

– The non-anxious presences of Jesus: “Calming the storm”

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Date: 12 February 2023

Preacher: Andrew Wingfield

[0 : 00] Well, good morning everyone. I hope you're happy and warm and you've got a car park to go in today. Lovely to see you all. Welcome anybody who's back from New Zealand.

Hello Joanne. And if you're visiting with us today, it's really good to have you. And if you're at home watching, oh, you're missing out. You're really missing out. You should be here.

So I hope we see you next time, especially at the weekend, but we'll come to that a bit later. Could I ask you to stand as we have our call of worship and we'll say what the psalmist said a little while ago.

If you'd stand please. This is what the psalmist wrote in the first three verses of Psalm 126. After coming out of captivity, they were able to come back home and this is what they said.

Maybe we'll think when we first became Christians, how we felt. So we'll read this together, shall we? When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we, like those who dreamed, our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy.

[1 : 09] Then it was said among the nations, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things. And we are filled with joy. I hope you're filled with joy this morning.

We're going to sing our first song together, which is, I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus, the Nazarene. I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus, the Nazarene.

How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

For me, O Lord has done great things. For me, O Lord has done great things. For me, O Lord has done great things. He breathed not my will, but thine.

He had no tears for his earth. He breathed, but set drops apart for mine. I'm marvelous, how marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

[3 : 01] In pity, angels beheld him, and came from the world of light.

To comfort him in the sorrows before my soul at night. How marvelous, how marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

He took my sins and my sorrows. He made those very own.

He bought the bed and a calvary, and suffered and died alone. How marvelous, how marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

Come like the flower is my Savior's love for me. When with the dancing glory His face I at last shall see, Tell me my joy through the ages to sing of His love for me.

[4 : 39] How marvelous, how wonderful, and my soul shall ever be. How marvelous, how wonderful, is my Savior's love for me.

Please remain standing as we pray. Father God, we stand amazed. We are lost in wonder as we consider who it is that we stand before this morning.

We're amazed that knowing us, You still love us. We come this morning to worship You and acknowledge You before the world. You've shown us Your justice, love, grace, and mercy through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ on Calvary.

You took our sin and sorrows and replaced them with Your love. We're no longer condemned, but have been made clean and we're called Your children.

Oh, how marvelous, oh, how wonderful, our Savior's love for us. We worship, praise, and thank You as we celebrate that greatest day in history.

[5 : 58] The empty cross, the empty grave, life eternal. What a glorious day. We look forward to meeting You face to face, to know that endless joy, to know that perfect peace.

Oh, happy day we shout and we celebrate. Jesus is alive. The greatest day in history. Death is beaten.

You have been rescued. Sing it out. Jesus is alive. The greatest day in history.

Death is beaten. You have rescued me. Sing it out. Jesus is alive. The empty cross, the empty grave.

Life eternal. You have won the day. Shout it out. Jesus is alive. He's alive.

[7 : 11] Oh, happy day. Happy day. You washed my sin away from all. Happy day. Happy day. Happy day.

Happy day. I'll never be the same. Forever I have changed.

When I stand, Jesus is alive. Can I please?

When I stand I'm dead in that place. perfect peace but the pain finally will cease celebrates Jesus is alive he's alive and oh happy day happy day you wash my sin away oh happy day happy day I'll never be the same forever I am changed oh what a glorious day what a glorious way that you have saved me and oh what a glorious day what a glorious day and you have saved me and oh happy day happy day you wash my sin away oh happy day happy day happy day

I'll never be I'll never be the same forever I am changed I'll never be the same forever I am changed

