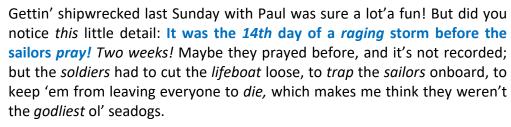
Calm Down

Faith in the Midst of the Storm March 27, 2022

Today we're building our faith for battling our storms with calm!

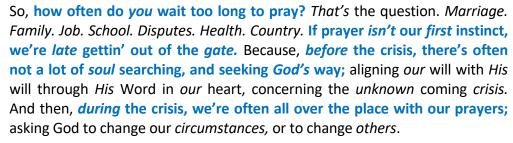






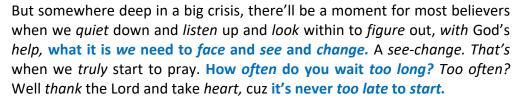






















The thing about the Lord, we don't like to think about, is how He'll lead us into a storm, if it's for our eternal best ... especially if it's the only way to get our full and faithful attention. Paul was obediently sailing to prison in Rome when he was led, not only into a storm, but a 14-day hurricane ... followed by a shipwreck ... followed by a struggle to shore ... followed by a deadly snake bite ... followed by the test of Malta Island (three months of godlike status in paradise) to try Paul's heart to see if he would continue to follow God's lead into that Roman prison. Yeah. We don't like to think about that.

But, He only leads us where He needs us, to position us, to best show and train and teach us the truest extent of His power and authority to calm the storm, or to calm us in the storm, or both. Which is exactly what He did years before, on the Sea of Galilee, off the shore of Capernaum (His base of operations) with twelve apprentices and 72 junior disciples.

And *this* story takes place right *here*, where He called Peter and Andrew and James and John, who *worked* on these waters and *knew* 'em guite well.

Now, life-threatening waves are rare on the Sea of Galilee, because it's actually a large lake.

But every so often a violent storm takes everyone by surprise. This was captured on video in 1992.







And this sudden storm produced 12' waves, which would've quickly swamped the 15-passenger boats of Jesus' day. So let's weave it, receive it, and believe it!

When evening had come, [Jesus] got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And other little boats were also with Him [for the 72] And they launched out. But as they sailed He fell asleep. And suddenly a great windstorm arose [and] came down and a great tempest arose on the sea, and the waves beat into the boat, the boat was covered with the waves and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. But He was in the stern, [the back of the boat] asleep on a pillow. [And when they realized they're not gonna bail themselves out of this one] They came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us!" "Master, Master, we are perishing!" ... "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" – Mt 8:23-24; Mk 4:35-38; Lk 8:22-24 NKJ

Okay, that *last* one's more *accusation* than *question* – much like *our* panic-prayers.

But how long do you think they battled that *storm* and tried to bail themselves *out* before coming to *Him?* Based on, "we're perishing!" I'd say the usual, 'too long'. And when we wait too *long*, our nerves are *frazzled*. But why the *accusation?* And why does the one *accusing* call Him "Teacher"? To understand *that* we need to *weave in* the *line* I left *out*, that *makes* it make *sense*.

[They] awoke *Him, saying,* "Lord, *save* us! We are perishing!" But [He didn't get up, or even help bail 'em out; instead, He chose *this* moment as a *teaching* moment, and] *He said* to *them,* "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" [He's not *scolding*. He's *teaching*. *Testing*. *Training*. *Asking* them in *that* moment to look *within* and *answer*] "*Teacher*, do You not *care* that we are perishing?" [And] *Then* He arose ... – Mt 8:25-26; Mk 4:38-39 NKJ

We're not reading into it; we're just actually reading it, word for word.



I remember taking a bath at my grandma's farmhouse, when I was very young, and accidentally kicking the water on, in her old clawfoot tub; and not knowing how to make it stop; and running downstairs screaming for help; and grandma being so frustratingly calm, and slow to respond, that when she finally shut off the water, it was only like 12" from going over! Close call.

So I get how they feel when Jesus won't react with the urgency their frayed nerves demand. But then, whose fault is that? And yet, what's He expect? They're fragile, drown-able, mortals! And most of 'em don't even have a Jesus in their boat! But, He expects the faith, of those who know He's in their boat, to override their fear. He expects us to know who He is, and to act accordingly.

