

Jesus is with us in the storm. Luke 8:22-25 – Feb 2019

This Gospel reading is about knowing that we can turn to Jesus to calm the storms to rest in him when things seem beyond our control.

The reason these hardy fishermen were probably scared was because they knew how rough the water can get on the Sea of Galilee – a small stretch of water – 13 miles by 7 miles – but very prone to sudden severe storms, So you can imagine the panic that caused them to wake Jesus – who then proceeds to sort everything out – once again...

It's quite a spectacular thing – to calm a storm – to defy nature – beyond human comprehension. We are hearing some powerful reassurances that there is one who has all power – and that one is God.

And Jesus knew that – his ministry was chequered with danger – conflict with people and priests and legal eagles...

This account of the calming of the storm by Luke – omits the detrimental 'don't you care about us' attitude of the disciples towards Jesus in Mark's account – and the 'Save us Lord,' from Matthew's account – instead Luke's disciples were filled with awe and marvelled and asked 'Who is this, then?'

This healing of the natural order – and the following healing of physical healings that will follow later in the chapter such as the raising of Jairus's daughter – will teach the disciples of the divine power that emanates through all that Jesus does

Where is your faith? – the disciples back then had witnessed Jesus in action first-hand – but didn't seem to think that amazing grace would work for them in the heat of a raging storm. They seemed to have been able to grasp it all when the going was good – but it didn't count for nothing when it meant trusting through their own stormy seas – literally. It wasn't good enough to talk the talk – walking the walk was what Jesus was asking of them – to have faith in God's infinite love and power – no matter what...

We can take this for us today as a basic course in anxiety management – fear is debilitating and the fear the disciples have is not only of a physical nature – but also an awesome fear – of that very power that is saving them. It is clear that when our own power has gone – when we simply can't win the game - there is only one way to go - and as soon as they gave it all to Jesus – they recovered their calm and began to see Jesus in a new light – not as a teacher or miracle worker – or a good man – but actually he was someone doing what God could– even Peter was stunned to silence.

And silence of our own powerlessness allows us to hear the calming, assuring voice of God. Listen to these assuring words:

"I will never leave you or forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go." (Genesis 28:15)

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Joshua 1:5)

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:20

I imagine we have all experienced fear in some form or another during our lifetime – it is part of being human I am coming to believe –

But this story can bring us hope – when we believe it can – it can bring calm and peace in the storm – we are being given an invitation to relax in the presence of Jesus – who will handle it all – he’s in the same boat - and he loves us...

We are coming up to Lent – where we can turn back to God through all that Jesus is to us and for us – the one who shows us the way of peace in the storms– let’s turn back together these coming weeks – starting with Ash Wednesday – there is something quite powerful in intentionally turning up before God to receive the cross of ashes – the symbol of commitment to the journey –walking with Jesus to the cross – not leaving him as he never left us but staying with it through our reading and reflection and prayers. Let’s do what we can to go deeper in – deeper into our own faith journey with Jesus – and help each other along the way – so we in turn can help others...

There will be some resources to help us along – some daily readings and prayers – some services and Lenten courses and Lunches – all that – but at the end of the day – in the final analysis – it will be about that space between you and God alone. It is the individual journey of faith that will build up the common journey of faith – and look at the church roof – I’ve showed this before – but a reminder...we are in the middle of the boat – not on the edge looking over – not grappling onto the sail – but in the middle – sitting at the feet of Jesus, the one promised by God to help us stay calm in the rocky seas of life

Isaiah reminds us - Fear not, for I have redeemed you – I have called you by name, you are mine...

We are redeemed – we are safe – we are called by name and we are loved by the one who can calm storms – even ours...