I'll never be the same now if you're staying here for the in this room for the rest of the morning you can hear a story about how jesus went sailing so i've got a boat here so what happened was jesus with his disciples on the shores of lake galilee and he said let's go over the lake so they went over they got in the boats and went over the lake and suddenly a storm blew up and it was really bad and the waves were going all the way over the boat and they were really worried what were they worried about do you think yep yep sorry sinking sinking that's right or being washed over and drowning that sort of thing but jesus was in the back of the boat sleeping on a cushion and they woke him up and said don't you care we're about to die but he said stop and the wind and the waves stopped and it was dead calm so that was just amazing they were really frightened about that because they thought what what's going on here you can just stop the wave just like that now a couple of summers ago i joined a sailing club in maidenhead there's a little lake there used to be gravel pit and i wear one of these can anyone tell me what one of these is when i go sailing it's a life jacket that's right so i wear one of these now does that mean i believe don't believe that jesus can save me from drowning have i no faith do i not believe this story that i've just told you so why do i wear a life jacket i wear a life jacket because jesus doesn't stop every storm he doesn't save anyone doesn't save everyone from drowning on that occasion he had something to teach the disciples and so he showed them that he had power of the universe so what does that mean for us well that means that jesus can make things happen if he wants them to it's part of his plan if it's what he wants to happen he can make it happen so he made the universe so he can control the universe thank you very much so keep your life jackets on let's have a prayer for the young people and those who teach them as before they go out and then we'll sing another song in christ alone so let's pray father god thank you for each of our young people thank you father for those who have been prepared to study and prepare for the teaching of our young people we pray father that each one will come to know you at an early age and will trust you will not be afraid because you hold them so would you be with those young people and their leaders lord as they go to their separate groups now and bless them in jesus name amen amen so so so so .

[13 : 36] Shall we stand? . .

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[14 : 40]

. In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe, this gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones he came to save.

Till on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied. For every sin on him was laid, here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay, light of the world by darkness slain.

Then bursting forth in glorious day, and from the grave he rose again. And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me.

[16 : 19] For I am his, and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me.

From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny. No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever block me from his hands.

Till he returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I'll stand. Thank you so much, Father God, for this wonderful song that just reminds us all the way through, of your power and what you've done for us through Christ Jesus.

Thank you, Lord. Amen. Please be seated. We're now going to watch a short clip before Gary comes and brings our prayers of intercession.

[18 : 02] It's called Tenacious Prayer. Tenacious Prayer. Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

He said, in a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, grant me justice against my adversary.

For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice so that she won't eventually come and attack me.

And the Lord said, Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night?

Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

[19 : 24] To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable. Two men went up to the temple to pray.

One Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, God, I thank you that I am not like other people, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

I tell you, that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Good morning, church.

[20 : 44] Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we humbly come before you, individually and collectively as one.

And to be honest, Father, we are struggling. Struggling to find the words to express how we really feel. We seem to be lurching and ricocheting from crisis to crisis.

In the recent past, we've had the banking crisis, the refugee crisis, and then the pandemic. And then, when we thought normalcy was returning, we have the war in Ukraine, the earthquake in Turkey and northern Syria.

Super hurricanes, record high temperatures, record low temperatures, global warming, the costs of living crisis, labor unrest with strikes and more strikes, mass job layoffs in the technology industry, increases in racial tension in some communities.

And on a personal level, there are crises in our homes, in our families, with our relatives, with our friends, with our parents, with our children. We cry out to you, Father.

[22 : 00] It feels like we're on a merry-go-round that's out of control and we just want to get off. So many people have died. So many people are suffering and struggling. So many people are in need of help.

There seems to be so much hate, so much suffering, so much need in the world. We pray, Father, where there is hate and death, we cry out for love. Where there is suffering, we cry out for comfort and peace.

Where there is need for help, we cry out for your provision. Where there is stress and pain, we cry out for relief and healing. We cry out to you, Lord.

We cry out. And yet through all this, you are still God. You are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. You are still the God who created the heavens and the earth.

You are the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. And more importantly, you are our God. You are my God. You are our Heavenly Father who loves us so much that you sacrifice your Son to pay the price of sin that we could never pay.

[23 : 13] And all you ask of us is that we love you with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. And even this, we fail to do.

So we thank you for your patience. We thank you for your gentleness. We thank you for your grace. You alone are worthy of our praise.

Forgive us for our lack of faith, for our unworthiness, for our weakness. Your word reassures us that when we are weak, then you are strong.

Not just strong, but perfectly strong. That our righteousness comes not from ourselves or from our works, but from you through our faith in Jesus Christ.

That your word reminds us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, but we have been saved, thankfully, by the blood of Jesus Christ.

[24 : 15] So we thank you, Lord. We thank you for your provision, even when we have not yet received it. For we know that while we wait and while we go through all trials, you are shaping us, you are pruning us, and you are loving us.

