

Pentecost 4 (Proper 7)  
June 24, 2012  
Text: Mark 4:35-41  
Theme: "I'm No Goat!"

**People who go into ministry sometimes like to think of themselves as sacrificing their lives to God in service to him. Everything bad that happens, they see as good because if bad stuff happens, it's like points for them because then they are suffering and therefore sacrificing themselves for God. Then congregations jump right on that bandwagon. They can feel good about underpaying their church workers and ignoring their needs because after all, they are sacrificing themselves to God.**

**Once, in another congregation, when we could not afford to pay our hospital bills, one of the members told Dänya, "well you didn't go into the ministry to get rich." Dänya, as you can imagine, was non-compliant. At the time, I was being paid about 1/2 of the median income for that area and the congregational leaders thought that was okay, because I was a pastor who gave his life and the life of his family in service to God. Dänya threatened to get a t-shirt that said, "I'M NO GOAT!" and wear in protest every Sunday. I thought a more productive course of action might be to teach that congregation what the Bible says about caring for your pastor.**

**Pastors, and all church workers, should be paid to the best of the ability of the congregation. My attitude was then and is today, I**

**will give 110% and I expect the same from you. Over the years, they got better, but they never quite got it. They paid the pastors and teachers begrudgingly, always with an attitude of handing out an entitlement instead of being thankful for our service.**

**One of the joys at Trinity is that you people get it. You pay me well so that I don't have to worry about how to pay my medical bills. I don't have to rent a house in a neighborhood in which you wouldn't want to live. I don't have to drive a 25-year-old car and pray that it will get me home at night. Not only that, but I am not embarrassed to tell young people who are thinking of serving the Church what my salary is. I want them to know that while it's not a place to get rich, it is possible for a person to support himself adequately through service to God. That is one of the reasons we have fewer and fewer young people going into ministry. Who wants to rack up debt to go to school only to get out and make less than the median income? No one wants to be a goat, especially when we are told that Jesus was sacrificed once...and for all people. But some people like the idea of paying God back, especially with the life of someone else, namely the church worker.**

**The reality is that God never wants us to suffer. Because of our own sin and because we live in a sinful, broken world, suffering happens. It was not God who caused my hospital bills, but illness,**

**which is a product of sin. It was not God who underpaid me, but the people he had appointed to care for my needs when he placed me in that congregation. It is God's will that we always have peace and joy. So demand it! It is your right as children of the King.**

**The rain and hail are falling. The waves are breaking over the bow of the boat. The lightening is striking all around and the thunder booms! All Hell is breaking loose and the disciples knew just what to do. Wake Jesus up!**

**"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" No one on that boat sat piously with a morbid smirk and said,**

**"Oh I am so blessed to be allowed to be drowned for Jesus." Yet sometimes we tip toe around Jesus as though we are afraid of waking him. WAKE HIM UP! He loves for us to call him. Never forget that Jesus is walking right beside you and for heaven's sake, never be afraid of him. He chose to die on the cross and suffer Hell for your sins, do you think he will ignore you now? Some trouble he will remove and some trouble he will strengthen you to withstand but he is always right here in the boat with us, right in the eye of the storm.**

**We are no goats. He does not intend for us to be a sacrifice and we are not somehow more holy and pious if we allow ourselves or others to suffer when we can prevent it. He was the sacrifice and**

**we are his brothers and sisters who benefit from what he did for us.  
He is always there. Wake him up. Be loud! Call on him and fully  
expect that he will give you whatever you need because he loves you  
more than we will ever fully understand.**