



# Sunday Service

28 February 2021

Please participate in this act of worship on Sunday at 10.30am if you can.

## Call To Worship

You will say in that day:

"I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
for though you were angry with me,  
your anger turned away,  
that you might comfort me.

Isaiah 12: 1-2

## Song: Still - (Hide me now)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abDzMnlybqs>

1 Hide me now under Your wings.  
Cover me within Your mighty hand.  
When the oceans rise and thunder  
roars,  
I will soar with You above the storm.  
Father, You are King over the flood;  
I will be still and know You are God.

2 Find rest, my soul, in Christ alone.  
Know His power in quietness and trust.  
When the oceans rise and thunder  
roars,  
I will soar with You above the storm.  
Father, You are King over the flood;  
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(Instrumental)

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## Prayer

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
This is the day when he can be found.  
God of all, breath of life,  
Living water, Saviour, friend.  
Come as the hungry, feed on his Word  
Come as the thirsty, drink of his Love  
Come as the faithful, worship the Lord. AMEN

## Song: Master the tempest is raging

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlpSl3yadO4>

1 Master, the tempest is raging!  
The billows are tossing high!  
The sky is o'ershadowed with blackness,  
No shelter or help is nigh;  
Carest thou not that we perish?"  
How canst thou lie asleep,  
When each moment so madly is threat'ning  
A grave in the angry deep?

Refrain:

The winds and the waves shall obey thy will.  
"Peace, be still!"  
Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea,  
Or struggles or evil, whatever it be,  
No water can swallow the ship where lies  
the Master of ocean and earth and skies:  
They all shall sweetly obey thy will.  
"Peace, be still! Peace, be still!"  
They all shall sweetly obey thy will.  
"Peace, peace, be still!"

2 Master, with anguish of spirit  
I bow in my grief today;  
The depths of my sad heart are troubled,  
Oh, waken and save, I pray;  
Torrents of sin and of anguish  
Sweep o'er my sinking soul!  
And I perish! I perish, dear Master:  
Oh, hasten and take control. [Refrain]

3 Master, the terror is over,  
The elements sweetly rest;  
Earth's sun in the calm lake is mirrored,  
And heaven's within my breast.  
Linger, O blessed Redeemer,  
Leave me alone no more;  
And with joy I shall make the blest harbor,  
And rest on the blissful shore. [Refrain]

## Reading Mark 4: 35-41 Calming of a storm

35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'



39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40 He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'

41 They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'



I love the story of Jesus calming the storm, over the years it has given me much scope for reflection. You can find the story in three of the Gospels (Matthew 8: 23-27 and Luke 8: 22-25) with Mark adding more detail than the other two. It is Mark who adds 'that there were also other boats' v.36 and also that Jesus is given a cushion to sleep on in verse 38. Any ideas of how I might be able to use these details in a sermon?- answers in an email or postcard and there is a prize!

Apart from Jesus calming the storm, what makes this story so remarkable is that in but 6 verses there are so many entry points for reflection, allowing God to speak to us. What follows are a number of these interlinked reflections and my prayer is that they will speak to you as they spoke to me.

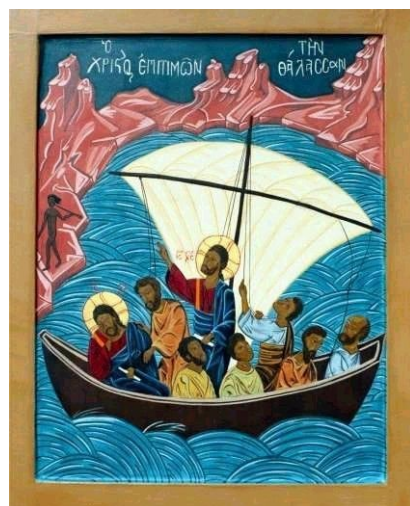
So, let's set the scene, Jesus had been teaching for most of the day, evening was approaching. Jesus suggests that they would go over to the other side of the lake. Here they all are then in a boat on water with a 'furious squall' coming up.

Two observations can be made. Evening or darkness in the Bible are often places of struggle of a spiritual nature. Jacob wrestles with God's angel the whole night long (Genesis 32: 22-32) and overcomes. Or, when Jesus dies upon the cross "darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Mark 15: 33), He takes all the sins of the world upon Himself, the ultimate struggle. There are many more examples, John's Gospel especially plays with light and darkness.

Secondly, if you picture a stormy sea, wind blowing, clouds racing across the sky, an imaginative reading could remind you of the first two verses of Genesis 1

v.1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

The Hebrew word for Spirit is Ruach which also can be translated as 'wind'. At the start of creation there is 'formlessness'; there is chaos and dis-order and then God speaks to bring order into that chaos. In the same way, Jesus speaks into the chaos of the storm, the wind and the waves and creates order – the wind and waves stop and there is peace and then we move on.



