

Faith in the Storm

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Preacher: Mr David Gray

- [0 : 00] Good evening and welcome to our service this evening. It's a privilege to be with you. I'm here, my first time in this box.
- Donald was in touch recently, knowing that I'm a teacher, that I was on holiday. I in fact taught Donald when he was in primary 7 when I moved home, so I may have some stories for some of you at another time.
- But as I said, it's a privilege to be here and we pray that the Lord will bless our time together. We're going to begin our worship this evening singing in Psalm 46 in the Psalter.
- All of our Psalms, our three Psalms this evening will be from the Psalter. Psalm 46, verses 1 to 7.
- God is our refuge and our strength, in straits a present aid. Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. Though hills amidst the seas be cast, though waters roaring make, and troubled be, yea, though the hills by swelling seas do shake, a river is whose streams do glad, the city of our God, the holy place, wherein the Lord Most High hath his abode.
- [1 : 22] God in the midst of her doth dwell, nothing shall her remove. The Lord to her and help her will, and that right early prove. The heathen rage tumultuously, the kingdoms move it where.
- The Lord God uttered his voice, the earth did melt for fear. The Lord of hosts upon our side, doth constantly remain. The God of Jacob's our refuge, us safely to maintain.
- These verses 1 to 7, God is our refuge and our strength. God is our refuge and our strength, in sin shall present aid.
- enom de saskmos, enom de glade aan resident die er hancen, hkiem sore of shared in son wars, Lord, how we so fibra and dodgy, so we cannot put us here at the altar.
- Amen. I swear it ceased to change.
- [3 : 04] A river did its true streams to cloud, the city of our God.
- The holy place where in the Lord most high light is upon.
- God in the midst of the earth doth dwell, nothing shall I remove.
- The Lord to her land help her will, and the brighter be true.
- The heathen rich too much asleep, the kingdom through and where.
- [4 : 38] The Lord all of the dead is before, the Lord's voice, he and in death are here.
- Then, Lord of hosts, Thou art thou art not merely made.
- The Lord of Jacob's heart and youth has saved me to maintain.
- Let's bow our heads and our hearts in prayer. O loving and almighty God, we are grateful to be in your house this evening worshipping a living God who has blessed us far beyond what we could ever even hope or imagine.

We thank you that we have your day set aside, that we can come one another to your house to worship you, to give you glory, praise, honour and majesty, to humble ourselves, our hearts and our minds before you so that we might be ready to hear what you have to say to us this day.

[6 : 32] We have been blessed already by your word and been in your house and having fellowship with each other this day, Lord, and we know that you have promised that where two or three are gathered, you are there in the midst to bless.

And that is a comfort, Lord, when we meet together. Lord, we thank you that this night we are found here for there would have been a day in our experience where it would have been the furthest from our minds to be in your house.

Lord, you have taken us from the road that we were on to the city of destruction, Lord, and you changed everything in our lives.

You took us from the path that we were on if we have faith with you, Lord, and you have put us on a path to eternal glory, one that we deserve not, but one which we grasp hold of and hold on to these promises that were found in your scripture.

Lord, that our names are written in the palm of your hand and you are not able or willing to let any go who you have a hold of.

[8 : 00] Lord, for once we are saved and we do not continue sinning, it is a path that we no longer want to be on, Lord, but we know that were it possible that we were to do something to lose our salvation, Lord, we would already have done it by now.

For every time we fall, you're gracious and merciful and loving. Lord, for every time we fall, to pick us up again, restore us, and set us on the way again.

And each and every one here this evening will have their own testimony about how you have done great and mighty works in their lives.

We are all walking, living testimonies, Lord, to those around us, to our families, to our friends, to our work colleagues, to the community around about us, about not what we have done, but what you have done.

And this evening, Lord, we pray that you would bless the word that is preached. We thank you for your servant who has already preached this day and who is leading the praise this evening.

