

## **Don't You Care?**

Mark 4:35-41

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, June 21, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

We are perishing. There is every indication that we are perishing.

There are the small indications that we are perishing. We are aging. We go through the normal growing process. Even if we are young we are growing up. We get taller every year. We get stronger every year. We get smarter every year. That is a sign that we are growing up.

When those things go in reverse, then we know that we are perishing. We don't get smarter. It is harder and harder to learn new things. It is not like we are incapable of learning new things, but they sure don't come as easily as they used to. We start to shrink. Our stature is not as large as it once was. We become weaker. There are things that we used to be able to do and we are no longer able to do them. Eventually people begin to tell us that we should no longer do them. We learned how to drive and now our children are telling us not to drive. We are growing old. We are perishing.

The signs are there. There is the extra wrinkle that was not there before. There are extra creases in the face that were not there before. There varicose veins that were not there before. There are spots on the skin that were not there before. There are pains that were not there before. The eyesight is slowly going. It used to be that glasses were all we needed. Then we needed bifocals. The hearing is not as good as it used to be. Hearing aids are frightfully expensive. Our teeth are not what they once were long ago. We cannot seem to keep them up the way that they need to be kept up. Even though who never needed surgery their whole life suddenly need surgery. All of this is because we are perishing. The hair is grayer than it used to be. Some of us color our hair because we are afraid of looking at the signs of our perishing. And some of us are losing our hair never to find it again.

There are some perks. We can get a senior citizen's discount. We can draw social security and retirement. But as joyous as those things are they are also a sign of our age. When we were little we celebrated our birthdays. When we are old we try to pretend like they don't exist.

And why all the fuss over these things? Why is it that dark hair or blonde hair is attractive, but gray hair is not? Why is it that smooth skin is attractive, but wrinkling skin is not? Why is it that physical strength is attractive, but weakness or flabbiness is not? Why should a thin person be considered attractive and not a heavy person? Because all of the things that we try to avoid are indications that we are perishing. When our health is not good, no matter what the health problem is, it is a sign that we are perishing. We are drawing ever closer to the hole in the ground into which we must go with a nice stone next to us and pray that they mow the grass so that our children and grandchildren can find us.

We are perishing. We are perishing from cancer. We are perishing from car accidents. We are perishing from Parkinson's and dementia. We are perishing from Alzheimer's. We are perishing from surgeries and heart troubles. We are perishing when our bodies fail, worn out by constant use and excessive work. We are perishing from our sins.

And does the Lord care?

How many of you have prayed that the Lord would save you from your death and the Lord appeared to be sleeping? How many of you have prayed that your loved one would not die and they died anyway? How many of you have stood next to the bed of someone you loved and prayed your guts out that the Lord would heal and restore them only to have them die anyway? How many of you have prayed in such situations and then honestly looked for some sign that the Lord was answering your

prayers? But when the monitors were checked there was no indication that anything had changed. Or how many of you prayed for your loved one who was perishing and then there were signs of improvement and you thought to yourself, "Oh good, they are getting better. Things are shaping up. The Lord is answering my prayers. I believe in the power of prayer!" only to have that temporary improvement turn into a setback that led to death? Was the Lord teasing me? Was He taunting me? What eternal plan could have been furthered by answering my prayer with a "yes" only to turn right around and say "no" again?

And in the midst of despair how many of you questioned the power of prayer? How many of you have prayed and prayed and prayed only to have no answer? How many of you have been tempted to abandon the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because from all appearances He either does not hear, doesn't care, is asleep, or doesn't exist? How many times have you been tempted to abandon God because He acts as if He does not exist? And if He acts as if He does not exist, then what does it matter whether or not I believe in His existence?

We prayed and prayed and prayed for life and there was no life to be had. The Lord was asleep. We cry out to the Lord, "Don't you care? Don't you know that we are perishing? Are we simply that worthless that it is not a care to you that we are perishing? If that is the case just kill us now and get it over with. Why do we have to live and watch ourselves slowly waste away? Why do we have to face the oncoming death? We can see it coming. It is not far away. Our years go by faster and faster with each passing moment. Don't you care if we die!

