



**Calming the Storm
A Lenten Message from
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Dakotas Conference
of the
United Methodist Church**

Hello I am Roy Caudill, Glacial Lakes District Superintendent.

It is really good to be with you this year as we take this Lenten journey together. As you know the cabinet is reading and studying the book, "The Way" by Rev. Adam Hamilton.

In the book Adam lifts up three stories in chapter four that all take place by the Sea of Galilee. The first is the calling of the disciples. The second is when the disciples of Jesus on the sea and a storm rages against them. The third is when

the disciples are in a boat, a storm comes up and Jesus comes walking towards them on the water.

In 1998 my wife and I had the wonderful opportunity of taking that, trip of a lifetime, to the Holy Land. On the very first day a guide took us up to Golan Heights. When I say up, I really mean up. It is quite high. From those heights we were able to look over the Sea of Galilee. We could see those places where Jesus had done most of his ministry.

Coming down from the Golan Heights our guide pointed out a hillside. She said on that hillside that was the place where Jesus encountered the man who was possessed by the legion of demons. If you know that story you know that Jesus cast out the demons. The demons went into a herd of swine. The swine went down the hillside into the sea where they drowned. She also pointed out to us that today; wild swine still live on the hillside.

As we consider the three stories I want us to look at the one where Jesus said to the disciples, "*Let us go to the other side.*" They got into a boat and went out on to the Sea of Galilee. Jesus fell asleep on the boat. A great storm comes up. The boat is taking on lots of water from the wind and the waves. The disciples think they are going to be swamped. They woke up Jesus and said, "*Don't you care if we drown?*" He gets up rebukes the winds and waves saying, "*Peace, be still.*" He turns to the disciples and asks where is your faith? The disciples say to each other "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (**Mathew 8:23-25 NIV**)

This year I would like us to consider this story in light of five questions. Five questions we can apply to our own individual spiritual lives. I have been asking these questions of myself lately, questions that every local church should ask. The first question is this, what is our near shore? What is our current realty?

The second question is prompted by Jesus as he says, "Let's go to the other side," what is that other side? For Jesus it was a man that needed healing. For Jesus it was Gentiles, it was those people who were unchurched. It was people where there was an opportunity to make more disciples. What does the other side for us?

The third question is, how will we get there? For the disciples it was a boat. What is our strategy to get from our current reality to the future?

The fourth question is, what are the winds and the waves that will beat against us? What are the threats to our journey? What are those things that we resist? What will we try to avoid?

The fifth question, maybe the most important of all, will we trust Jesus? You see even if we don't go, Jesus is. He is always going, always looking for new places and new faces, new disciples. That is the call upon us. Can we make the journey this Lenten season? After all it is the way of Jesus.

May you be blessed as you wrestle with the questions and the answers.



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