

Teaching for KCF – 11/10/20. **Where is Jesus in the Storm?**

Dear Friends at KCF,

Can I remind you today of some well know Bible stories? Sometimes in our efforts to find deep teaching, or further understanding, we may overlook stories that we have known from childhood. Would you like to stop and read Mark 4 v35-41, & 6 v45-52? On two occasions Mark records the disciples being hit by storms while out on the Sea of Galilee. We might find it hard to conceive of severe storms hitting an inland lake like Loch Ness, or Lake Windermere, even in the worst winter gales, but we need to remember that Galilee was almost 700 feet below sea-level, surrounded by mountains, and sudden squalls were common. Several of the disciples were professional fishermen, who were used to the conditions, and yet we read of them being afraid that the boat was sinking.

There are two things to note from these stories. In the first account, Jesus is actually with them in the boat, and so unconcerned that He was fast asleep. In the second, He had commanded them to get into the boat and sent them off across the lake. He was well aware of the situation they were in. In both narratives the disciples were in the centre of God's will, and yet the storm hit. What they needed to learn was that Jesus was in total control of both situations.

Let's go back to the first storm in the Bible. When did you last think about Noah and the Flood? If you haven't read it recently, it is in Gen. 6-8. Let's note that it was God who ordered Noah to build the ark, and warned him of the judgement that was coming on the earth. It would not have been a pleasant experience for him to be cooped up with all those smelly animals for 10 months (not to mention the huge amount of excrement that elephants and others produce!), while all that they had ever known of human civilisation went into extinction. Yet he was in the centre of God's will ... and yet we consider a few weeks of "Covid lock-down" a major hardship!

Finally, can I remind you that St Paul survived three shipwrecks, according to 2 Cor. 11 v 25, although the only one we have details of is in Acts 27. Again, he is in the centre of God's will on his way to testify in Rome; God was clearly with him, and in control of the situation – see verses 23-4.

Why am I reminding you of these well-known stories.? It is important for us to realise that just because things seem to go wrong at the human level, it does not mean that God is not in control, or that we are out of His will. If you can think back to the teaching I sent you for 21/6/20, when I said that bad things can happen to good people, and that both Jeremiah and Daniel had to go through the pain of God's judgement on ancient Judah by the Babylonians—the only promise that Jeremiah was given was that of his own life being saved (Jer.1 v 19). Again, back at the beginning of the year (when were still allowed to meet together!) in January we looked at the book of Habakkuk, and the need for long-term faith in God's good purposes.

We are living through both a national and an international crisis, and there are tough days ahead. Although there are some prophetic voices promising that revival is just around the corner, the more sober words that I am receiving state that this is a time of judgement, on both the church and the nation, and that it will continue for 2 or 3 years. To survive this, and come out victorious, it is important that we learn to listen to God and stay in the centre of His will. Only if we obey Him precisely will we be able to survive and thrive.

Warm greetings to all, HARRY.

P.S. If you can remember it from childhood, sing to yourself the little ditty "With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm", or the hymn "When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed".