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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

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Communion - Jesus Calms the Storm

Selected Scriptures

Prayer: *Father, we just again thank you for the fact that we can gather and we thank you for the provisions that have been made via TV and all of the different things that have gone into being able to actually be here in person. And Lord, we're just grateful that we still can meet and gather today on this day to ponder what it is you've done for us on the cross. We just again pray as we again have the privilege of going into your word, that you would give us the ability by the power of your Holy Spirit to see a new depth, a new breadth of the love that you have for us as seen in the death of your Son. So we pray that you would give us this grace, this insight, this wisdom and that it would be of permanent value, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well once again the first Sunday of the month, this is that Sunday that we set aside to worship and remember Jesus Christ and his cross. And Jesus on the night before he died he had this meeting with his disciples and there he celebrated a Passover supper with them. It's described in *Matthew 26*. It says: *Now as they were*

eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." So Jesus took the bread and he took the wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood, then proceeded to ask his disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup so that they could symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. And then he asked them to repeat this remembrance on a regular basis. This is what we call "the Lord's table" and we celebrate it once a month by again meditating on what it is the Lord Jesus did for us on the cross, by examining ourselves, asking God's Holy Spirit to point out areas in our lives that we need to confess, areas of sin, by confessing our sins and then by participating in the elements. John 6:53 says: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Well we've been looking at the gospel of Mark, we're nearing the end of the fourth chapter of the gospel of Mark. Jesus has been ministering nonstop and all the while dealing nonstop with demons

and with earthly enemies such as the Pharisees. And while he's ministering Jesus is still instructing his disciples who prove over and over again to be very difficult pupils. Jesus has been speaking in parables for a while now. He's spoken of the parable of the sower and the seed and he's speaking from a boat to a crowd, and he speaks of rocky, thorny, wayside and good soil, explaining to his disciples only afterwards what it all means. And then he goes on to describe why he's speaking in parables, the judgment that it was against the nation of Israel for rejecting the Messiah. He goes on to tell them another story about how the seed grows while men sleep. He points out that it is God who is at work in growing his kingdom. Man is simply attempting to manage something that is mysterious that God is doing. And then he moves on to the parable of the mustard seed which describes how the church is going to grow so that the birds of the air will actually be able to nest in it. And he's telling them that the blessing in the church will extend outward and that it will affect every single kingdom that it's in because Christ's church does that, Christ's church blesses even believers and non-believers alike. And even though the mustard seed itself will never become an impressive looking tree, it still exists as it exists because Christ's church will never emulate the power, pomp and glory that the kingdoms of the world all seek to claim. But just like a mustard seed, the church will be ubiquitous. That is it will grow wherever the master plants it

in a way that can never be stamped out.

And Jesus has been going nonstop. As I said, he's been facing demons and enemies and crowds of people constantly. As I said he gave the parables of the soils from the boat because the crowds were so huge. And as we come across Jesus this morning we find he's clearly exhausted, and so he makes a request of his disciples in *Mark 4:35*. He says: *On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.* Now the side that Jesus had been speaking from what the city side of the sea of Galilee, that other side, that other side was the country side. That's the side that Jesus wanted to head to so he could have some peace and quiet. And Jesus' exhaustion is such that he needs to leave the crowd to seek some peace and rest. So he asks his disciples to take him to the other side. It says: *And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.*

In 1986 there was a severe drought in Israel. It caused the Sea of Galilee to retreat somewhat and it allowed two amateur archeologists to stumble upon what became known as "the Jesus boat." It was the remnant of a fishing boat that had been used

during that time period which had been sunk and buried in the mud for thousands of years, and it gives us a picture of the type of boat that Jesus most likely was in. It was a big boat. The boat was 27 feet long and it was about seven feet wide, had a very flat bottom so that you could go after fish in the shallows. There was places for oars that could be used in the boat. There was even a place that you could erect a sail. Well the scripture says that Jesus made his way to the back of the boat and that he put his head on a cushion and instantly fell fast asleep. You've got to understand, this is not exactly captains quarters on a luxury liner. This is the back of an open boat and a bench. It's sort of an indication of just how exhausted Jesus must have been to have fallen fast asleep in something that's not designed for resting at all.