[9 : 19] We pray that, and ask that his work this day will not be in vain. And that the word preached this morning and this evening would, in some ways, through even going out after this meeting, Lord, would be a blessing to those who need to hear it, who need to hear the gospel message.

And even those of us who are saved, it is a good thing for us to do to continue to reflect on the gospel, the good news, so that then we can be encouraged and challenged to go and share that with those around about us.

We thank you, Lord, for the work that has happened in recent months in this corner of your vineyard, Lord, in this area of the island, Lord.

We thank you for Reverend Donald and his wife, Emma, and what they have done since they have come here and that you have given them a passion to be here and that they are taking it on with an attitude, with a loving and caring and immediate attitude to want to share the gospel, to want to witness and to show others about what you have done in their lives and all of our lives, Lord.

We thank you for the elders and the deacons and the members and the adherents, those here this evening and those who are unable to be out. We thank you for their witness and coming so faithfully on Sundays and to prayer meetings and to other services, Lord.

[11 : 04] We pray that it would be blessed and that you would add to their number. We know sometimes during a vacancy that people can drift away and go to other places or stop coming out altogether, Lord, and we know that you can work in people's hearts to pull them back here, pull them back to their roots, to where they maybe went before and that you would add to the numbers here.

It is not all about numbers, Lord, but we are encouraged when we see even one or two extra coming who were not coming before. For when we are in your house and when we are under your word, that amazing things can happen, Lord, in our community and in our church and in a person's life.

And, Lord, we are grateful and thankful for the work that has been done in our back to church day here in recent weeks, Lord, and those who have come and continue to come and we thank you for them.

We thank you for the Sunday school and for those who attend and for those who help lead, Lord. It is sometimes the devil can be quick to attack those who are involved in doing things in your name, Lord.

We pray that you would help them and be with them as they go about your work. We thank you for other ventures, Lord, like the Men's Breakfast Fellowship that takes place and where even some small things like that can just bring people together so that we can begin to show more trust with each other, that we can confide in each other and confess and repent with each other so that we would strengthen the bonds here, Lord, in this place.

[12 : 46] We remember recent evangelism talk and the Hope Explored course that took place and the convenience as well in the past month or so that these ventures will be blessed and we know, Lord, that when your word goes out it does not return to you without achieving something, Lord.

But we know as great as all these things are, Lord, we know there is sadness and we know that our people in this community morning, connected to the church or not. People are grieving and people are asking questions about why does death happen?

What happens now? What is the meaning of life? And in the midst of mourning and grieving, Lord, we know that you are there, that you reach down and you comfort us and you meet us at the point of our need.

You know each and every one intimately, Lord, here better than we know ourselves as we read in the Psalms. When we were even in our mother's womb, you knew us, Lord, when you knitted us together in your image.

We look around the world and we see such conflict and such hatred in wars and elections and fights and such horrible from man to man and we wonder, some people wonder, where did it all go wrong?

[14 : 13] Well, it went wrong in the garden, Lord, and it has not been right since. But there will come a day when you will wipe every tear from our eyes where there will be no more pain and no more death and no more struggle, Lord.

And that day we look forward to. But until then, Lord, we ask that you would bless all that we do, that you would continue to be with us wherever you have placed us.

Sometimes we might question why we are here, why are we not somewhere else, but we surrender ourselves to your will, knowing that that is where we are safest and that is where we are meant to be.

Bless your servant this evening, Donald, as he is preaching in another part of the island, those in Ness and those in Calanish who are having partaken of the Lord's Supper this day, Lord, that you would bless their weekend and the coming weekends, Lord, too, in Graver and in Garibost, that these would be a blessed time and a chance for people to look back, to look inwards, to look ahead, but also to look up and see their Saviour sitting on the right hand, interceding for us, Lord.

We pray that you would bless this meeting, Lord, that anything that is done or said in error would be corrected, Lord, and that we would focus on your word and what you have to say to us, that our ears would be open and our hearts would be soft to the gospel that we hear this evening, Lord.

