



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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July 1, 2012

Pentecost 5

Sermon Text: [Proverbs 30:4-5](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Proverbs 30:4-5](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 46](#)

Second Lesson: [Acts 27:13-26](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Mark 4:35-41](#)

Take Refuge In What You Know

This is our God and we know his name

This is our God and we know his Son

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

It's an epidemic that we don't talk about all that much, but it's pretty much national. It's pretty much everywhere. I have to believe it's probably sitting in these pews this morning. It might even be sitting in your own pants. The epidemic I'm talking about has been called the "know better disease." During the campaigns of the president and all these other campaigns going on, do you ever listen to these commercials and think "Who are these guys? I know better than them what should be done." The Supreme Court gives a decision on ObamaCare this week... do you think you know better how the law should be applied than they do? Sometimes, right?

Not even on a national level, on a local level do you ever find yourself saying "I know better than that commissioner, that supervisor. I know what should be done." Okay, if you don't care about politics, I have to believe some Monday mornings you think you know better than the guy who spent the whole week with the team coaching them, right?

That's how we are. That's what we do. We know better. It's always easy to sit back and say "What are they doing? What are those people thinking?" than it is to be involved in making the decisions because if you're involved in making the decisions, it's a little harder to say "I know better." And we all love to say "I know better." It seems to be a place we take refuge in... "I know better. They should have done this. They should have done that."

Those words I read to you from Proverbs come from a guy name Agur. You guys didn't choose that for one of the twin's names, did you? Agur... we don't use that name, so we aren't familiar with it. And, you can read the rest of Scripture and you won't come over that name again. It's just right here at the end of Proverbs in Chapter 30. But evidently this Agur guy was pretty sharp and pretty smart because the Holy Spirit caused someone to gather together some of the things he said and put them in the Bible for us. He preserved them. The Spirit wanted us to have these words because Agur had something to teach us.

It's kind of interesting. Right at the start of it he starts out by saying something that we can probably relate to... "I am weary O Lord. I am weary O Lord." Have you ever had that feeling? That's how he starts out. Then he says what he is weary about is that other people might think he's smart but there's so many things he can't understand. Agur's wisdom probably stands chiefly in this... he didn't suffer from the "know better disease." He looked at the things of God and he said "I can't understand how God can do this." He saw that he did not know better than God, so he urged not only himself but other people, including us, to take refuge. Don't let the storms toss you because of what you don't know and what you don't understand. He said to take refuge in what you do know. The truth of the matter is that we know something that many people do not.

Agur asked about four or five questions in Verse 4 of Chapter 30. These four or five questions all have the same answer but many people don't know the answer. "Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son?" Not everyone knows that.

By God's grace, you and I know God. We know his name. We know what he has done. And we know that he is bigger than we are. We know that he knows better and not us. But that doesn't mean there aren't times when we see what happens in this world and we can echo Agur and say "I'm weary God. I'm really weary. Things are happening in my life that I can't understand. God, where are you? Why are you letting this happen? Why are you letting that happen? God, I thought you loved me! Why in the world would you let this happen if you love me?"

It's then that we need to remember that we don't know better than God. We aren't the one that can gather the wind in the hollow of our hands or take a cloak and gather up all the waters. That's God.

These words in Verse 4 are kind of really reminiscent. If you read the Book of Job, when you get to the end of the Book of Job, this really reminds me of what God said to Job. "Were you there when I laid the foundations of the earth, when I said to the waters 'You can come this far and no farther'? Were you there when I laid the foundations of the mountains? If not, then who are you to tell me what I should be doing?" We always talk about the patience of Job, but by the end of the Book, Job had gotten so much terrible advice from his friends that he was basically shaking his fist at God and saying "God, come down here and answer me because you're not being fair. You're not being loving. You're not doing what is right. You're wrong. I'm right." Agur seems to have known the Book of Job, because it sure seems like he's quoting from God's answer here and turning it into the form of a question.

This is the beauty of it... you and I know our God and his name. You and I know his Son and his name. We know not only their names, we know what they've done. What he has done for us... we just saw it happen this morning. Our God took people like you

and me who question him, who doubt him, people who have sinned against him, who shake our fists at him and say “We know better God,” our God, who said “Let there be” and there was, who could just squash us like a bug and be just and right in doing so because of our sin, instead of doing that, he sent Jesus. Jesus lived in our place. Jesus died in our place. Then he gives us something as simple as water and the Word and he clothes us in Jesus’ perfection. What God demands of us he gives to us.

That’s our God. We know him. We know he is above us and we are nothing compared to him. But we need reminders of that truth, don’t we? That’s why what Agur says at the end is really key. He quotes Psalm 18 when he says “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.” Every word of God is perfect. That’s where we go. Trust the Word of God. When God says something, he’ll do it, maybe not in our time and in our way, but he’ll do it in the best way for us. That’s what our God promises us.

You and I don’t always see that. Often times you and I rely on what we can see instead of what our God has said. It takes faith to rely on what God says because our eyes tell us the complete opposite of what God says at times.

I asked you earlier to put yourself in the shoes of those sailors that we read about in the Book of Acts. If you are one of those experienced sailors and you just got done putting some ropes to hold your ship together and all of a sudden podunk Paul stands up in front of you and says “I told you we shouldn’t have left.” And then he says “But don’t worry. We are not going to die.” What are you thinking as you are listening to him? You’re not thinking he’s seasick; you’re thinking he’s sea-nuts, right? That’s where you’re at. He just sounds like some goof ball. Who is this guy to talk to us and tell us this?

Think of the faith it took Paul. Imagine going days without seeing the sun or the stars. I can’t imagine going without the food part of it like they were talking about let alone all the other things they were going through. Yet Paul stood there and got in front of people who obviously had to think he was nuts and told this message. From everything we can see there, he believed every word of it. When our faith is at its best, that’s how we are. We believe every Word of God even as we are going through difficulties and hardships.

God tells us his Word is flawless. He tells us we can take refuge from it. But he doesn’t tell us that storms won’t still batter us and storms won’t still beat on us like they beat on that boat. He’ll be a refuge. He’ll keep us safe. It doesn’t mean it will be fun. It doesn’t mean we’ll be happy as we go through it. It doesn’t mean that it won’t be painful at times the things that you and I have to go through. But what our God is telling us is to do what Agur did. He seems to be quoting Job. He seems to be quoting the Book of Psalms. He’s telling us to go back to the Word of God because it’s flawless.

Know the promises God has made you in Scripture. “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” Everything will work out for the good of those who love God; not the

earthly happiness, but the eternal good of those who love God. Keep focusing on those promises and the reason you can believe those promises. The reason you can believe those promises is what God did for you. Even though you at times have challenged God, doubted God and everything else under the sun and sinned against God in so doing, he still loved you enough to die for you. He still loved you enough to give you water and the Word. He still loved you enough to give you the Sacrament of the altar so that you have this tangible body and blood of Christ that assures you that's how much God loves you. He loved you enough to die for you. He will keep his Word.

That Word of God is that refuge that takes us from the "know better disease" to knowing that there is no better person to have in charge than our God who loved us enough to die for us. I don't know better than him, but there's no better person I want in charge of my life or you should want in charge of your life than the Lord who loved you enough to die for you. Amen.