And the Lord rises from the dead. And at the mouth of His empty tomb He asks us, "Why are you still cowards? Do you still have no faith?"

When the Lord rises from the dead, He conquers death. He conquers your death. When the Lord rises from the dead, He promises you resurrection from the dead. When the Lord rises from the dead, He promises you that you will come out of your graves just like He came out of His grave.

When the Lord rose from the dead the stone was rolled away. Presumably when you rise from the dead whatever it is that is holding you in your grave will be removed. For most of us in the United States it is six feet of earth that will be holding us in our graves. Just like the stone was rolled back from the tomb of our Lord so the earth of our graves will be rolled back and removed.

When the Lord rose from the dead He left behind His grave clothes. His body had been wrapped in a linen shroud. There was a separate cloth that covered His face. When He rose from the dead He no longer needed those clothes. Those are the clothes of the dead. They are no longer necessary. He left them behind. When you rise from the dead the clothes of death will no longer be necessary. You will leave behind whatever box or vault that you were buried in. You will not need the clothes in which you were buried. You will leave those behind as well. This should be good news for those men of the congregation who dread being buried in a suit and tie! The Lord rose from the dead and He had glorified clothing on. He did not appear naked to His apostles and to the women at the tomb. You will have clothing provided by God Himself. It will be supernatural clothing, but it will be yours.

When the Lord rose from the dead it took a moment for people to recognize Him. They did not immediately know it was Him. Mary Magdalene thought He was the gardener until our Lord said her name. I think it is because she did not expect to see a dead guy alive again. So when you and I rise from the dead, it may take us a little while to recognize one another. We have never seen each other sinless before and we will see each other sinless there. We have never seen one another deathless before and we will be without death at the resurrection. We will not perish.

When will all of this take place? It will take place on the last day when our Lord returns. When our Lord returns from heaven, He will come with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet call of God. As the lightning flashes in the east is also visible in the west so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Every eye will see Him even the soldiers who pierced Him. He will raise all of the dead and after the final judgment eternal life will commence in a new heaven and a new earth that Jesus is preparing for you.

What guarantees your resurrection? His does. That is what I mean when I say that Jesus conquered death. I mean that Jesus conquered death entirely. I don't mean merely that you die and go to a better place. I mean that death itself will be rolled backward and then permanently removed from the creation. You will rise from the dead and live forever. Everything is going to be ok.

That means that everything is going to be ok even when you are perishing. That means that everything is going to be ok even when your loved ones are perishing. The empty tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ stands as testimony at every funeral that this is not the end. It is not ok now. It will be ok when he returns. That is your faith. That is your confession. That is what your Lord has achieved for you. Why then are you still cowards?

Why then do you still fear the fact that you are perishing? Do you still have no faith? Why do you fear the perishing of those you love? It is not only because you fear losing them. It is also because you know that you will wind up like them. But Jesus is risen from the dead. Do not be afraid.

He commands the wind and the waves. He commands them and they are still. The creation obeys the voice of its maker. Jesus was the word that said, "Let there be light" and there was light. Jesus was the word that said, "Let there be an expanse over the earth," and it was so. Jesus was the word in the beginning that said, "Let there be lights in the heavens," and it was so. The Lord Jesus created everything that lives on the face of the earth. He formed us out of the dust of the earth. He breathed into us the breath of life. Our Lord Jesus Christ made us living beings on this earth. And since our Lord made us from the dust of the earth and our sins return us to the dust of the earth it only makes sense that if He has redeemed us from sins by His cross that He will also raise our dust from death. He is the creator. The creator creates!

He stands in the midst of our fears and apprehensions and He commands the tornadoes and the floods and they obey Him! He stands in the midst our terrors and our dismay and He commands the things that we fear and they obey Him! He stands among our lives that are falling apart and He commands them and they come together!

In spite of our faithlessness and terror and anxiety, in spite of the fact that we do not trust Him or believe in Him even though we say we do, He commands our fears and bids them be gone! The reason that I can say these things from this pulpit in your hearing is because He is risen from the dead. He stands over your loved one's casket and bids your fears of death be gone. He stands over your casket and bids you rise and you will rise. It is only a matter of time! And there is a great calm.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.