So Jesus is fast asleep and this storm arises. Now you have to understand, these are seasoned fishermen. These are folks who ply the Sea of Galilee all the time. They're hyper aware of storms. This storm had to have been a doozy. So the boat starts taking on water and the possibility of sinking becomes very real, so real that the disciples are now in a complete panic. But he was in the stern sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said, *"Teacher! Don't you care that we are going to die?"* We could sum up in three of those words what is probably the greatest complaint

or lament that believers and non-believers alike have about God. It's those three words "don't you care." I mean the disciples' terror and panic has stripped them of all of the niceties that would have prevented them from being so blunt. Now they're terrified. Now they're blurting out something that all of us have thought about at one time or another. *"Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"* I want to be very careful about how I express it because I don't want you to get the wrong impression but I want you to know that Jesus cares far more about you perishing than he does about you dying. You see there's a huge difference between the two. Dying is something that every one of us is going to have to go through. *Romans 5* says: *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.* That means all of us, I mean except for that small chunk who are alive during Christ's actual return, all of us are going to experience physical death. That's the curse of Adam's fall, it's the curse that all of us live under. Jesus hated the fact that all of us lived under the curse of death. He hated it so much that he wept over Lazarus' tomb. But he also understood that the power of death itself had been taken away for one reason. That is Christ himself had embraced death itself for each of his sheep. He had come to earth and lived the only perfect life that's ever been lived on earth and then he offered up his perfect life as a substitute for our lives of sin if we by faith

accept him as Lord. And doing so he had taken away from death the one thing that gave it this enormous power and that was its permanence.

The difference between dying and perishing is the difference between physical and spiritual death. Because of Adam we all live in this cursed world in which death has spread to all of us because all of us sin. Evolution tells us that we die and we die for a different reason, we die because all we've ever been is just an accidental collocation of molecules which appear for a moment and then disappear. We're born and we grow old and we die and that's it. I mean that's just the way it is according to evolution. Well if that was all there was to this, then our lives would be no different than any other animals, I mean they too, they're born, they live, they die, life goes on. Well not so for us. You see, the most amazing thing happens when a child is conceived. Because at the same time an eternal soul is created by God that will live forever. You know if you are a parent, you have been given this amazing, incredible, unspeakable privilege that you get to partner with God in creating an eternal life. That's what Jesus is focused on, that's what Jesus came to save. Jesus came to earth and he lived a perfect life so that he could offer his life up on a cross for what? *John 3:16: "That whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

What about the disciples' claim though, I mean certainly it was given under duress but nonetheless they said, *"Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"* Well again, I want to say this carefully. In a very real sense Jesus cared far less about the physical death of his disciples than he did about their perishing. I mean he flat out told Peter exactly the way he was going to die in the future. He told him with no laments, no grieving. This is what he told him in *John 21*. He says: *"When you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go."* Just in case you think this language is a little too abstruse, the scripture here makes it clear that Jesus was talking about death in the very next verse, verse 19 says: *This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.* We know Peter is said to have been crucified upside down. And we do know that he did indeed stretch out his hands and go someplace that he did not want to go. And we have another instance of James and John. James and John asked Jesus if they could sit at his right hand and his left hand in the kingdom and Jesus asked them if they could be baptized with the baptism that Jesus himself was going to undergo. *Mark 10:39* says: *And they said to him, "We are able."* Well Jesus kind of asked that question rhetorically. I mean knowing exactly what was in store for them, Jesus then said: *"The cup that I drink you will drink*

and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized." Well, James was killed with the sword, John was supposedly thrown into boiling oil before being banished to the island of Patmos where he died. Jesus seems almost cavalier about the way he treats these deaths.