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love the Lord. The Apostle Paul encourages us to rejoice in our sufferings. But, Father, this is hard.

In fact, this is impossible. It's impossible in our own strength. So we ask you today, Lord, to refill us with your Holy Spirit. Fill us until we are overflowing so that we can rejoice in our sufferings as Paul describes, so that we can connect with and come in, so that as we connect with and come into contact with others, we can share your love, your joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Equip your people for the work you have set out for us to do. We thank you for the sermon series that Malcolm and Andrew have prepared.

Bless Andrew as he preaches to us this morning. May your words flow through him and from him this morning. And in closing, Father, I ask with blessed assurance that one day we will dwell in your house, that we will seek you in your temple, and that we will gaze upon your beauty forever.

[25 : 47] Amen. Good morning.

So our scripture reading is taken from Mark chapter 4. We'll read from verse 35 to 41. On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, let us go across to the other side.

And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him, and a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

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? 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. He said to them, Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear and said one to another, who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?

[27 : 16] Amen. Amen. Well, thank you so much, O'Brien, for reading that to us.

And good morning to you. For those that don't know me, my name is Andrew. I'm associate pastor here at Union Baptist Church. And we're continuing this series today that Malcolm kicked off last week, looking at the non-anxious presence of Jesus.

Now, we really need a non-anxious presence, don't we? Because as a society, we are extremely anxious at the present time. As a nation, we're suffering, I think, from an epidemic of anxiety.

I wonder if there's ever been a time in our history when people of this nation have faced as much anxiety as we do today. Now, recent statistics show that in any given week in England, six out of every 100 people will have a diagnosis of anxiety.

And a recent workplace study revealed that 58% of employees in the UK are experiencing anxiety of some kind. Where has all this come from?

[28 : 29] Well, there's a lot to be anxious about. Gary mentioned a lot of the reasons in his prayers from the pandemic and the after effects of that to the cost of living crisis, fears over job security, the wars which are going on, feeling under increasing pressure in our work or education settings, having to do more with less resources, the difficulties of accessing medical services at the moment.

And all this is exacerbated by news feeds bringing us daily updates of more things to worry about to our smartphones and social media prompting us to constantly compare ourselves with other people who seem to be doing so much better than we are.

It's not surprising that many of us are facing the daily effects of anxiety. Some of us may wrestle with an anxiety that's linked to a specific event in the near future like an exam or an interview or a difficult meeting that we've got coming up.

Others may experience attention coming from uncertainty over a longer term situation, a cancer diagnosis, choices being made by our teenage children or an elderly parent needing increasing care.

But at other times anxiety may not be directly linked to any objective events. It may be an overwhelming sense that life isn't safe, that there's something bad out there.

[29 : 51] Now it can be very difficult for us to, as believers, to reconcile these kind of feelings with our Christian faith. We may feel, if God is real, why would he let me go through this kind of suffering and suffer this kind of anxiety?

We may feel a sense of guilt or a sense of failure almost, that as Christians I'm supposed to have this inner sense of peace and joy. So am I failing God by feeling so anxious?

And then I actually start to feel anxious about the fact that I might be failing God and it becomes a vicious cycle. Well I believe that God wants to speak to us about these issues today.

How we react to anxious and stressful situations when we know that Jesus is with us. So let's turn to Mark chapter 4. It's on page 1006 and we'll be looking at the passage that begins at verse 35.

Now the disciples here face a very anxious situation. Some situations that cause us anxiety creep up on us gradually as we've mentioned. Others hit us suddenly. Like a life changing diagnosis like a phone call about the death of a loved one or an announcement from our employer about redundancies.

[31 : 04] What the disciples faced was the sudden kind. Let's just look at the context of this passage. It occurs early on in Mark's gospel which is one of the accounts of Jesus' life.

At this point in chapter 4 Jesus has been he's chosen his disciples he's been doing miracles he's been healing people he's driven out demons he's been teaching people and we read at the start of chapter 4 that such a big crowd came to hear Jesus that he sat in a boat while they sat around the edge of the lakeshore so that everyone could hear him.

