

May the words of mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen

I'm not really fond of boats.

First off, I get motion sickness

Secondly, even though I can swim, I am fearful of being out in all that water.

Water is powerful.

It has the power to save, and it has the power to destroy.

I remember when we lived on Long Island.

In what must have been a moment of weakness,

I let a friend of ours talk us into going out into the bay in his sailboat.

Now he called it his sailboat,

But literally, it was the canoe with a sail

He guaranteed me that we would be fine;

that the bay was no big deal.

Well, I quickly learned that he and I had different ways of defining “no big deal”

It didn't take long for me to realize that this was a big mistake.

There we were in this little canoe,

Surrounded by what seemed like hundreds of large boats,

which then subsequently, caused waves that were higher than the sides of our boat.

Waves that tipped us back and forth at such an angle

that I was sure we were going to swamp.

And on top of that, we were so small that I was sure that all those big speed boats and yachts could not see us.

They all seemed to be heading right at us,

while our friend just repeated over and over again.....”**sail boats have the right away....sail boats have the right away.**”

and as my knuckles were turning white from clinging so tightly to the sides of the boat,

I remember my husband Tim saying over and over again...

**“right of way isn't going to help us when we're dead”**

I can only imagine what the disciples were feeling out there in that storm.

Waves so high that they were sure that they were going to swamp.

Winds blowing. Water crashing. White-knuckled. Fear rising.

I keep thinking that if I was so scared out there in the bay with no storm, imagine how they must of felt.

Imagine how high those waves must have been to intimidate seasoned fisherman.

They were terrified. And they yelled out to Jesus in desperation,

**“don't you care that we are going to drown?”**

Can you imagine the chaos? The fear?

Yet, where was Jesus during all this chaos?

He was asleep on a cushion.

Think about what that must have looked like.

Jesus, unaffected by the storm around him,

Peacefully napping like a baby...

How could he be so calm? So unaffected?

Was it that the disciples were right?

He didn't care about their safety?

No, Jesus cared.

But he was able to be calm.

to sleep through the whole thing,

Because he knew there was no ultimate danger there.

He knew that although the wind and waves were powerful,

He also knew that he was more powerful.

He knew that the wind and waves would obey him.

So when the disciples cried out for his help, Jesus got up,

**And with three little words....Peace. Be still.**

he calmed the raging storm.

Now this scene comes early-on in the Gospel story.

The disciples knew that they are following a gifted rabbi,

A man sent from God,

But they didn't yet get it.

They didn't yet understand who Jesus really was.

So when they see him calm the storm they immediately ask,

“who is this that even the wind and waves obey him?”

In our Old Testament lesson, we hear that only God has power over the seas;  
over the forces of nature.

Only the Creator can control the created.

So if Jesus was able to calm the storm, it could only mean one thing:  
that Jesus is God.

and Jesus has the power to calm the storms around us.

**Jesus has the power to calm the storms around us.**

Now that's comforting in those moments when we can see or feel God's intervention.

Last week when our plane headed down the runway and at the last minute the pilot  
slammed on the brakes and aborted the takeoff;

that was one of those moments when I thanked God for intervening.

for saving the lives of 120 people.

Most of us have had at least one of the moments in our lives.

When it seems clear to us that God was there,

Intervening...calming the storm.

But what about the moments when we don't feel that intervention?

What about the times when the storms continue to rage around us?

Where is God while the storms of sickness and unemployment and addiction and sudden death and broken relationships and war and injustice continue to rage around us?

Does that mean that God doesn't care about those storms?

Our Old Testament lesson comes from the book of Job.

The entire story of Job, a man who loses his wealth, his children, and his physical health, wrestles with the questions of why God allows suffering.

### **How do we make sense out of the times when God does not seem to calm the storms around us?**

Many of you know Chick Overington,  
Chick has had a difficult couple of years,  
between his Parkinson's progressing, and cyclical infections  
that have caused numerous hospital visits,  
Chick has had **more** than his share of storms.

Yet, what has been so inspiring is how Chick has handled these storms.

The things he has endured are certainly enough to have broken his spirit.  
Yet, the opposite has happened.

Instead, as Chick's physical functioning decreases, his spiritual functioning is increasing by leaps and bounds.

In dealing with all his storms, Chick has found a closeness with God,  
He has found a calmness.

He has found wisdom and understanding.

He has even found joy.

God may not have calmed the storms around Chick, but God continues to calm the storms within Chick.

Jesus has taken up residence in Chick's heart...whispering to him, day and night...**Peace, Be still. Peace, Be still.**

And this calming has not been only for Chick alone.  
God has been using Chick as witness to those around him;  
to his friends, to his pastors, to his fellow residents, to his doctors and nurses.

**Jesus said, "Peace. Be still."**

**Jesus is still saying "Peace. Be still"**

Just as Jesus has been speaking to Chick's heart.

He is also speaking to your heart...**peace. be still.**

No one is sure why God allows suffering.

No one is sure why God does not lift us out of every storm.

Those are questions that will remain unanswered until that day when we see God face-to-face.

Yet, what we can be sure of is that **Jesus is with us in the storm.**

And He has the power to calm our hearts and minds.

He also has the power, and the desire, to give us what we need to get through the storms.

We can be sure that suffering has nothing to do with God's lack of care.

God cares for us so much that Jesus willingly chose to suffer on our behalf.

When we face the storms of life we have the assurance that there is no storm that we face that Jesus hasn't already faced for us.

Jesus even faced the storm of death so that we might live with God forever.

And because of his sacrificial suffering we can be sure that there is more to life than this world.

We can be sure that there will be a day when all storms, internal and external, will cease.

We can be sure that there will be a day when there is nothing but peace.

True peace;

Not just the absence of conflict,

But true wholeness and restoration...SHALOM

No more crying, no more pain, no more death.

A day when PEACE will be written on our hearts.

**But how do we live until that day?**

We live in prayer.

We live in praise of God, even in the storm.

We live in faith.

We live to support one another

We live hope.

May the peace of God which passes all human understanding keep your hearts and mind in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen