

In the first reading God speaks through the prophet Amos reminding his listeners that God does nothing without first revealing it to his servants, the prophets. The Israelites, says the Lord, know not how to do what is right, are deep in sin, and will be surrounded by an enemy who will strip them of their strength and pillage their ill-gotten gains. Many will escape with only a remnant of what they had.

The Psalmist prays expectantly before the Lord and warns the people that wickedness, falsehoods, evildoers, deceit, and killing are all abhorrent to God and the prayers stemming from such sinful ways will not be heard.

The disciples follow Jesus into the boat and a violent storm erupts causing them to become frantic with fear: "Lord, save us! We are lost!" Jesus speaks to nature, rebuking the wind and the sea and complete calm ensues.

When we follow Jesus we can expect to suddenly find ourselves in the midst of occasional storms and he may not seem to be there when the situation is critical, but he is there with us and tells us, as he told the disciples, "Where is your courage? How little faith you have!"

In these readings God speaks to Amos who speaks to the people; the psalmist prays to God and warns the people of evil ways; Jesus commands nature and speaks to the disciples.

A long list of evil behaviors is noted: not knowing how to do what is right, robbery, extortion, wickedness, arrogance, deceit, falsehood, and blood-thirstiness.

But on the positive side are God's kindness, his answering of our prayers, Jesus' response to our need for greater faith and courage, and his power to calm the storms that will arise in our lives.