This is where he taught the parable of the sower the lamp the mustard seed it was a pretty full on teaching session he'd spent all day teaching and then his disciples stayed behind to ask questions he spends time with them explaining everything to them.

That brings us to verse 35 on page 1006 the beginning of our reading in the evening Jesus says to his disciples let's go over to the other side. Now notice that it's Jesus that initiates this journey a journey that would end in near disaster and a very stressful situation.

Now we can sometimes get ourselves into difficult situations into stressful situations because of the path that we've chosen because of the decisions that we've made I know I've done that many times but we find it harder to accept or I do when we've been obedient to God and followed his will and then we find ourselves in a very difficult or painful situation we think why God would you lead me in this direction if you knew that it would lead to this.

[32 : 32] Jesus wants them to take the trip to the other side of the sea of Galilee Lake Galilee it's about 8 miles across so in verse 36 the disciples took him now I find it very interesting that it says they took him just as he was and I wonder what the significance of that is he didn't come with any special gear no waterproofs no life jackets and we're told in verse 36 that there were other boats with them this is an incidental detail but it shows that this was an eyewitness account of what happened at the time if legends were written down they wouldn't have these kind of details for a story that was just made up of course we're used to reading novels where there's these kind of extra incidental details added to a scene to make it more realistic but that's not the way that legends were written in these times so what we're reading is an eyewitness account from somebody who was actually there in the boat with Jesus quite possibly it was Peter in verse 37 a furious squall came up this happened without any warning now this kind of storm can happen in that region because of the unique geography of the area the sea of Galilee lies at 700 feet below sea level now whenever you have a low-lying depression like that you get a build-up of hot air but not far away there's a mountain range there's Mount Hermon which is 9,000 feet high that's like two Ben Neveses

I actually looked it up on Google Maps there's actually a ski resort on Mount Hermon that gives you an idea there's cold air on Mount Hermon and then there's warm air down on the Sea of Galilee in this depression coupled with the moisture from the lake coming together it can lead to very eruptive

storms now many of the disciples are experienced fishermen they would have been used to this kind of weather but the fact that they thought they were going to die means this must have been an exceptionally bad storm now I've never experienced anything quite as terrifying as that probably the closest that I came to experiencing a storm on a lake which frightened me was when we lived in Tanzania and I was visiting a small island on Lake Victoria checking out a potential partner church with another pastor we spent a few days on this island which was about probably only a mile from the mainland of Tanzania on Lake Victoria and we had a music group with us from the church that was visiting and they had their equipment they had these massively oversized speakers and the time came for us to go back to the mainland they hired this fishing boat and they loaded up the speakers these massive speakers into the front of the boat and I just saw the boat going down and it wasn't just going down with the weight of the speakers it was going down there was a hole in this boat and the boat was filling up with water they pulled the speakers out the speakers were ruined they were completely drenched with water and then went to find another fishing boat now you probably this is when they're loading up the second boat in this picture you can probably see the colour of the sky

I was getting a little bit concerned that we're heading to a storm loaded up the boat there's about 20 people on this boat and then if we come to the next picture we're about halfway across and this is what the sky looked like now when the clouds are that kind of shape and that kind of colour it means only one thing there's a storm and it's about to kick off the guy who's in front of me when I'm taking the picture Paul was talking about a life jacket that's a life jacket that he was wearing before we did this trip the pastor that I was with we went to a shop in the city and said we need to buy life jackets for this trip so he and I had a life jacket so he and I the only people on the boat about 20 people wearing life jackets I was looking around looking at these clouds thinking this storm is going to kick off I was thinking I'm probably the best swimmer on this boat because I doubt anyone else in this boat can swim who might I need to give this life jacket to if it all goes wrong anyway the heavens did open there was a massive massive downpour we did make it to the shore about 100 metres from the shore we did make it to the shore dried off we were all okay but it was a it was a nervous moment what the disciples experienced was much worse than that it was it was truly scary they thought they were going to drown verse 37 waves were breaking over the boat it was nearly swamped with all the water landing on it do you feel nearly swamped sometimes like you just can't cope and one more thing if it were to hit you would break you as this was going on this really scary situation meanwhile through all this

