

Hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather this week and watching everything turn green and grow :) Is it still a weed if it is as a pretty flower on it? ;) Watch out for the weekend weather though - forecast is calling for some storms.

It can almost feel a little stormy each day with the current situation. President Trump on Monday then Governor Abbott on Tuesday extending the COVID-19 Directives through the end of April into the first week of May. Then yesterday the first reported case in Gillespie County. It's enough to keep a person from going to Dairy Queen for a blizzard...maybe ;)

Whether we're in storm or blizzard - listen to the Psalmist words in ***Psalm 46:1-3(AMP) God is our refuge and strength [mighty and impenetrable], A very present and well-proved help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change. And though the mountains be shaken and slip into the heart of the seas, 3 Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains tremble at its roaring. Selah.***

God is and will always be our very present help in times of trouble or stormy situations. The disciples found themselves in one in ***Mark 4:35-41 (ESV) 35 On that day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd, they took Him with them in the boat, just as He was. And other boats were with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"***

Every time I read this passage, I picture this big wooden fishing boat - going headfirst up and down the waves in this storm - the wind howling and water crashing over them. These are experienced fishermen - and they are freaking out! Then the picture pans to the stern - the back of the boat. We see Jesus Christ - on a cushion - asleep! *On the boat itself there was calm among the chaos.*

Last fall when Christi and I were on the ministry retreat cruise - there was one night where a storm was raging outside. The waves were much bigger than the night before. We could see the water splashing up against our cabin window and hear the waves crashing into the hull of the ship. But because of where we were at in the ship - the waves rocked us side to side - like a cradle - as we lay in bed. Even with the storm outside - we were able to sleep in peace.

In our passage Jesus Christ calmed the storm around the disciples first - then He addressed the storm within them. Jesus pointed out that fears combats our faith.

In scary uncertain times like what we are experiencing right now - thousands of years later - people still ask the same question - "Jesus, don't you care that we are....." Different translations finish this verse with "drowning", "dying" or "going down with the boat". People today fill in the blank the same way - with things they're drowning in, taking them closer to the grave - or causing them to sink deeper in their situation: fear, anxiety, stress, finances, unhealthy living, shaky relationships, possessions, status, power - the list goes on.

I wonder how long the disciples waited - tried to get through on their own - didn't think it worth the time or the bother - before they went to Jesus? They allowed the storm to rage around and within them. You do have to commend the disciples though - in their time of desperation - when they made the decision they couldn't do it on their own anymore - they knew the source of their rescue - Jesus Christ.

When our children were young, and a storm would come at night - with the lighting flashing and the thunder cracking afterwards - sometimes enough to shake the windows - our children would cry out to us from their bedrooms. We would go to them - speak reassuring words while either holding their hands or stroking their hair with our fingers. Our presence and words would give them the peace they needed to fall back asleep as the storm passed.

Let's place ourselves in God's presence. Let The Lord's word provide for us a very present and well-proved help in these troubling times. Cry out to Jesus Christ amidst the storms of life. Fear will try to drown our faith under waves of uncertainty and doubt. Jesus says **"Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."**

The passage doesn't go into detail what happened on the sea after the storm or the conversation on the boat. Scripture goes straight into Chapter 5 and shows the disciples safely made it to the other side of the sea with Jesus.

I read a riddle on a gum wrapper years ago - who remembers doing that? It asked, "How did the gum cross the road"? The answer - "It was stuck to the chicken's foot" :) Just like the gum needed help crossing the road - the disciples needed help crossing the sea by getting through a stormy situation by calling out to Jesus Christ. It didn't make the disciples "chicken of sea" by not trying to push forward on their own. They went to the source of **"refuge and strength [mighty and impenetrable], A very present and well-proved help in trouble".**

After the storm, the disciples went back to the task that Jesus had requested **"Let us go across to the other side."** As we continue this Bible Truth we see what happens in **Mark 5:1-2(ESV) - They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when Jesus had stepped out of the boat, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.** This is the well known passage where Jesus Christ heals the man by sending the evil spirits that possessed the man into a herd of pigs. Notice it was "immediately" after crossing the sea and Jesus stepping out of the boat a miracle healing happened.

Just like in every info-mercial - let me tell you - "But wait - there's more"! ;)

**Mark** tells us later in **Chapter 5** in verses **21-23(ESV)** **21 And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about Him, and He was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at His feet 23 and implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live."**

In the following verses of Chapter 5 a woman in the crowd, who had been dealing with an issue of blood for 12 years which had drained her physically as well financially, pushes through the people. She reaches out to Jesus Christ in faith for healing as He was on His way to Jairus's home. Another miraculous healing takes place and Christ tells the woman in verse **34 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."**

Then before arriving at Jairus's home - the news came **35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 And He allowed no one to follow Him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.**

Jesus Christ walked with Jairus to his home - to his daughter - to a circumstance where fear may have challenged Jairus's faith **38 They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 And when He had entered, He said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. But He put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was.**

Imagine Jairus - the reassuring words from Christ swirling around in his heart, mind and spirit along with the news of his daughter. Feelings of faith and fear that may have been teetering back and forth. And then Jairus - making it back to his house - sees the commotion - the weeping - the wailing. And then Jairus hears the mocking laughs at Jesus Christ after He asked **"Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping."**

At this point - what would we have done? What would have of been our next step? To succumb to fear and give in to what was going on around us. Or - to believe and step out in faith - standing on the words of The Master.

Then the miracle took place - Jesus Christ raised Jairus's daughter from death **41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement.**

Storms raged around and within the disciples, the possessed man, the diseased woman and Jairus. As Mark detailed - the disciples continued to cross the sea after the witnessing Jesus Christ authority over the natural in calming the wind and waves. Then immediately they witness Jesus Christ's supernatural authority in casting out the evil spirits in the possessed man.

The disciples again cross the sea - no doubt calm and confident - faithful vs fearful. Once on the other the side - the disciples again witness the love and compassion of Jesus Christ as He is the cure of a disease that 12 years of medical attention couldn't heal. Reaching out - believing in - and having undeniable faith in God's Son healed the diseased women.

Then James, John and Peter followed Jesus to Jairus's home and saw a Jairus's faith and belief in the loving, healing, saving power of Jesus Christ in bringing his daughter back to life.

Today - as disciples - as followers of Jesus Christ - let's take heed of His directions - go where He asks us to go and take Him. We know storms in various shapes, sizes and situations will come. We also know we can call on Jesus Christ amidst any storm - natural or spiritual. Jesus Christ is our protector, healer and Savior - giving us new life.

Our peace comes by surrendering our lives to Jesus Christ and having faith in God's word and promises. Seek The Lord's presence and help. Call to, press on, reach out, and walk

with The Lord. Let go of fear and ride out the wave of faith in our lives. **"Do not fear, only believe."**

**2 Timothy 1:7(AMP) For God did not give us a spirit of timidity or cowardice or fear, but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of sound judgment and personal discipline [abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control].**

**1 John 4:17-18 (MSG) God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.**