

Transcript for Chinese Community Church worship service on August 20, 2023

Sermon Title: Our Powerful God

Scripture: Acts 14:15-17

Call to Worship

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*

² *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

³ *though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging*

*The Lord Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

Psalm 46:1-3, 7

Pastoral Prayer

Oh, Lord, we thank you that we can put our trust in you no matter what kinds of storms we face in our lives. You are our anchor. You are our refuge. You are our strength. You are an ever-present help, no matter what storms we face. This morning, as we come before you, we entrust everything to you. We thank you for your love and protection. We thank you for your care and compassion. And we offer ourselves fully to you, in Jesus' name.

Message

Well, welcome everyone. I'm so glad we can all be together this morning, even though it's a different format. It's great to see your faces on this Zoom call. Well, this morning we're going to do something a little different than at our usual service. I'm going to give a short message today. And then we're going to get into breakout groups, so that we can have a chance to connect with each other. Now the reason why we're doing this is because of what we've been talking about. We are the church. Church isn't a building. It's also not just hearing some teaching from the Bible. *We* are the church. And we're meant to be the church by sharing our lives with each other and supporting each other. So, we're going to have a

short time later in breakout groups so that we can do that. And I'll explain more later how we're going to do that.

Well, I was just thinking last night that we're really blessed that we live in a day and age where we have the technology so that can keep connected – even in moments like these!

And what a moment this is! On Thurs, I got a text from Sam saying that he found out some strange news...and that news was that there was a hurricane coming. And that WAS strange news! Because I'm a native to San Diego, and I've never heard of a hurricane in San Diego!

But that day, we weren't too worried, because all the forecasts said that the hurricane would not land in San Diego. But, even so, we decided to keep a close eye on the weather. So, between Thurs and Saturday, we kept checking the news over and over again.

Well, I thought it was pretty interesting to see how the two of us were reacting. We were both back and forth on everything. We would have moments where we would be obsessively checking the news and bringing all our patio furniture in. And then other moments where we'd say, oh, it's not going to be a big deal.

Now, at the same time, we got text messages from family members who live out of state, and they were telling us to get water and batteries and canned food. Now, these family members have lived through Hurricane Katrina, and so it made sense that they were hyper vigilant for us.

Now, also went to a birthday party on Saturday, and we overheard some young people talking to each other, and they were saying that it's only going to be just a little rain and they just didn't understand why everyone was at the store stocking up on everything.

Everyone reacts very differently to this kind of news. Whether it's a big storm or a big fire or some unexpected health news. We all react differently to unexpected news. Some of us might be flooded with fears and worries. Some of us might wave it away as no big deal. And some of us might be cautious but alert. But whatever it is that we feel, one thing we can agree on is that in life, we face

storms, and those storms can come on us very suddenly, and in those moments, what we need to know, what we need to believe, what we need to trust is that God is a powerful creator who provides for all our needs in all situations.

And that's the **Big Idea** I want you to remember this morning: God is a powerful creator who provides for all our needs in all situations.

And we're going to look at that idea briefly from a message that Barnabas and Paul preached when they were on mission. The passage is from Acts 14:15-17. I'll read it to you. They said:

¹⁵ We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ¹⁶ In the past, he let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷ Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

Paul and Barnabas taught the people that God is a powerful creator and a powerful provider.

First, they described God as a powerful creator. God is the one who created the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. In other words, God made everything, and God holds everything together. There's nothing that can overpower God. Not fire. Not hurricanes. And not any diseases.

Jesus gives us an example of this. He was in a boat on the water with his disciples. In the darkness, the wind picked up. The storm clouds got heavy. And the boat rocked. And then when the clouds couldn't hold it in any more, the skies poured down rain. The waves got higher and higher, and they broke over the boat. And so the boat was filling up with water. And as the disciples saw this happening, they got more and more afraid. And then finally when they couldn't stand it any longer, they went over to Jesus who was sleeping, and said, "Don't you care if we drown?" And Jesus didn't even break a sweat. He rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" And the wind and waves died down and it was completely calm.

And then Jesus said to the disciples, “Why are you so afraid?” In other words, he was telling them they didn’t have to be afraid.

God is our powerful creator who made the heavens and the earth and holds everything together. And so we don’t have to be afraid.

Second, Paul and Barnabas described God as a powerful provider. God is the one who provides rain and crops and plenty of food. But, not just that, God also fills us with joy! And we have proof of this because God provides rain for all of us. We need rain because it feeds and nourishes our crops. And, by God’s grace, rain comes down on everyone and for everyone. It’s not discriminate. And so what this means is that whether you think of yourself as good or bad, right or wrong, sinner or saint, God sees you as someone worth loving and sustaining. And God wants to provide for you.

God is a powerful provider, who provides for all of our needs in all situations.

And so, as we think about Hurricane Hilary and of the different emotions we might’ve had about it in the last few days, and as we think about the other kinds of storms in life that we’ve experienced, I want you to hold onto this truth that when we’re hit by hard things, we can trust in our God who is a powerful creator who will provide for all our needs in all situations.

BREAKOUT ROOMS

Now, at this time, I’d like you to take a moment to think about these two points – that God is our powerful creator and our powerful provider. And then in a minute, we are going to get into breakout groups to share on that topic. A box is going to show up on your screen and there will be a blue button that pops up. It says “Join room.” Click on that, and in a second, it’ll take you to a different room. That’s your breakout group. You’re going to have about 10 minutes to talk and share, and then I’ll bring you back into this main room.

So, while you’re in the breakout room, these are the questions you can discuss.

1. What were your reactions when you heard about Hurricane Hilary? How did you prepare for it?

2. Which aspect of God speaks to you today? God as a powerful creator or powerful provider? Why?

Take a screenshot of it you have a smart phone handy or write them down. I'll also send it as a text on your screen.

Now, I'll send you to your breakout room, where you'll have a chance to talk.

CLOSING

Welcome back, everyone. Hope you had a good time of connecting with each other as you shared with each another.

As we close, I wanted to share a new song with you. It's called "I'm So Blessed" by CAIN. I love this song because it's a great reminder that no matter what's going on in our lives – whether it's a good day or bad day – we're still blessed because we are a child of God. We are loved and cared for by the one who is a powerful creator and provider. So just listen to the words and allow God to fill you with joy at this truth that no matter what, you are blessed because you're a child of God.

BENEDICTION

May the Lord bless you and keep you,
May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.
May the Lord's face turn toward you and give you peace.