Jesus was asleep it says in the stern that's the back of the boat he was sleeping on a cushion Jesus is fully man as well as fully God so he experiences tiredness he'd been teaching and preaching all day as we mentioned so he needed to rest but I think that even if I was was really tired I could not sleep through a storm like this but Jesus is restful he's not perturbed by the weather the situation that they're in he's not anxious we need to know that in situations that make us anxious Jesus is not anxious Jesus is never anxious just imagine what the disciples are going through at this point what they're doing I think the word panicking probably sums it up they're probably scrambling around maybe trying to take the sails down maybe trying to get rid of excess weight maybe trying to bail out water that's flooding into the hole perhaps on the other hand some of them are completely frozen unable to do anything because of fear they woke Jesus in their desperation verse 38 don't you care if we drown what's behind that question

I think the disciples were feeling what most of us feel at some point everything is going wrong you're overwhelmed you're sinking and why isn't God doing anything about it the disciples are thinking if you loved us we wouldn't be about to sink look what happens next in verse 39 Jesus very simply gets up rebukes the wind and the waves and says quiet be still he didn't need to raise his voice he didn't need to recite special words or raise his hands in a dramatic way he didn't perform any kind of ritual or procedure but at his command the wind and the waves stopped now in the culture of the time the sea was understood to be a symbol of unstoppable destruction uncontrollable by any power apart from God up to this point reading through Mark's gospel Jesus has already demonstrated his authority over disease over evil spirits authority to forgive sin now he demonstrates his authority over nature over the creation over the most destructive and untamable element of creation he doesn't call on a higher power to do this he's not doing this on behalf of any other authority he has the authority when I was at school

[39 : 19] I'm sure this is the same for everyone at school there were certain teachers you could play up for and get away with it because they just didn't quite have the authority or the air of

authority but there was one teacher in my secondary school Mr. Allen he wore sharp pinstripe suits he had grey hair neatly combed slicked back on his head very tall he used to stride around the school looking like he really means business and if he ever stepped foot into a classroom which sometimes happens in the scenario I've described where an inexperienced teacher was struggling to control the class the whole class would go silent immediately he didn't even have to say anything let alone raise his voice he just had that air of authority the authority of Jesus is in a completely different league he doesn't need to raise his voice he simply tells the storm to stop and it does it says the wind died down and it was completely calm the calm part is referring to the water now it's one thing for wind to stop suddenly that can happen in certain weather conditions but the waves don't stop in any ocean or lake when the wind stops the waves keep going for several hours but the sea is completely glass still have you ever seen water like that where you can see a perfect reflection in it it's almost eerie it's no wonder the disciples are shocked and when

Jesus sees the look of fear on their faces he doesn't say I can understand how you felt no he asks why are you so afraid what do you mean why are we so afraid isn't it obvious we thought we're going to drown they're thinking but Jesus is saying your premise is wrong you thought if I love you I wouldn't allow you to go through this storm but that's wrong I do allow people I love to go through storms in the storm they were scared but now in this calm they're terrified why are they more terrified in the calm than in the storm well Jesus power exceeds that of the storm the storm was unmanageable and totally scary so Jesus power in one sense is utterly terrifying but there's a difference between the power of the storm and the power of Jesus a storm doesn't love you Jesus asked do you have no faith this could have been translated as it is in

Luke's gospel where is your faith now the crucial thing about faith is not how much we have but what the object of our faith is the disciples are at the point of growing in faith in Jesus but do they really know the object of their faith the account ends with the disciples asking who is this they still don't really know Jesus now the interesting thing reading this story we feel sorry for the disciples don't we now very often in the in the gospels reading the bible when the disciples get told off by Jesus we don't sympathise like when they argue about who's the greatest we can see what idiots they are but in this instance we feel sorry for them don't we of course they were scared we would have been we get scared we get scared and anxious when we go through difficult situations and we don't have Jesus present with us physically like they did but actually we know something about Jesus that the disciples didn't at this point it's very striking the way that