And then there's the case of Lazarus. *John 11* says: *Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."* Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. I mean Jesus knew full well that Lazarus was dying. He also deeply loved Lazarus, he just said so. But we know he clearly waited instead of rushing off to serve him. And we later learn that the reason why Jesus waited was to make sure that Lazarus has been dead not just recently but for three days before he gets there. And when the disciples inquire about Lazarus, Jesus flatly and plainly tells them something they couldn't possibly have known. He tells them Lazarus is in fact dead. It says: *Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died,*

and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." I mean Jesus' attitude toward that death was subject is to a rebuke by Lazarus's sister Mary herself. She said: *"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."* When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. Now understand, Jesus was not troubled by the death that Lazarus had to die, I mean he was going to very quickly undo that. What so deeply troubled Jesus was the deep pain that the curse of death caused everyone in general and his dear friend Mary in particular.

So if we look at Jesus' attitude toward death itself, that is towards physical death, if we look at his attitude towards James and John and Lazarus and understand that to Jesus then death is painful but it's not necessarily permanent. And besides Jesus would also speak from experience as he, too, would experience the very same physical death that James and John and Lazarus experienced but he would experience it uniquely alone. See when Jesus went to his death every single shred of support that James or John or Lazarus could and would expect from their fellow earthly companions was stripped from Jesus. Not a soul on earth nor in heaven above could support or accompany him on this journey through death itself. His disciples completely abandoned him and his

heavenly Father had no choice but to do so as well, as Jesus had now become the sin that caused death to reign in the first place. *2 Corinthians 5* says: *For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.* So take a moment this morning to consider the death that Jesus embraced for us.

Consider also as we begin to take the bread God's warning about communion. It's found in *1 Corinthians 11*. It says: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* I say this every month, communion is extraordinarily serious business and to enter into it in an unworthy manner as to court disaster. I beg of you, if you are not absolutely confident that you're a child of the King, if you haven't been faith trusted in Christ as your Savior, also if you first need to be reconciled to your brother or sister before you bring the sacrifice of yourself to this altar, then don't participate. Just pass the elements on. If you don't feel right about participating, just err on the side of caution and get right

with God first. I say all the time on the other hand you can make the mistake of thinking you have to be flawless in order to receive communion and that, too, is a mistake that the devil just loves to trip us with. Being a child of the King doesn't mean you don't sin, it doesn't mean you don't fail. What it means is you recognize that the salvation that you have been given is a gift. It's a gift that no one is capable of earning. And I put this quote out every month because I hope eventually every one of us will have it memorized because it so perfectly sums up the attitude we need to have. Dane Ortlund says: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." That sums it up perfectly. But it also means that when we fail, we are aware of the fact that we failed. Why? Because God's Holy Spirit is now inside us. It's God's spirit inside us convicting us, causing us to grieve as children who know that we have a Father who longs to forgive and cleanse us, a Father who says: *If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being a child of the King doesn't mean that you are flawless, doesn't mean that you are sinless, it means that you understand that when we do sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ up in heaven right now speaking on our behalf. *1 John* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we*

have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. The whole point of communion, the whole point of why we're all to participate in communion is because we now have not our righteousness but Jesus' righteousness. It now belongs to us. So we're free to eat at his table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that he purchased for you at the cost of his blood. He lived the life we were supposed to live and died the death we all deserve to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven. So I ask us to just think for a moment about the fact that he died for us and ask yourself am I willing to die for him? Take a moment to open up your packet, get the bread.