[15 : 48] We pray that all these things will be done and that you forgive all our many sins. In Christ's name, Amen. We are going to read this evening in the book of Psalms and we are going to read Psalm 107.

Psalm 107. Psalm 107 and we will read the whole psalm.

Let's hear what the Lord is saying to us. O give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His steadfast love endures for ever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in desert wastes finding no way to a city to dwell in, hungry and thirsty. Their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress.

[17 : 11] He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man.

For he satisfies the longing soul and the hungry soul he fills with good things. Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

So he bowed their hearts down with labour. They fell down with none to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress.

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and burst their bonds apart. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man.

For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron. Some were fools through their sinful ways and because of their iniquities suffered affliction.

[18 : 18] They loathed any kind of food and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man and let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of his deeds in songs of joy.

Some went down to the sea in ships doing business on the great waters. They saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind which lifted up the waves of the sea.

They mounted up to the heaven. They went down to the depths. Their courage melted away in their evil plight. They reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wit's end.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet and he brought them to their desired haven.

Many of us will have learned verses from these Psalms from a very young age, when we went to Sunday school perhaps, and we were glad and grateful that this practice is still happening now.

Different Psalms are appropriate to be sung in different circumstances. Some at weddings, some at funerals, some giving thanks, others including words of despair.

But I wonder how many have seen some of their own experiences of their own lives when they have read some of the Psalms. An Old Testament scholar named Michael J. Rhodes, after looking at the top 25 worship songs and studying the Psalms for many months, said, Maybe most devastatingly, in the top 25, not a single question is ever posed to God. The top 25 never ask God anything. Prick the Psalter and it bleeds the cries of the oppressed, pleading with God to act. This is completely lacking in the top 25. Crying out in despair or crying out in praise. Both of these are evident in the collections of Psalms that we have before us. What we see is incredible honesty when you read of some writers challenging God, looking enviously around at others, repenting from embarrassing sins. These are things that we do.

[29 : 46] We see journeys of people of faith, questioning, doubting, searching. And we can relate to these, whether we are singing them or reading them. You see, although the Psalms are a collection of poems written hundreds of years ago by a variety of authors, some known and some unknown, they are still so relevant today. Just before we start, the book of Psalms is actually split up into five separate books. And you'll have maybe seen when you're reading that Psalm 107 is the beginning of book five, the final of those five books. The first book includes Psalms 1 to 41 and include themes such as mankind being blessed, fallen and a promised redemption by God, similar to those found in the book of Genesis.

The second book is from Psalms 42 to 72 and they mention Israel as being ruined and then recovered, just as in the book of Exodus. The third book is from Psalms 73 to 89 and these Psalms show a connection to the book of Leviticus, where both cover topics such as the temple and God's holiness.

The fourth book is from Psalm 90 to Psalm 106 and include many references to Israel's relationships with other nations around about her, just as in the book of Numbers. And the fifth and final book is from Psalm 107, this Psalm to Psalm 150, where the focus is on God and his word, just like the book of Deuteronomy. So a short introduction to Psalm 107 to look at it as a whole before we look at the verses 23 to 32. David actually wrote more Psalms than anyone else. He wrote 73 in total, but today's Psalm is actually written by an unknown author. It's a Psalm of thanksgiving, with that focus mentioned in verses 8, 15, 21 and 31. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind. This Psalm was actually written to celebrate the Jews' return from exile in Babylon. In the Psalm, we are continually reminded to give thanks to God for delivering us from a variety of difficult circumstances. In verses 4 to 9, we read of the

Israelites wandering in desert places. Verses 10 to 16, we see prisoners in chains and in darkness. In verses 17 to 20, we see people who are sick suffering from a variety of illnesses. And finally, we see the storm-tossed sailors in verses 23 to 30. Each of these four sections is one that you could look at in great depth. Who here this evening have wandered in dry, desert-like places for a long time? Maybe some find themselves there this evening. Even as Christians, we can find ourselves in this type of place, often by our own doing. Before we were converted, we were in the ultimate of dry places, dead in our sins. But if you're a Christian here this evening, then there was also a time when you were imprisoned, when you were in chains and could do nothing about it. But Jesus entered your life, freed you from the shackles, and released you from that bondage, taking on the punishment that we were all due. Those who have not yet given their lives over to Jesus are still living that life of imprisonment. You may feel like you are free to do whatever you wish to do, and that it is the

