

## From Pastor Andy . . . "Peace! Be Still!"



*Mark 4:<sup>35</sup> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."<sup>36</sup> And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.<sup>37</sup> A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.<sup>38</sup> But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"<sup>39</sup> He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.<sup>40</sup> He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"<sup>41</sup> And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, I participated in the 103<sup>rd</sup> running of the Chicago to Mackinac Island sailboat race. This was the 21<sup>st</sup> time that I have crewed on the sailboat Eagle in this race with a crew and owner that I have been friends with since Jr High. In the 21 years I have raced on the Eagle we have been successful by winning our section 10 times and the overall prize on three occasions. Over the years we have had mishaps on our boat, including the tearing of sails, broken hardware, and cut lines. These things are the misfortunes of pushing equipment to its limits and the mistakes made by a crew not working together over a long period of time. Every boat that partakes in this race does its best to prepare boat and crew but there is always an element in any sailboat race that cannot be controlled.

In 2011 the sailing vessel Eagle again won the section they raced within but the victory came with a dark cloud hanging over it. Over the 103 years that the Race to Mackinac has been held there has never been a weather related death. The year 2011 put an end to the record. Approximately at 12:00 am Sunday morning a large thunderstorm rolled out of Minnesota, across Northern Wisconsin and onto Lake Michigan. On this lake awaited approximately 3000 sailors racing 330 boats. We on the Eagle prepared for the storm and watched the lightning it was producing. We reduced the sails, called for all crew to come on deck and positioned the boat in a place that would not force us into any other vessel or even land. The wind had been blowing over 20 knots most of the day and in our minds we thought that it could not blow much harder but it's always good to be prepared. I thought about our reduced speed and the lead we had worked so hard to build; I even spoke of my concern. We only had 30 miles to complete the race and a fleet victory was set in my mind. A few minutes before we were blasted by this simple thunder storm our instruments began to show the effects of an increase presence of static electricity. I could even feel it in my feet, as I was standing very near the boat's navigation antenna, but when the storm hit we felt the true power that was unleashed. I stared at the boat's instruments and the boat's speed jumped from a speeding 10 knots to 17 knots. The wind speed went from 20 knots to over 50 knots. It was then we frantically took the remaining sails and began to ride out the wind and rain.

The sailboat, the WingNut, also prepared as the storm approached some 20 miles behind our location and actually had all her sails down before the force was felt but when they saw winds of over 70 knots, their boat capsized, throwing all but two of their eight crew in the water. The two crew members that remained on board had tethered themselves to a life line to keep them from being separated from the boat in the storm. As the boat turned over they were unable to release themselves for the boat and were lost.

## From Pastor Andy . . . (continued)

Our crew listened to the radio as this misfortune unfolded, (It's the practice of a racing fleet to always be available to help boats in need), we prayed and waited but it was not until we had finished the race some seven hours later that we were informed that they would not join us at Mackinac Island.

What does this all mean? I don't know and much of this is to let me process what's going on in my heart. I do know that sailing is something I love but also understand the danger. Jesus calms a storm in Mark 4, perhaps like the one that raced across Lake Michigan early on July 17<sup>th</sup>, Jesus also gives great perspective to the disciples in their time of great distress. Jesus simply says, "Peace! Be Still." You see he is not just saying this to the wind, he is saying this to the disciples who stand in the heart of the storm with him. There are so many storms in our lives that we attempt to prepare for but there is always something that will work against that plan. There will always be more stress, more things to worry about, more trials, more storms. The only way to see yourself through to the morning when the sun comes up is to know that it's Christ who will bring peace and a stilling of your heart.

May peace and a stillness of heart be with sailors Mark Morley and Suzanne Bickel who now rest in Christ.

Peace, Be Still,  
*Pastor Andy*