

-When I was in junior high school, my best friend Tyler (who's now pastor in the Dalles, OR) and his dad, John, took me up to a church camp near Lake Mile Lacs called Camp Onamia for a work weekend. I have vivid memories of our drive up there as we traveled through this incredibly strong storm. We passed underneath a more major underpass where several cars were pulled over and many people seemed to be out of their cars looking at something. John stated that he would continue driving. We then started hearing reports of a tornado warning in the area that we were passing through and I found myself starting to get really anxious. I started to shake a little bit, breathe faster, and sweat as I started into the blackness of this storm hoping a tornado wasn't coming up the highway. Sure enough, we passed through the rain part of the storm and then Tyler saw something out to the left side of the car.....tornado. I had never seen a tornado in real life before. We were about 1 mile away from it: close enough for John's comfort that we pulled over immediately and began to watch what it did. It was on a course to cross the highway in front of us and John wasn't about to go any closer. I remember being able to see as it got closer to the highway the bits of trees and debris it was churning around in it's black/grey funnel. My fear elevated considerably and I began to think to myself: what happens if this thing changes course and comes right at us? What if we need to take cover? How secure are those tin sheds off the highway? Would they be blown apart and hit us? I remember I was so amped up I began to shake. Well, the tornado didn't come straight for us. As soon as it crossed the highway, it began to weaken and finally dissipate.. When the coast was clear and we started to drive again, I remember seeing the path of fallen trees it had taken before going back into the sky.

-This is one of the few times in my life where I can maybe relate to the fear level of the disciples in our gospel story today: "They were filled with great fear/awe". It needs to be pointed out that these disciples were not "just afraid". In fact, Mark the gospel writer, puts the word "fear" (phobon) twice in the sentence to really emphasize the fear that this group in the boat were feeling. It literally can be translated as: "the disciples feared with fear" or "feared a great fear". Either way, the point comes across: this fear for the disciples was intense. But was it a bad kind of fear? We spent a lot of last week's sermon talking about what happens when fear completely takes over your life and blocks you being able to trust beyond yourself. This week, I have been pondering on the kind of fear that these disciples obviously experienced when they "feared a great fear". Does this fear still exist today in our present day?

-President Franklin Delano Roosevelt famously said in his speech following the bombing of Pearl Harbor: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." This is an incredible statement that still resonates a lot with me today, but is fear just one thing?

- Dr. Karl Albrecht, an author and consultant for health and business management, has come up with 5 types of fear that we all share:

1. **Extinction**—the fear of annihilation, of ceasing to exist. This is a more fundamental way to express it than just calling it "fear of death."
2. **Mutilation**—the fear of losing any part of our precious bodily structure; the thought of having our body's boundaries invaded, or of losing the integrity of any organ, body part, or natural function.
3. **Loss of Autonomy**—the fear of being immobilized, paralyzed, restricted, enveloped, overwhelmed, entrapped, imprisoned, or smothered. In physical form, it's commonly known as claustrophobia, but it also extends to our social interactions and relationships.
4. **Separation**—the fear of abandonment, rejection, and loss of connectedness; of *becoming a non-person*—not wanted, respected, or valued by anyone else.
5. **Ego-death**—the fear of humiliation, shame, or any other mechanism of profound self-disapproval that threatens the *loss of integrity of the Self*.

-Dr. Albrecht, in his books, then goes on to give advice on how we can mitigate these 5 fears in our daily lives and be more "successful". Though I appreciate this interesting breakdown of fear and would agree that the disciples in the storm or me witnessing the tornado felt, perhaps, a combination of these 5 types of fear, I believe that there was a sixth type of fear is not mentioned in his breakdown but which was the most powerful. I will call it "fear of God" or borrow from our NRSV translation: "awe/fear". The fear that I think the disciples were wrestling with most was that type of fear that comes up when you realize you are not in control, when you are not at the top of the food chain, when there are things that seem to be beyond our limit of comprehension or strength. It's that type of fear that you get when you see videos of the tsunami in Japan swallowing up entire villages, or when you see a wild Grizzly Bear on the hiking trail, or when the doctors say: "we don't know what's wrong with you". It's the type of fear that kinda puts you in your place. This is a type of fear that I believe the disciples of Jesus knew more intimately that we do today. Awe/fear was a fact of life and why having "a god" for protection and safety from utter chaos was so important.

-Today, as our own Dan Spencer so eloquently explained in his lectures up at Holden Village this summer, humanity can launch satellites to Mars, can cure once incurable diseases, can communicate and surf the "internet" on handheld devices, and can even stare back into time using huge telescopes and equipment created by our own minds.

-We live in a world where in many ways, as the 1966 Time Magazine cover states, "God is dead" along with the "fear of God."

-So, once again, I appreciate Dr. Albrecht's analysis of these types of fear, but disagree that we need to "overcome" all of our fear. I think we need more awe/fear in our lives.

-Many of you know that Abby works for ClimateSmart Missoula, a nonprofit that is working hard to empower our local communities in mitigating and adapting to Climate Change. They host monthly conversations focused on different climate change topics

that are open to the public called “monthly meetups” at Imagine Nation Brewery. I remember attending one of these last year that focused on how agriculture is going to change in our local valleys. One of the farmers that was part of this conversation, I remember, said something that I have never forgotten. He said: “the good farmers and ranchers are the ones who wake up every morning scared out of the (bleeping) minds, but who instead of being paralyzed by that fear, are energized to care for and grow something amazing.” He then went on to say: “We need more of those types of those farmers and ranchers who are *scared into respecting* the sacred systems of the Earth.”

-“Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”, ask the disciples. This, it seems, is when the disciples were, too, scared into respecting their place of not having control of everything. This is when their awe/fear kicked in and it wouldn’t let go.

-Maybe this what we need to find more in our faith at the end of the day. Not one of the 5 “Dr. Albrecht” fears, but a sixth one. Not to be scared out of our minds, but to be scared into respect for our place and time in this creation. That fear can make a difference. That fear, awe/fear, can be truly “faithful fear”. Amen.