1 Corinthians 11:23 says: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." So take, and eat.

The disciples are still in the boat, still in the storm, still in a state of panic as they're trying to rouse Jesus from his sleep. But he was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?" He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Then he

said to them, "Why are you fearful? Do you still have no faith?" And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

You know when I was -- when my kids were little, I used to explain the sovereignty of God by simply claiming that Jesus is the boss of everything. My kids would ask, "Is he the boss of the sky?" And I would say, "Yes, he is the boss of the sky." And we would continue this way through lions and sharks and mean dogs and bugs and down the whole list, and we'd cover just the whole gamut of young people's understanding of God's sovereignty. If there was a particularly bad thunderstorm, the kids would want to know, "Is Jesus the boss of thunder?" And I would say, "Yes, Jesus is the boss of thunder." Well, here we have a case where the disciples are the kids and they really don't know what to ask. I mean they only know that they're terrified and Jesus is so unterrified, so completely at rest with who he is and where he is that he's sound asleep in the middle of a squall. I doubt very much if any of them even imagined the extent to which Jesus was the boss of everything, including the howling winds and the rolling sea because when Jesus actually showed them the extent to which he was the boss of everything, they were terrified. The scripture says Jesus did two things. First he rebuked the wind and then he spoke to the sea. He addressed both of these forces as if they were domesticated pets

under his full control because they are and they were. Just picture the disciples and understand here we're talking about seasoned seamen. Picture the state that they were in, they're having to scream to one another above the howling winds and they're clinging to the side of the boat, it's taking on water and they're afraid they're going to be thrown into the heaving seas and all of a sudden everything instantly stops. I mean it's not like the wind started to kind of slow down and yeah, I think I see some light and -- everything just stopped. At the command of the boss of the universe, nature itself stops itself. *And the wind ceased, and there was great calm.* I mean just imagine going from what is essentially a hurricane type situation to instantaneous perfect calm and sea smooth as glass. I mean the disciples are no longer screaming to one another, they're no longer gripping the side of the boat and now it's their turn to receive a rebuke. Verse 40: *He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?"*

Well, this is not a question just for the disciples, this is a question for us. And the question is how much of a role does fear play in our lives as believers? I mean to be sure, fear is a good thing, I mean, it is right and proper to fear hurricanes and to fear drowning, but how far do we go in letting fear control our lives? I mean the disciples, they were actually upset that Jesus was so fearless, that not even a life threatening squall could wake

him up. I mean this was a person who never, never let fear get the best of him. And God tells us exactly why in *Isaiah 26*. He says: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.* Want the secret to peace? Jesus' mind was constantly stayed on his Father. He told the disciples the very same thing in *John 14*, he says: *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."* Jesus perfectly demonstrated this principle that the more focused you are on God's sovereign control over every single aspect of your life, the less fear you will find yourself subject to. The more you believe what Christ said when he said in *Matthew 10*: *"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."* I mean the more you believe that, the less you will find fear controlling you. There's almost a direct ratio in proportion to the amount of fear that you allow into your Christian life and the sense that you have of the presence of God. And because God and Christ have been systematically removed from our culture, we find that fear is one of the most prevalent conditions that afflicts us. We are a nation and a culture that has more success in removing fearful things than any other culture in history ever has. There is no place on planet earth that is safer to live than in the United States. One of the things that is so striking about the folks who live in third world

countries who don't have the protections from fear that we have is that they oftentimes have a far more vivid understanding of living in the presence of God. I mean we essentially live in a safety bubble that covers us from the womb to the tomb. Because of that we are in general highly risk averse. That is to say that we almost always regard risk as a bad thing, as something that's looked on from an insurance agent's perspective. Do whatever you can to minimize your risk. Do whatever you can to avoid having to face fearful situations. You know what happens when all of the risk is removed from your relationship with Jesus Christ? You know what you find when you do that? You find that what you have left is something called religion. It's a set of facts, a set of rules, a set of propositions about who God is, it may be orthodox, it may be theologically sound but it's absolutely devoid of life itself. I mean it's what the Pharisees had, I mean, it's what they embraced. They wound up reducing God to a series of little rules and regulations that they felt good about adhering to. And yet their whole history from Abraham through David to John the Baptist was all about people of great faith taking great risks because they knew their God was sovereign. See with great risk came great reward. With no risk comes religion.