Mark has written this account that he deliberately draws a parallel even down to using exactly the same phrases to an old testament character who was in a boat in a storm do you remember Jonah Jonah is a very short book in the bible in the old testament about a guy whom God told to go to Nineveh and he ran the other way the opposite direction he got on a boat sailing in the opposite direction and suddenly a great storm blew up and it was so violent that it was threatening to break up the ship and everyone on board was panicking apart from one person who was asleep in the bottom of the boat that was Jonah they woke him and they asked him what was going on because he'd already told them that he was on the boat because he was running away from God shouldn't have mentioned that really and he said it's because of me that this storm is happening and I can help the storm stop the storm but you'll have to throw me overboard they didn't want to do that but they were desperate and so reluctantly they threw him overboard and instantly they threw him overboard the sea went calm do you see the similarities here the big storm suddenly starting the one person who could stop the storm being woken up from their sleep the sea going completely calm the difference is of course while Jonah was thrown into the storm to calm it and save the others

Jesus stayed in the boat what Jesus says of himself in Matthew 12 41 one greater than Jonah is here Jonah was thrown into the storm Jesus stayed in the boat but what the disciples didn't know at this stage was that later Jesus would be thrown into the storm in order to save others he was thrown into the storm of arrest trial and crucifixion by his own people and his disciples even let it happen now this last week it was on Thursday I think it was a beautiful sunny day really beautiful winter sun and Miriam and I were lunchtime just at home together we were just sat on the carpet just praying through some stuff that that we were worried about and just during this time of prayer Miriam looked up and in the window straight ahead of us bright against the blue sky background were two vapour trails which just crossed over and just formed the image of a cross now this almost sounds like a kind of corny thing but just sharing it now but in that moment

[45 : 19] God just spoke to us and said anything that you're worried about you need to see this in the perspective of Jesus and what he did on the cross that cross out the vapour trail it wasn't there two minutes earlier it wasn't there two minutes later but God spoke to us in that moment and I think he wants to speak to us today about seeing the things that cause us anxiety in the light and in the perspective of what Jesus has done on the cross because Jesus was thrown into the storm of punishment that we deserve for our sin when he hung on that cross and he endured an agonising death and just as the sky darkened as that storm descended on the sea of Galilee over the disciples boat the sky darkened as Jesus hung on that cross and faced the ultimate storm as he fought the battle for our souls now if we truly understand what he did on the cross we shouldn't say God don't you care the disciples premise that if

Jesus loved them he wouldn't let them wouldn't let bad things happen to them that was wrong it was the wrong premise he does let bad things happen to us and he has reasons for that and if Jesus has authority over nature then he's big enough to have some reasons to let you go through difficult things and they will likely be reasons that we can't understand he does let us go through storms he does have the power to stop these storms but he is in the boat with us he will not abandon us everything that causes you anxiety everything that worries you about now about the future about the past he is with you in that and he has authority over it all he did not abandon you in the ultimate storm that he faced when he was rejected and hung on a cross instead of you he did not abandon you in that ultimate storm he will not abandon you in the smaller storm that you are experiencing right now and he wants you to know that today we are just going to have a bit of time to pause and to pray and respond to

God's word to us we will have a short time of quiet there will be some music in the background and then I will lead us in a prayer and then there will be an opportunity for us to pray for one another let's just have a moment of quiet now and just allow God to speak to us allow his spirit to work in us He says I'm sorry So let's go I'm sorry I'm sorry I'll I'm sorry They'll I'm sorry I'll all here I'm sorry serving Myers to him Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[49 : 48] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for that.

We thank you that you have authority to calm storms. Thank you that one day you're coming back to calm all storms for eternity. But in the meantime we pray as the psalmist prayed, search me God and know my heart.

Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Lead us in your ways Lord Jesus knowing that you are in the boat with us.

Amen. I'd like us just to take a couple of minutes now just to pray for those people that are near us now. Not to discuss what's going on but just to pray for the other person that they would know Jesus' presence and comfort and saving power through fearful, challenging or anxious times.

If you'd rather not be prayed for that's absolutely fine just to say no thank you if somebody offers to pray for you. In my case I try to never turn down an offer of prayer because I know normally I need it but the time may not be right for you and that's fine.

[51 : 32] There will be an opportunity to be prayed for after the service so don't worry if you don't have anyone near you to pray for you right now. A couple of our elders and deacons are also available to pray with people now.

So let's just spend a few minutes to pray with those who we're sitting close to. And yeah let's spend that time just lifting each other up in prayer.

Let's pray for each other now. Let's pray for each other.