When I read this story, I am always struck by that 'Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion'. The storm was raging, the boat was nearly swamped and Jesus was sleeping! Now you could say " give the man a break", he has been teaching all day long, it's not surprising he is tired. From the disciple's perspective, their outcry "don't you care?" is understandable. He is the boss; he has responsibility for this group of people what ever he feels like. Don't you care!

What strikes me is that Jesus, who is God, is asleep – God is asleep! And the cry of the disciples is the cry heard shouted so many times by so many people: “Don’t you care?” Over the years many people have said: “God doesn’t hear my prayers, He doesn’t seem to understand my struggles, He seems ‘far off’. He is asleep”!

The waking up of Jesus by the disciples, the Jesus asleep on His cushion, is like the prayers we pray when we ask God, Lord save us, help us in our darkness in our time of struggle.

Here Jesus says, fairly harshly, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”. Faith, here could also be translated as trust. What Jesus is asking, in response to the disciples’ question, which can be our question – Jesus saying: “do you not trust me?” The promise of the Good News story Mark is telling, is that we can trust God to never to leave us nor forsake us

And this, is one of the main points of this story, as we can see in Jesus’ practical response to the disciples’ concern.

<sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

So Jesus tells the wind and the waves to stop their destructive work. He speaks, like God did at the beginning of creation, order into the chaos of the storm. He, by His words, creates calm and order. For the disciples, as for us this is a moment of truth. If we believe, if we trust in Jesus, trust in God, the storms of life will not harm us, the wild waves of destructive chaos will never overcome us, drown us. This doesn’t mean that our lives will be easy, more likely the opposite. As the story unfolds it becomes clear that Jesus had to express His own trust in the Father. He had to do this by dying on the cross, trusting in His Father that His story was indeed a Good News story. Even when He give up His spirit in death He had to trust! Jesus had every reason to cry out: “Don’t you care?”. And yet, even in death- maybe especially in death- He could trust His Father and because of this He was raised from the dead. What Jesus came to do is to show we can trust God!



And then we come to the heart of the reason why Mark writes his Gospel, his Good News story.

<sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’

Who is this Jesus? Mark tells this story for a reason. He tells this Good News story to draw out a response from us. He wants us to ask the same question: ‘Who is this Jesus?’ Who is this Jesus to you and to me? Is He someone who can be trusted? Is He someone who can create order in our chaotic world? The answer of this Good News story to that question is YES! Is that the same answer you give, that I give? Do we trust in Jesus?

## **Song: Sometimes He calms the storm**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bpi1gYIPqeM>

All who sail the sea of faith  
Find out before too long  
How quickly blue skies can grow dark  
And gentle winds grow strong

Suddenly fear is like white water  
Pounding on the soul  
Still we sail on knowing  
That our Lord is in control

Sometimes He calms the storm  
With a whispered peace be still  
He can settle any sea  
But it doesn't mean He will

Sometimes He holds us close  
And lets the wind and waves go wild  
Sometimes He calms the storm  
And other times He calms His child

He has a reason for each trial  
That we pass through in life  
And though we're shaken  
We cannot be pulled apart from Christ

No matter how the driving rain beats down  
On those who hold to faith  
A heart of trust will always  
Be a quiet peaceful place



## **Prayer**



Let us pray to the Lord,  
who is our refuge and stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,  
that all who are fearful and anxious  
may be at peace and free from worry:  
Lord, hear us,

For the isolated and housebound,  
that we may be alert to their needs,  
and care for them in their vulnerability:  
Lord, hear us,  
Lord, graciously hear us.

For our homes and families,  
our schools and young people,  
and all in any kind of need or distress:  
Lord, hear us,

For a blessing on our local community,  
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,  
where all are known and cared for:  
Lord, hear us,



We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,  
accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

After some silence say the Lord's prayer

### **Song:** 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCtQMinitKk>

1 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,  
and to take him at his word;  
just to rest upon his promise,  
and to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

Refrain:  
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!  
How I've proved him o'er and o'er!  
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!  
O for grace to trust him more!

2 O how sweet to trust in Jesus,  
just to trust his cleansing blood;  
and in simple faith to plunge me  
neath the healing, cleansing flood! [Refrain]

3 Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,  
just from sin and self to cease;  
just from Jesus simply taking  
life and rest, and joy and peace. [Refrain]

### **Blessing**

#### **Go Peaceful**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRj4ExcXZso>

Go peaceful,  
in gentleness,  
through the violence  
of these days.

Give freely,  
show tenderness  
in all your ways.

Through darkness,  
in troubled times,  
let holiness be your aim.

Seek wisdom,  
let faithfulness  
burn like a flame.

God speed you,  
God lead you,  
and keep you wrapped  
around his heart;  
may you be known by love.

Be righteous,  
speak truthfully,  
in a world of greed and lies.

Show kindness,  
see ev'ryone  
through heaven's eyes.

God hold you,  
enfold you,  
and keep you wrapped  
around his heart;  
may you be known by love,  
may you be known by love.

God speed you,  
God lead you,  
and keep you wrapped  
around his heart;  
may you be known by love. AMEN