[Because] <u>Faith comes from hearing</u> the message, [of Christ] and the message [of Christ] is heard through the <u>Word of Christ</u>. [That's where we get faith] – Romans 10:17 NIV





So that's what He expects. The OT not only declares that He rules the raging sea, and when it's waves arise He stills them, (Ps 89:9) but in a passage written 1,000 years earlier, not about them, but tailor made for them ... and us ... His Word in Psalm 107 clearly says:

Others went out on the sea in ships ... [and] saw the works of the Lord ... For He spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. ... [And] in their peril their courage melted away ... they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. – Psalm 107:23-29 NIV

Wait. Go back. He stirred up the storm? Think it happened against His will or took Him by surprise? He's got a lot'a faith to build in these boys, and little time to do it! So He puts 'em in a boat, goes to bed, and whispers to the wind to blow. And if they'd had Psalm 107 locked and loaded, they would've woken Him much sooner and calmer. But they were of little faith hearing the message through His Word. So they were of little conviction and confidence and calm. Otherwise one of 'em would've said: "Hey! I think we're doing Psalm 107!" "Oh, cool!"

But when He asked "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" They didn't know they didn't know Psalm 107. Why? Cuz they never thought they'd ever need to really hear the message of Psalm 107. And if they did know it, they obviously didn't think He's the One it's describing!

So there He sits in a raging storm, calmly asking a question. Somebody paint that picture! He can be so frustrating that way! "Teacher, don't You care if we drown?" "Pupil, don't you know My Word?" But time really is of the essence here, so He just gives 'em the answer: "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" "Uh ... because we're of little faith?" "Correct! Okay! Good talk."

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the raging sea, "Peace, be still!" [As though directing, with authority, Thing One and Thing Two] And [here's the thing] the wind ceased and there was a great calm. – Mt 8:26; Mk 4:39; Lk 8:24 NKJ

And here's the thing too: we limit Him by our limited knowledge of Him. So He sends us to sea, cuz we need to see how we underestimate His power and authority. They had no clue He could do Psalm 107. Know how we know? The Bible! Watching the wind suddenly cease is pretty cool. But when He says to the sea, "Be still!" the waves collapse in a mirror-like calm, and the boys are terrified ... of Him!

He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? Where is your faith? ["How do you not see we're doing Psalm 107?! We sing it in church all the time!"] How is it that you have no faith?" And they were afraid, they feared exceedingly, and marveled, and said "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, ["Not since Moses at the Red Sea—and even He had to call to God!" So] "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" ["Can He be who Moses was calling to?"] – Mt 8:27; Mk 4:40-41; Lk 8:25 NKJ

I think their alarm comes, not from having no idea, but from suddenly realizing who it actually is they're trapped in a boat with: the actual Creator! And they just woke Him up and told Him off!





I picture the boys crowding the bow, like the kid on the lifeboat with the tiger in The Life of Pi. Only with something way scarier! And they realize they had more control over the storm than over Him! So they fear Him exceedingly more than the storm. Which is as it should be. Which is part of our problem. We tend to fear the storms of life more than the One who gives life and takes it away. But He's infinitely more powerful than our little ups and downs down here.

And they're beginning to grasp the fearsome Lion that's *in* their *boat*. Are *you*? That's why *Paul* could say: Keep up your *courage!* We're about to go *down*; but God will be *with* us *all* the *way!*

[Because] [Our God] will be our guide even to death. – Psalm 48:14 NKJ

If we'll *let* Him. "But I don't like to think about death." *Nobody* does. But you *better*. Cuz *it's* inevitable, and we're *all* in *that* boat *together*. And *until* you *do*, He'll be *unable* to comfort *you*.

"But don't You care if we drown?!" "Absolutely 100% yes! But you still might drown. And if you do, I'll catch you on the other side. Trust Me?" Not without building our faith by His Word. And only then can we show Him that we know Him. Because trust is the test of faith; and calm is the test of trust. So don't leave Him in the back of the boat while you try to bail yourself out.

In other words, don't wait too long to pray. You can start right now, today. Just ...

Humble yourselves ... under God's mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time. [In the meantime] Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. — 1 Peter 5:6-7 NIV

Right in the *midst* of the storm, if you'll *let* Him, and *trust* Him; not only because of who He *is,* but knowing He *alone* knows *when,* for *our* eternal *best,* He *needs* to *calm* things *down;* and when He *needs* to *stir* things *up;* and when He *needs* to *run* us *aground;* (Acts 27:22-26) and when He maybe even *needs* to prepare a *big fish* to swallow us *up* and *spit* us out! (Jonah 1:17; 2:10)

Go figure. Cuz the *critical* factor in faith *isn't* its *strength*, but its *focus*. And *if* it's *founded* on the *One* with *all* the authority and power, *all* you *need* is a mustard *seed* – like say, Psalm 107.



So where's your faith? And more importantly, where can faith be found?

"Uh ... the Bible?"

Correct! Okay! Good talk.

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.