Christians that are stuck in their ways and having no freedom. But the only way to have true freedom in this life and in the next is with Christ at the centre of your life now. These people in this part of the psalm spurned God's counsel, and it was said, you had your chance. But then we read that they did indeed in their darkness call out to God. We read thirdly of people being ill and sick because of the choices that they have made. There are many of us who will know friends and even family who are maybe in deep, who are deeply troubled because of choices that they have made in their lives, choosing to put harmful things into their minds and their bodies. In this psalm, they would have felt that there was no hope for them, that God couldn't or wouldn't help them in their situation. But they too called out to God and he heard their cries. Healing may not fully appear in this life, but God will give the grace and the strength needed when people cry out, preparing one for an eternity with him. But we're going to focus on the group of people found in verses 23 to 30, the sailors in the storm. In each of these four sections, we can see a pattern forming. First, the troubles of the situation are described. Second, we read of the people crying out to God for help. Third, we see the provided deliverance. And fourth, we read of the call for those who have been delivered to give thanks. We're also going to look at the gospel accounts of

[35 : 50] Jesus calming the storm and make connections between these texts. So first of all, if we look at the describing of this trouble that the sailors find themselves in, we first of all see those working on the seas being in awe of God's power. The waters are great waters and they witness his wondrous deeds.

In this psalm, it appears that the people are at sea for business reasons, as merchants trading on the open seas. One commentator suggests that the predicament that the sailors find themselves in in this psalm is not of their own doing, unlike the other situations mentioned elsewhere in the psalm.

In verse 24, we get the impression that they might even have been privileged to see the wonderful acts of God on the high seas. God's power is often displayed at sea, as we can testify living where we are in the world. Amazing creatures and wonders can be seen at sea. Often seamen will return home from their journeys and speak of the sights that they've witnessed of nature and creation. There has always been a connection between physical and spiritual storms. Spurgeon says that God sends some to sea in a spiritual sense, continuing by saying that they are sailing over the depths of inward depravity, the waste waters of poverty, the billows of persecution, and the rough waves of temptation.

They need God above all others, and they find him. In verse 25, we read that all it took was God to speak, and the storm arose. All that had to be done was for God to speak it, and it happened.

I wonder where we might have heard that before. Of course, in the first two chapters of the Bible, in Genesis 1 and 2, the creation story, he spoke and the worlds were created. Here he spoke and the storm arose. We shouldn't be surprised by this at all. The creator of this whole universe is more than capable of calling up a little squall. The sailors in the psalm went from the heavens to the depths, something we were all experienced in our own lives. Courage disappears in a flash. Fear is ever present. Hope seemingly lost. In Mark's gospel account, the disciples were used to being on the Sea of Galilee and what the conditions were like. Josephus, the Jewish historian, even suggests that this could also have been a fishing expedition that the disciples were on, although it looks more likely that they were simply trying to get away from one group of people on the instructions of the instructions of Jesus. Either way, it was written from the beginning of time that they would be found on this lake at this time with roughly 300 other boats. In verse 24 of Matthew's account, we see that the storm came up without warning, which often happened on the Sea of Galilee. I'm sure there may be one or two even here that may have been in the Holy Land and have been on the Sea of Galilee, but from what I've read up, the dimensions of the lake and its location will have played a part here. Its shoreline was nearly 700 feet below sea level, surrounded by mountains. But the real reason that the storm arose is for the same reason as mentioned in the psalm that we read, Psalm 107, because God chose it to happen, because God said. It is also worth considering the fact that Mark may have actually been thinking about this very psalm when he wrote his gospel message. These Jewish men, these disciples and followers of Jesus would have been very well versed in the psalms and the other Old Testament scripture. And you could also almost even imagine them smiling afterwards, having the story passed to them, or even witnessing the event themselves, writing their gospel account, seeing their own predicament exactly mirrored and written about hundreds of years before this event with Jesus.

[40 : 39] We don't need to look far to spot the troubles and the storms in our own lives. The heart of the problem is the problem is the problem of the heart. Our troubles may be brought about by our own choices, when we consciously turn away from God and ignore his word from impacting in our lives. Sometimes our troubles may actually be brought about by people around us, maybe even things bigger than people, by our workplaces, organizations, governments, even laws. We may even have done nothing wrong. Indeed, sometimes being even persecuted or going through rough seas simply because we are a Christian or because we have stood up for what we believe. God also brings trials and hard times into our lives for our own good. In Job 23 verse 10 we read,

But he knows the way that I take. When he has tried me, I shall come out as gold. Sometimes we are faced with tough times so that we can grow in them, or even so that some things can be stripped away from us, things or even people that we don't need. That can be very difficult.

Just like the gold being purified, being placed in the fire to get rid of that which makes it less than what it should be. But we must remember, as we are told in so many places in scripture, that his eye is always on us, even in the midst of the fire.

So the storm has arisen and the people now secondly cry out for help. When we are in a situation like those in the psalm, like the disciples, or even any storm that we may be going through today, we have two choices. We can worry or we can trust. Of course, it's much easier to say to someone, don't worry when you're not going through something difficult in your own life. It can sometimes even seem insensitive to say, just trust to someone. But it really is what we need to do. Proverbs tells us, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, submit to him and he will make your paths straight. The mariners here in verse 27 were at their wits end.

They had tried everything, no doubt attempting every way to keep themselves and their boat afloat. This would have been the same as the disciples on the Sea of Galilee. But watch, they all seem to have done their best before calling out to God, before awakening Jesus. However, if we have Jesus as our Lord and our God, then even when we call out at our wits end, we will not be at our faith's end.

[43 : 52] God brought the distress onto the mariners and they did well to turn to him to deliver them also. We see this in the story of Jonah as well, where the mariners all called out to their gods. They tried their best by throwing the cargo overboard, but knew that this storm came from a higher power, even if they directed their cries in the wrong direction initially.

Some may have heard of the saying, let those that would learn to pray go to sea. Matthew Henry suggests that a better saying would be, let those that will go to sea learn to pray, and accustom themselves to pray, that they may come with the more boldness to the throne of grace when they are in trouble. We all need to learn to pray. We should apply this in our own lives.

Prayer should be the steering wheel in our life, not the spare tyre that we go to in emergency. It should be something we are continually doing, not just something we reach for when we need something from God.

I say this as a person who desperately needs to learn and practice this myself more than anyone here. Yet, yes, prayer is difficult and hard for us, but prayer, when in storms of life, must be the first thing that we turn to.

The disciples, in the gospel accounts, then try to wake the sleeping Jesus, concerned that they are in immediate mortal danger.

[45 : 30] Jesus seemingly appears unaware and unconcerned by the dangers facing both him and the disciples. He is sleeping with his head on a cushion.

He is awoken by the scared disciples, feeding for their lives, throwing accusations at Jesus. It is clear that they are still not fully understanding who their teacher really is.

Yes, they have seen miracles and heard amazing teachings, but it doesn't appear to be the case that the penny has dropped, as we would say. They are in for a shock.

I wonder if we ever think or act as if God is not working in our lives. Sometimes we might admit we would like to see how things are going to pan out when we are going through a difficult time.

We know God is in control, that he knows what is going to happen, and that according to Romans 8, we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

[46 : 40] We know this, but do we actually live it out? It would drive us mad if we were to see how God was dealing with us, even in a small part of our lives.

It is good for us that his ways remain hidden. And how quickly we forget all the times he has heard our cries.

It is indeed ourselves who keep our pleas of help from the Lord, often going to the broken cisterns of this world first. But Jesus is not going to leave his disciples, and God is not going to abandon these men at sea.

I love these words from David Mathis. He says, Over and over again, the scriptures describe the faithful, not as those who never saw trouble, but as those who cried out to God in their crisis.

The men and women we remember as models faced the greatest times of trouble and days of distress, and God heard their cries for help.

[47 : 51] He was not deaf then, nor is he today, to the voices of his people, however great or humble, especially in crisis. If you are part of the faithful here today, then your cries are not being ignored, just as the cries of the fallen saints were never ignored.

God hears and God cares. But if you are not part of the faithful here this evening, who is it that you are calling out to for help, when in times like the mariners faced, thirdly, we'll look at the provided deliverance.

Before addressing this particular example of God delivering his people from the storms at sea, if we look ahead to verses 33 to 42, we see many examples of how God rescues his people.

Ray Orkland writes, The Lord saves his people through reversals. He continues, It is the parched land that becomes a spring of water.

It is the hungry who establish a city. It is the needy who are raised up. We know this about our Lord, that this is often how he works, so differently, so very differently, to how we would.

[49 : 21] This is how he delights to work. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12, that God told him that his strength is made perfect in our weakness.

The ultimate reversal. In verse 1 of the psalm, the Hebrew word koshed, pardon my pronunciation, the Hebrew word koshed is used.

It translates as steadfast love in some of the translations that we read. Other words are used in other translations. His mercy, his loving kindness, his faithful love, his compassion, and his loyal love.

This word is a word that speaks of God's fundamental covenant relationship towards and with his people and with Israel. The quality of God is eternal, meaning that he will never abandon his people.

And that is the story of the psalm. And we will see this message weave throughout the different scenarios that we have read. God brought about peace. A peace that surpasses all understanding.

[50 : 35] Through great trials and storms and through favourable breezes and still waters, we are brought to the haven by God. And unless we have been in a storm, we can never really truly appreciate the words found in verse 30.

That deliverance, that being taken to the haven, safe and secure, that deliverance may take one of many forms. That haven may be one we experience here on earth, if it is God's will, but this psalm also speaks of us being brought to our eternal haven, our final destination.

God appears oftentimes, and in different ways, for those distressed at sea in answer to their prayers. Spurgeon notes that he helps in three ways.

He calms the waves and the wind, and they obey him. We read this again in Mark's account, with the disciples' shocked observation. A word from him, and the wind and the waves stop immediately.

Secondly, the seamen are made glad, feeling at ease and happy. They have escaped the noise and the dangers of the storm. And thirdly and finally, the voyage proves to be a successful journey.

[51 : 58] They reach their desired place of rest. Well, let us look at the gospel accounts of the storm, and it is interesting to note that in two of the accounts, that Jesus, first of all, calms the wind and the waves, before then rebuking the disciples for their unbelief.

The disciples had seen many miracles by this point, but had not seen one that had affected them personally. They had seen people healed.

They had seen water turned into wine. But they had not been saved. They had not been rescued. And this, as it turns out, was what seemed to get them closer to being convinced of who Jesus actually was.

They knew from scripture that God had parted the Red Sea, helped his people cross the Jordan, and even calmed the seas when Jonah had been thrown in.

God had previously taken chaos and turned it into order, and he was doing it again here. The disciples underestimated Jesus, which is something that we still do.

[53 : 12] The disciples were just getting to know who Jesus was, but we don't have that excuse. We have these gospel accounts. We have the Bible in front of us. We have the Holy Spirit who is continually speaking to us, revealing to us who Jesus is and what he has done.

He can handle all the crises in our lives. I would like to read a poem by John Newton entitled *I Will Trust and Not Be Afraid*, which I believe encapsulates how we can worry and be distressed, but also how great God is at delivering us from these troubles.

Be gone unbelief, my saviour is near, and for my relief will surely appear. By prayer let me wrestle and he will perform.