Just consider our text this morning. We're looking at the disciples getting a lesson on the omnipotence of Christ. He could

have sat them down and explained to them that he's the God of the storms, he's the God of the seas and they would've probably nodded their heads and said, yeah, gotcha. It would have been a nice religious teaching. But that's not what Jesus wanted them to learn. You see the disciples got to see a side of Christ that no one had ever seen before. They got to see the enormity of his power but the only way they got to experiencing that was by being placed in a circumstance that was rife with terror. I mean the disciples had this particular experience thrust upon them, they certainly didn't choose it. Nor would it have been wise for them to go out in the middle of a hurricane just to experience Jesus' power. But understand, it was only in the middle of a hurricane that they were able to discern this aspect about Jesus and his power that they were never able to perceive while standing on dry ground in the sunshine. And what I'm saying is this: If you want to experience God in a way that is something outside of textbook learning, you're going to have to face some kinds of fear. And most of us don't go looking for fear. Mostly fear finds us. And when it does appear if we're normal at all, we want out. The problem is the safety and security we all crave has a way of nudging our need for God right out the door. And to the extent that we want to have Christ and safety with no fear, well, we'll wind up with a Christ that seems good and right and proper but lifeless and distant. When we live in a country that is so wealthy

and prosperous and so fear averse that fear itself becomes something that we have to embrace voluntarily if we want to experience the living God. See I tell you right off the bat, it's a fearful thing to approach my neighbor with the intent of sharing the gospel. He might think I'm an idiot, he might think I'm trying to shove the gospel down his throat, he might not like me afterwards. It's a fearful thing to ask someone to stop blaspheming when he insists on using the Lord Jesus Christ's name as a curse word. It's a fearful thing to do the right thing when you know it might cost you your job or your livelihood but these are the places where you find the living God.

Fear also determines the way we give our resources as well. I think it was Tim Keller who said if you look at the heart of greed, it's almost never greed itself that's driving it. What is really driving it is fear, fear of not having enough, fear of running out of resources. It's that fear that makes us greedy. It's that fear that robs us of our joy, and joy is our legacy. See, there's no one else who has the ability to cast out fear than those who know that the God of the universe has their back. *1 Peter 1:3* says: *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.*

So you have to ask yourself how much do I let fear control me? How much do I let our risk-averse culture shape our response from living our lives for the kingdom? You know we went down to Washington for the prayer march last week, last Saturday, and we said we were going down to the march, there were folks who said, well, what if there's protesters? What are you going to do around all those people? What if you wind up in the middle of a super spreader event? All of those are legitimate questions and I definitely appreciate the genuine concern that people had who raised those questions, but in the end you have to realize that fear can be paralyzing and it will keep you from doing anything. I understand you have to use your brain, I mean, out of an abundance of caution, I'm not going to go to the back of the church to greet you after the service today 'cause I was in Washington last week and you know what happened in Washington last week. I was surrounded by tens of thousands of people. I feel perfectly fine but I want to exercise some caution. And I know there are folks sitting right here today who have overcome their fear of being in a public place during this time of COVID-19 and let me tell you, it is far harder for those folks to be here than it is for those folks who don't have any of those fears. And I recognize there are folks who think wearing a mask and that kind of thing is just utter nonsense, but for the sake of those people who are conquering those fears, the ones who have conquered those fears to come here, we

wear the masks in order to show the love of Christ to our brothers and sisters. I mean there's no doubt we are living in fearful times. And that's true for everybody but it's not necessarily true for us. The world has nothing to offer us to allay our fears. But listen to what God tells us in *Isaiah 41*. He says: *"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* In *Deuteronomy* he says: *"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, he is the one who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."* These are God's words. They're not spoken out there, they're spoken to us specifically. And the question we need to ask ourselves this morning, are we willing to accept them not just as true academically but as truth that is going to guide our lives and drive out the fear that the enemy loves to afflict us with. You see, the more you grab ahold of the certainty of the love of God along with the sovereignty of God, the more you'll be able to look fear right in the eye and say: *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

As we take the cup, ask yourself, is it fear or is it faith that is driving my life? *1 Corinthians 11:25* says: *In the same manner he also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new*

covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." So take, and drink.

