

ARE YOU FEELING TOSSED AROUND?

Scripture Luke 8:22-25



Have you ever been in a boat that's being tossed around? When I worked on French Island I had to travel across Westernport Bay from Stony Point. Would only take about 20 minutes. One morning, Missy who was the captain of the ferry, lost the use of the rudder. The weather was rough that day and as we were heading into the jetty at Tankerton she had to have a few approaches before we were safely there. It was frightening cos we could have crashed into the jetty and sunk.

So I can fully understand what the disciples must have been feeling in our Scripture passage this morning. Let me read it to you from the Voice Bible. Luke 8:22-25

One day Jesus and His disciples get into a boat. Jesus says: let's cross the lake. So they push off from shore and begin sailing to the far side. As they progress across the lake, Jesus falls sound asleep. Soon a raging storm blows in. The waves wash over the sides of the boat and the boat starts filling up with water. Every second the situation becomes more dangerous. The disciples shake Jesus and wake Him. They shout – Master, Master, we're all going to die. Jesus wakes up and tells the wind to stop whipping them around and He tells the furious waves to calm down. They do just that. Then Jesus turns to the disciples and says – what happened to your faith? The disciples had been terrified during the storm but now they're afraid in another way. They turn to each other and start whispering, chattering and wondering – who is this man? How can He command wind and water so they do what He says?

During our times of fear, uncertainty and anxiety where is Jesus? With us, right beside us, carrying us.

The crises of the last few months around the world has many of us feeling worn out. I heard on the radio that one helpful thing to do was to let out a good old-fashioned scream. I am just concerned about the neighbours and the police showing up though.

We seem to be living now with seemingly never-ending and difficult circumstances. And we all respond in different ways to the stresses impacting each one of us.

Psalm 6:6 tells us how David was at one time. He was at the end of his tether. He said – I'm exhausted, I cannot even speak, my voice is fading

as sight. Every day ends in the same place – lying in bed covered in tears, my pillow wet with sorrow.

If you are feeling like that, you are not alone.

I endeavour to journal every day as another means of talking to God and it helps me to write down my days. I always start with writing down the blessings God has given me on that day. There is always something you can recall, even in the smallest ways which lifts your heart.

So I start this section with – Today I am thankful for.....

I love God's natural world so I next focus and mediate on what I see around me – the specific components of God's creation that we often take for granted and then I praise Him.

Yesterday for me it was the wafting smell from my daphne bush which has survived to bloom with beautiful flowers. This was my mom's bush and even though daphne struggle when replanted, this one has taken off.

Psalm 118:1 says – give thanks to the Lord for He is good.

During our wearying times we need to feed our hearts with gratitude and thankfulness – this is a great antidote.

Have you ever read the book of Job? God spends 95 verses teaching Job about His creation during the time of Job's deep suffering.

I have found another of David's Psalms – Psalm 104. Although a long chapter I try to read this every day and it stirs up the gratitude within me.

I can provide a copy if you wish from the Voice Bible.

Another helpful tactic is to challenge your thinking.

Philippians 4:8 tells us – finally brothers and sisters fill your minds with beauty and truth. Meditate on whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is good, whatever is virtuous and praise-worthy.

This tells us to replace any negative thoughts with good thoughts. When you fear and doubt you choose how you react. One positive way to help is to remember all the times God has been with you, being faithful.

When you feel overwhelmed with your problems, reflect on all the promises of God found in Scripture and reflect and read them.

When you feel bitter, angry and frustrated, remember God's forgiveness and the grace He has personally extended to you through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 4:23 tells us to be careful what we think because our thoughts run our life.

Colin Duggan sent me a table of the prophecies that have been fulfilled in relation to Jesus. For His lineage and birth 11 Old testament references which have been fulfilled in the New Testament.

In His preparation for Ministry there are 13 Old Testament references which have been fulfilled in the New Testament; The Last 24 hours in Jesus' life from betrayal to His trial contain 6 Old Testament references which have been fulfilled in the New Testament; From Jesus' trial to His Death the Old Testament contains 28 references all fulfilled in the New Testament.

The Bible continues to point to God's plan and promises for all of us.