With Christ in the vessel I smile at the storm. Though dark be my way since he is my guide, tis mine to obey, tis his to provide.

Though cisterns be broken and creatures all fail, the word he hath spoken shall surely prevail. His love in time past forbids me to think.

[54 : 38] He leave me at last in trouble to sink. Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review confirms his good pleasure to help me quite through.

Why should I complain of want or distress, temptation or pain? He told me no less. The heirs of salvation I know from his word through much tribulation must follow their Lord.

How bitter that cup no heart can conceive which he drank quite up that sinners may live. His way was much rougher and darker than mine.

Did Christ my Lord suffer and shall I repine? Since all that I meet shall work for my good the bitter is sweet the medicine food though painful at present it will cease before long and then oh how pleasant the conqueror's song.

This poem speaks of God's promises that belong to the Christian no matter what they face along the way in their walk. going back to the idea of God working through reversals the central gospel message is the final great reversal the sinless one became sin so that the guilty ones will be judged as innocent and not be condemned and this indeed is a reason to be thankful each day anew again and again.

[56 : 19] finally we have our call to give thanks we see in verse 31 that those who have been rescued are called to give thanks for two things his unfailing love and wonderful deeds this is a request that is mentioned several times throughout the psalm at the end of each section we must not forget to be thankful when we are safe or saved from trouble and harm it is easy to forget what we have been rescued from remember the ten lepers that were healed in Luke 17 you will know that of the ten that were healed only one came back to thank Jesus verses 15 to 18 read as follows then one of them when he saw that he was healed turned back praising God with a loud voice and he fell on his face at Jesus feet giving him thanks now he was a

Samaritan then Jesus answered were not ten cleansed where the nine was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner the leper fell on his face to thank Jesus is that the attitude we have when we have been rescued when we have been saved on a daily basis if it isn't already then it should be back in the boat with the disciples we don't read in any of the accounts the disciples thanked Jesus for what he did perhaps they were so stunned that they couldn't get the words out or perhaps they did and it just wasn't recorded but what we do know and what we do read is of their amazement at what they just witnessed in all three accounts they ask a variation of the same question who is this that the wind and waves obey him in these situations the psalm and the storm and the disciples boat we see examples of what the psalmist calls his unfailing love and wonderful deeds for men his love and care for his disciples is evident despite their concerns that he didn't care what was happening to them as in the examples mentioned before when the

Israelites were cornered by the Egyptians at the Red Sea he delivered them when they were needing to cross the Jordan to the promised land God showed his love for his people and fulfilled his promise making a way where there was no way God's ultimate example of this was providing a way back to him through Christ when there was no other way possible so how are we then to give thanks as we are told to in verse 32 we are told to give thanks to God in the presence of those around us in the assembly of the people any Christian here this evening will be able to speak of something that they have been delivered from whether it be a situation or an affliction an addiction an illness or just a personal struggle you may also be able to share what you are currently going through and as a side note this is maybe something that we as a church and I don't speak as a church here but in general that is something that we are not very good at we are maybe good at calling out to

God for thanks that is most important that we should do that there is nothing of higher importance than that but we have been put where we are beside fellow brothers and sisters to encourage each other we are to share the burden of others offer wise counsel pray for each other yet sometimes we know so little of what even the people beside us in a pew might be going through at this very moment telling others of the deliverance of our deliverance that we have experienced is perhaps the best way to witness sharing our own journey with others nowadays we can very easily be drawn into debates and conversations and topics that aren't central to people's salvation and we may need to be well studied to be able to converse and argue with those in the world on such topics Peter tells us that we are to always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks us for a reason for a hope that is in you yet do it with gentleness and respect but we are also able to visit the bank of our own experience and share that with others we have all been in the valleys and been brought out of them even if we are still in one right now he has done it before and he will do so again because he is faithful think of the sailors first steps on dry land after their deliverance from the storm how good that ground would have felt how solid their footsteps would have been they would have counted themselves fortunate to have survived and will have spoken of that storm becoming calm before their very eyes to many people and for many years to follow when we get peace from our spiritual storms we must acknowledge