This is the part that we call hands, heart and feet where we try to understand a practical way of what it is like to remember the Lord Jesus Christ. And what I wanted to do is just kind of give you a report as to what it was like to go down to Franklin Graham's prayer march. We actually got there, we stayed at Janice's sister and my brother-in-law's place. They live right outside of D.C. and they go to Capitol Hill Baptist Church which is in D.C. and so they let us park there. So we went, parked there and we went to the actual venue. We wound up being behind the venue, so we walked about six or seven miles and we wound up getting there about, oh, about a half hour late. So we missed the initial instructions that Franklin Graham had. And the way it was set up, there was seven different stations, include the Washington Monument, the War Memorial, all of these different things where you were to stop and pray specifically with the instruction that you were given. We didn't get that for about the first 45 minutes. There were groups of people. There were groups of five, ten, twenty-five, fifty, there was 2,000 people that came from Liberty University, 2,000 kids all with t-shirts on all assembled in groups. And there were groups praying all over, some praying in tongues, some praying. It was just an amazing thing to see this huge assemblage of people all

individually praying and kind of moving on.

And so we got our instruction and it was simpler because we understood exactly what we were going to do. I'm going to pray through these very briefly and explain how that worked. The first one was the Lincoln Memorial. There it says we were to pray to humble ourselves in repentance, ask God to forgive our sins and heal our land. We do just that, Lord, we ask that you have said *if my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and heal their land.* And that was our goal that was our desire, that is our goal and desire, Lord.

Secondly we went to the World War II Memorial and there, Lord, we pray for our military, we pray for our police, we pray specifically for Tom and for Eric and for Seth and for Anthony and Scotty and Ray, those who are associated with our church who are in law enforcement. We just lift them up. We pray for firefighters and their families. We pray security and peace for our nation.

And then we moved on to the Washington Memorial where we prayed for salvation of the lost. Lord, we pray for renewed strength in our families, we pray for front line medical workers and solutions to the Coronavirus pandemic, and we pray for an end to abortion.

We then moved on to the White House where we pray for the president, the vice president and their families, all those who work in the White House in the executive branch of our government.

Next we moved on to the National Museum of African American History and Culture and there we prayed for compassion and kindness toward one another, for respect and reconciliation between races, for healing in communities torn by violence and injustice.

And then we moved to the National Archives where we prayed for religious freedom, for boldness for churches to stand firm with the word of God and to preach Jesus Christ in a troubled world.

And finally we arrived at the U.S. Capitol where we prayed for our congress and our other leaders at the national, state and local levels, the Supreme Court and judges across the nation.

You know, in this past week, there's been an awful lot of speculation about what is going on, our president's got COVID-19 and some people think there might be conspiracies. There's all kinds of thoughts. The overarching thought in my mind, there was almost 100,000 people in Washington, D.C. praying and less than a week later our president comes down with COVID-19. So I'm just going to believe this is from the hand of God and my prayer is that

this is something that really moves our president, really moves him to understand that he is vulnerable, he is human, that he needs far greater help than human beings can give and it's exactly what Franklin Graham said, we are here because human stuff doesn't work. It literally doesn't. So we're here to pray. So what we did last week I just want to see repeated in the spirit over and over again what this country needs more than anything is prayer. So let's pray.

Father, I just want to pray for us individually. I pray for us as a body, Lord. You have given us this incredibly sacred task. People who don't know you don't have any idea of the power that exists, just like the disciples sitting in that boat see you stand up and say to the wind and the waves, "stop it" and it stops. That's the power that we have by knowing you, by serving you, by having you as our Lord and Savior. And Lord, I pray that you would give us the ability to harness that power and to pray, to pray for our country, to seek its good, to seek your will to be done, Lord, and your kingdom to come. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.