These fulfilled promises help us hold onto hope. Hope is one of the 3 pillars of Christian life – Hope, faith and love. When we trust in God we find the strength to keep going. Cultivate a hopeful heart as this helps us to hold onto faith and trust in God and His plan for us and the world.

Hebrews 6:18-19 tells us that God has given us 2 unchanging things: His promise and His oath. These prove that it is impossible for God to lie. As a result we who come to God for refuge might be encouraged to seize that hope that is set before us. That hope is real and true, an anchor to steady our restless souls, a hope that leads us back behind the curtain to where God is.

In our scripture the disciples were overwhelmed by their fear – that is normal given what was happening. And at that time they had only just begun following Jesus – they would witness many more miracles after that.

But we need to recognise the power Jesus has as the Son of God to control this world. Jesus was with them – He was obviously weary and needed sleep. He knew He was safe in God's hands.

The disciples lived with Jesus but they underestimated Him. They did not see that His power applied to their very own situation. Jesus has been with His people for 20 centuries and yet we, like the disciples underestimate His power to handle crises in our lives. The disciples did not yet know enough about Jesus. We cannot make the same excuse.

Another tactic we can use is to reflect on God's presence in our life. Jesus know all our challenges. He may not always remove our trials or free us from having to endure them. But, like in the boat He is always by our side to guide us through it step by step. We are invited to ask Him for His guidance and presence in our life.

When we are feeling weary and challenged, reflecting on God's presence in our past life can lead us to recognise all the times He has intervened and led us.

As Isaiah 58:11 says – the Lord will guide you continually.

Jesus' disciples thought that their storm would last forever, or at least long enough to put an end to them. But we see that the SON, not the SUN came out and calmed the winds, the waves and storm that they were so worried about and it was over.

And isn't that the way it usually goes! When we realize that we can't do it on our own, that's when we ask for help. That's when we start looking for Jesus. And why do we do that? We do that because we know that Jesus will always be there to calm the winds and the waves of our spiritual lives. He will always be there to strengthen and comfort us.

Now that must not be the end of it. We cannot just call on Jesus when we are facing a storm and then when it is over, forget about Him till the next time. We must remember always to put our faith in Jesus! Now you might be asking yourself, why should I put my faith in Jesus? The storm is already over. Well the storm may be over, but Jesus is still there!

Just because Jesus is there in the storms of your life, that doesn't mean that you can't look for Him in the good times. It doesn't mean that you should only ask for His help and guidance in the bad times, because He wants to be there when things are going great. He wants to share in your joys as well as your sorrows.

When we look at the disciples in the story, at what time did they go and get Jesus. It was when times were really bad, it was when they had no

place else to turn. I think that is something that each and everyone of us should think about!

Another tactic is to continue to reach out and support others.

We need to focus on what we can do and not what we can't do.

Proverbs 11:25 tells us – a giving person will receive much in return and someone who gives water will also receive the water they need.

It is in giving that we receive. How we are impacted and how we manage our challenges is unique for each one of us. Every trial and stress helps to mould up into the person we are and who God is maturing us to be. God equips us through our trials to be able to comfort others with empathy and compassion.

Conclusion: We are still on this journey and the storms of Covid19 is still with us. And to help us through we need to always remember and to reach out to Jesus both in pray and in Scripture to assure us that He is always with us – He will never ever leave us and when we are worn out, He will carry us. When the Storms come we must remember to put our faith in Jesus, because He will help us through tough times. When the storms go we must remember to put our faith in Jesus, because He will help us put our lives back together, strengthening and encouraging us along the way.

Closing Prayer: *Almighty God, we know that everything is in Your sovereign control. We ask that You keep this new coronavirus from continuing to spread. Give government officials the ability to safely handle people arriving from other countries. Be with people making decisions that affect the lives and futures of our families, communities, countries, and the wider world. We pray that they communicate clearly,*

truthfully, and calmly — with each other and with the public — and that their messages are received and heeded. May truth and empathy be the touchstones of people setting policies for our protection.

Help people decide to stay home instead of traveling or going out needlessly. Holy Spirit, remind people to wash their hand properly. And while it may be heartbreaking, comfort families as they decide to keep their distance from elderly or other high-risk family members.

Jesus, during Your ministry on Earth You showed Your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need Your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel Your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses.

Take away the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in pursuing health and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them.