God's mercy shown towards us and pass that on to those around about us we must also give thanks to God privately in our own closet with the door closed this is where we will draw closer to God where we can open up to him especially about things that we are not able to share with others I find it so encouraging and precious when people take passages of scripture apply it to their own lives and experiences and write about it whether it be in writing or in a poem or to music when studying for this text initially I found a hymn that I would like to share with you today as we come near to a close in the 1870s in America a woman by the name of Mary Ann Baker was commissioned by her Sunday school to write some songs on the school's theme for that year Christ stilling the tempest she wrote a hymn entitled

[63 : 12] Master the tempest is raging it was then put to music and added to a book with other numbers she and others had written the words of the passage in Mark were mirrored later in her own life she was orphaned at a young age left only with a brother and a sister her brother took seriously ill and the two sisters paid for him to go to Florida for treatment he passed away shortly afterwards and the two sisters were unable to afford to travel to Florida for his funeral or to bring him back she spoke of this trial afterwards I became wickedly rebellious at this dispensation of divine providence I said in my heart that God did not care for me or mine but the master's own voice stilled the tempest in my unsanctified heart and brought it to the calm of a deeper faith and a more perfect trust the verses to the hymn go as follows master the tempest is raging the bullows 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 threatening a grave in the angry deep master with anguish of spirit

I bow in my grief today the depths of my sad heart are troubled awaken 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 master the terror is over the elements sweetly rest earth sun in the calm lake is mirrored and heavens within my breast linger oh blessed redeemer leave me alone no more and with joy I shall make the blessed harbour and rest on the blissful shore if you by God's providence this evening are going through a storm right now then look at this hymn read the psalm that we have read and watch what Christ did in the boat we are to trust

God in the storm because he has allowed it and when it is gone we will always hear the stillness of God's voice why are you so afraid my child have you no faith I leave you with the chorus from the hymn that I was just reading whether the wrath of the storm tossed sea or demons or men or whatever it be no waters 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 is your ship captained by this master of oceans and earth and skies this evening if not we pray that you will make that decision soon while we are on this side of eternity amen let us bow our heads in prayer lord our god you know us so well and you know where we are in our spiritual walk you know if we are in the mountain top or if we're in the valley you know if we are in the calm or in the storm you know lord if we are saved and safe in you or if we are lost we pray lord that those who do not yet know you as the master of that ship the master of their ship will come to you this evening that they will acknowledge how great a sinner they are and how great a saviour you are and for those lord who are in you and who belong to you but are going through difficult times some it might be known to many for some it may be something that they keep to themselves lord that you would draw near to them and that you are the great physician you meet us at the point of our need you are the one who can calm the greatest storm and just like you calmed that storm in

Galilee over 2000 years ago lord you can calm the storm in your people's hearts and lives this night thank you for being with us lord and we pray that your word would be blessed and be with us as we go from this house at the beginning of a new week to wherever you have placed us and help use us to spread your word so that we might only through your power and glory and ability that we might be able to help with your word and your promises calm the storm in the lives of the people around about us amen we are going to close by singing these words in psalm 107 psalm 107 at verse 23 we are going to sing verses 23 to 30 psalm 107 who go to sea in ships and in great waters trading be within the deep these men

God's works and his great wonders see for he commands and forth in haste the stormy tempest flies which makes the sea with rolling waves aloft to swell and rise.

[70 : 02] They mount to heaven, then to the depths. They do go down again. Their soul doth faint and melt away with trouble and with pain. They reel and stagger, like one drunk, at their which end they be.

Then are they glad because at rest and quiet now they be. So to the haven he then brings, which they desire to see. We'll sing these verses and afterwards if you remain standing for the benediction and then allow me to make my way to the door to be able to say goodnight to you.

by Lord Mary.

Thank you.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.