

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Intro

“It was a dark and stormy night ...”

So the world's most talented Beagle begins his Great American Novel, as Snoopy sits atop his doghouse with his typewriter banging away.

“It was a dark and stormy night ...” is actually the beginning of an 1830 novel entitled “Paul Clifford”.

But it has devolved into what is described as the archetype for bad writing, and become much parodied as “*the literary posterchild for bad story starters.*”

None the less, as we shall see, “It was a dark and stormy night” aptly describes our scripture readings today.

I Disciples

A. “It was a dark and stormy night...” for Jesus and the Disciples after a long day of preaching, teaching and healing;

- So when they had finished, Jesus and his Disciples got into the boat to head over to the other side.

1. Jesus was tired and the gentle rocking of the boat soon put him to sleep.

2. When suddenly, and without warning, the skies blackened and a storm opened up on them.

3. Here they thought they were off on a three-hour tour – when the weather started getting rough, the tiny ship was tossed – oops, wait a minute, that's another story for another day.

4. But it was a “Dark and Stormy Night”, the boat was filling with water – they were about to sink at any moment – and there was Jesus, sound asleep in the stern.

5. So they cried out to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

6. And with that, Jesus woke up – rebuked the wind and the waves, saying, “Peace, be still” – and suddenly, the sea is as calm as glass.



B. But he doesn't stop there – he rebukes the Disciples too.

1. He says, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”

Jesus Calms the Storm

2. What are they so afraid of – they have Jesus right there with them in the boat?

3. One scholar explains it this way: “Here “faith” is not just a matter of intellectual conviction; it is *trust in God* along with *appropriate action* when confronted with a life-threatening situation.” (Synthesis p.1)

4. That kind of faith – that kind of trust – that kind of appropriate action that David had in our first lesson.

II. David

A. It was a “Dark and Stormy time” in the life of Israel.

1. We heard 2 weeks ago of **Samuel's** calling David to be God's Anointed One, and now young David has gone to take supplies to his brothers who are fighting the Philistines on behalf of Israel.

2. **Goliath**, the Champion of the Philistines swaggered forward and issued a challenge for one-on-one, winner-take-all combat, in which the people of the loser would become the servants of the winner.

3. This practice of selecting champions to fight one another as representatives of their respective armies was not uncommon and prevented combat involving entire forces.

4. So when **Goliath** issues his challenge, no one in Israel's Army wants to fight him, and **David** is appalled.

B. He knows the Lord is with them – he has FAITH and TRUST in God.

1. “How could anyone prevail against the living God?” he asks, and volunteers to answer the challenge and fight **Goliath**.

2. Saul tries to outfit **David** in his armor, which is far too big and cumbersome for **David** so instead he wraps himself in the armor of his FAITH, and steps forward to meet the Giant armed only with five smooth stones and his sling.

3. Well, we know the end – we know how this “Stormy Night” will end – **David**, armed with his FAITH and TRUST in the Lord, defeats **Goliath** – and Israel goes on to rout the Philistines.



4. And eventually, **David** is crowned King in Saul's place and rules over the Golden Age of Israel's history.

C. So what **is it** that the Disciples lacked that David had?

- Faith and Trust in the Lord.

1. David, as our scholar pointed out earlier, put his TRUST in God and followed through “with *appropriate action* when confronted with a life-threatening situation.”

2. So where do YOU find yourself on this Doubt – Faith continuum?

3. Are you with the Disciples, crying out in fear, even though Jesus is right there?

4. Or are you with David, putting your FAITH and TRUST in God?

III. Camp Stevens Sunday



A. I'd like to tell you a story about another place who had to weather the "Dark and Stormy Night" of Covid-19 and did so with FAITH and TRUST in God.

1. Today is **Camp Stevens Campership Sunday** – and as it just happens to work out, I will be leaving for Counselor Training at Camp Stevens right after church.

2. Now, you may know that I have just concluded serving 7 years of a six-year term on the Camp Stevens Board – the last 4 years as Board Chair.

3. Let me tell you about how that went.

4. Two months after I became Chair, the Camp Director announced she was leaving;

- That meant organizing a farewell party, beginning to search for a new Director, working with the Interim Director – who eventually became the new Director, transitioning new support staff – running a year of camp programs with new folks – and just when we got it all settled down and were feeling good about things – BOOM, Covid hits.

