with the program.”
- b) Somebody was in “la la land.”

IV. Where’s My Pillow?

A. Stuff happens when you leave the safety and familiarity of home:

1. God tells you to step out and trust Him; but He didn’t tell you there would be a violent storm when you were totally exposed in the middle of the lake.
2. It is then that you have to decide how to respond:
 - a) Will it be the natural reaction of panic?
 - b) Or will it be to go looking for your pillow?
3. Is God in charge and in the boat with you, or are you on your own?

B. A Great Calm

1. Mark tells us that when the disciples woke Jesus up, He spoke to the storm:
 - a) Mark 4:39 NIV He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.
 - b) In the original, Mark says: “there was a great calm.”
2. Then He turned to the disciples with a question:
 - a) Mark 4:40 NIV He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”
3. What a question!
 - a) There they were, fighting for their lives against the wind and the waves while Jesus slept on His pillow in the back of the boat.

b) They were doing their best to keep themselves and Jesus from drowning.

c) And all along, there was another option, another path, another response that had never crossed their minds!

4. After all, if God is IN THE BOAT, how safe are you?

C. Where's My Pillow?

1. Do you think the disciples learned anything that night?

a) Mark 4:41 NIV They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

b) They could see that Jesus had power, but did they learn to reach for their pillow?

2. The most important part of your spiritual journey will come NOT when you are worrying yourself to death or striving to keep going, but when you reach for your pillow.

a) Think about Jacob, running for his life after cheating his brother Esau out of his inheritance.

b) He, too, was on a desperate journey – far from home, with no certain future.

c) But it was when he found a stone for a pillow and laid down to sleep that he encountered God and discovered his destiny.

3. Jesus has a special command for you and me as we journey:

a) Matthew 11:28 NIV "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

b) Matthew 11:29 NIV "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

c) Matthew 11:30 NIV “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

4. The writer of Psalm 46 says:

a) Psalm 46:8 NIV Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

b) Psalm 46:9 NIV He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.

c) Psalm 46:10 NIV be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

5. The storms will come – especially when we’re far from shore.

a) When that happens the choice is yours.

b) Will you react in panic or reach for your pillow?