5. Now, you think we had a pretty rough time of it this past year plus dealing with Covid restrictions and not being able to be together – well, let me tell you that was nothing compared to the "Dark and Stormy Night" that Camp Stevens endured.

6. When you are a Summer Camp and Retreat Center – what do you do when you can't host people anymore?

- Your number one source of income suddenly dries up and there are still bills to pay and program to support.

- We were lucky: we still had all of you paying your pledges and giving sacrificially, while we were able to livestream the services – well, you can't livestream camp – it doesn't work.

7. And so the Director and the Board had to scramble – we met every Wednesday night for months – trying to make sure our beloved camp didn't go under.

8. It meant that we had to shut the camp down and all of the Camp Staff had to go on unemployment,

- but part of their compensation is their housing at the camp – did that mean they had to be homeless too?

9. So new and creative methods had to be found so that people could keep the places where they lived as they helped to look after the day-to-day needs of the facility.

10. Fortunately too, the camp has its supporters who gave generously and we turned to Fundraising with an on-line auction and other ideas.

11. And all of this was done in a spirit of FAITH and TRUST in God's love for our camp.

B. And as a result, new ways were found to reach out to the people who were part of the camp's life.

1. There was a weekly Community Campfire program on the Camp's Facebook page – virtual hikes were conducted, with a staff person taking you along with a web cam – they even had a day with the chickens via livestream.

2. They also found ways of reaching out to their community: they still had a large kitchen; they still had food growing in the gardens, and access

through Episcopal Relief and Development to additional food – so they started assembling food boxes for those in the Julian area whose jobs had disappeared and were in need of food.

3. And this has now expanded as they have joined with a local farm to augment the food boxes and the camp has become a distribution point for those in need.

4. They also invited those in the area to use the camp swimming pool to cool off in the heat of last summer – in a carefully coordinated effort so that no Covid restrictions were violated.

5. Hikes – Food – fun in the pool – sounds like Camp to me – these creative folks were able to take the things that they had and in FAITH and TRUST offer them to those who were struggling that they might help out.

C. And now we're going to try something new – Camp in a time of Covid.

1. While many of the Covid restrictions are relaxed for adults, we are dealing with teenagers and children as young as 8 – and there's a whole new ballgame as far as rules and regulations from the camp community to follow.

2. All the groups are their own bubble – so while a camper doesn't have to wear a mask in their group – each group has to stay self-contained and we will need to have a 6 foot distance between groups.

3. All the meals will be outdoors – and all the teaching we do for Counselor Training will be outdoors too.

4. And yet, it is SO worth it.

5. After being cooped up at home for a year, children so need to get outside and to explore and use their creativity in a way that camp can provide.

6. If you watch the brief video about Camp Stevens on our Facebook page, the Bishops of both Dioceses talk about this need and the need for all of us to help.

7. And we're not just talking about rich kids from La Jolla or West LA – **30% of our summer campers** receive support to come to camp each year.

8. This summer these kids need camp more than ever – and this summer Camp Stevens needs our help more than ever.

9. So I am asking you, won't you make a donation in any amount to the Camp Stevens CAMPERSHIP fund.

10. Just go to their website – campstevens.org/give – and make your donation to help send a child to camp.

- All the money received goes to help children to go camp.

Go to the website:

<http://campstevens.org/give/>

See the YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jWvYYClXpU>

11. And then, later this summer, when she gets back – be sure to ask Jenna how she liked camp.

Conclusion

So where are YOU and YOUR trust and faith?

1. If God dropped a ministry opportunity in your lap today, how would you respond?

2. Would you respond with the FEAR of the Disciples, or the TRUST of David, or the FAITH of Camp Stevens?

3. If God wants something done – doesn't it make sense that God is going to give us what we need to do it?

4. All we have to do is put our FAITH and TRUST in God's love and follow through with *appropriate action* in our lives.

5. What are we so afraid of – we have Jesus right here. [Heart]

6. As we work to rebuild our life together at St. Columba's, let us wrap ourselves in the armor of God's love, and trust that God will give us what we need to answer God's call – to face the violence and hatred of this world and offer an alternative – the love of Christ shining through our lives.

Let Us Pray

Saving God, entering the flood and storm of chaos and confusion; speak peace to our fearful hearts that we might find our faith in him whose word brings rest to all creation; through Jesus Christ, Lord of wind and wave. AMEN.

[Shakespeare p. 63]