Let's pray for each other.

Let's pray for each other.

[53 : 42] Let's pray for each other.

Let's pray for each other.

Do continue to pray for each other. Do continue to pray with one another. I'm just going to invite our musicians to come up and prepare to lead us in our next song. There's no rush.

There's no rush.

There's no rush so do just feel free to continue to pray as we sing. Let's just remain seated as we sing this next song. It's a song about the greatness of God and knowing the greatness of God

through whatever we face.

[55 : 30] Thank you, musicians, for the greatness of God through the earth. Thank you, musicians, for leading us. Thank you, musicians, for the greatness of God through the earth. Thank you, musicians.

Thank you, musicians, for the greatness of God through the earth. Thank you, musicians, for the greatness of God through the earth.

Thank you, musicians, for the greatness of God through the earth. Thank you, inhoob Rogan cause of pantalla. Thank you, fathers. There's no way there is, but the greatness of God through the earth is the world because you love the camera.

So I will not fear, for this truth remains, that my God is the Ancient of Days.

Now above Him, long before Him, all of time in His hands, for His throne it shall remain and ever stand.

[56 : 46] All the power, all the glory, I will trust in His name, for my God is the Ancient of Days.

Dread of night overwhelms my soul, He is here with me, I am not alone.

All His love is sure, and He knows my name, for my God is the Ancient of Days.

Not above Him, long before Him, all of time in His hands, for His throne it shall remain and ever stand.

All the power, all the glory, I will trust in His name, for my God is the Ancient of Days.

[58 : 24] Though I may not see what the future brings, I will watch and wait for the Saviour King.

Let my joy complete, standing face to face, in the presence of the Ancient of Days.

None before Him, none before Him, all of time in His hands, for His throne it shall remain and ever stand.

All the power, all the glory, I will trust in His name, for my God is the Ancient of Days.

For my God is the Ancient of Days. Though I may not see what the future brings, I will watch and wait for the Saviour King.

[60 : 01] Then my joy complete, standing face to face, in the presence of the Ancient of Days. Just before we sing our closing hymn, just a few notices.

A reminder of your pledge forms for Living Stones. And if anybody would like to ask any further questions about what Living Stones is, where it is, how far we've got with it, please meet with Colin up in the prayer room after the service and ask any questions you'd like.

If there's any advice, any thoughts, any worries, anxieties, take them to Colin. So, a reminder to bring those pledge forms in as well.

I'd like to say a prayer, I think we've forgotten almost sometimes, I think, to give thanks for the offerings that come in. Because we don't have bags going round anymore, which is great.

But the offerings that come in through the bank on a regular basis and other offerings, really want to thank God that during this pandemic, how things have really not dropped.

[61 : 16] God has been very faithful. So, let's give thanks to God for our offerings. Father God, thank you that you've given us so much. And you've given us the stewardship to look after what you've given to us.

I want to thank you for the generosity of those who have shared what they've got to further the work of your church. Here in High Wycombe and overseas through the missions that we support, Lord.

Thank you so much for your generosity. And we ask you to bless those offerings and those who have given them in Jesus' name. Amen. A reminder about the church weekend.

Now, some of you haven't signed up. Now, maybe because you've forgotten. It may be just that you don't know how to do it. Well, we've got some great help. At the back there, you see that young man, Guy, just in front.

Stand up, Guy. Just so they don't know. Oh, well, he's got the glasses just in front of the radio. Go and see Guy. Or you can see Lynn, who's really good at this sort of signing up stuff. I think she'll be at the table there.

[62 : 15] I'd like to sign you up. We really need to know how many people we've got. So you might not think it's important to sign up, but it really is. We also need to know who's on the site. So that if there's a fire, we don't leave you behind because you didn't put your name on.

We didn't know you were there. Okay. We can start at 9.30 for a coffee, if you'd like tea or coffee, with a prompt start with some really good Bible teaching at 10 o'clock.

We've got plans for the young people. We can be used for Christ. They're coming. So if you've got children, bring them along. They'll have great fun. I can tell you the enthusiasm that they've got for working with children is great.

And they've got a program for the young people. There'll be all sorts of things in the afternoon that you can do. So, and you can even just sit in the memorial lounge and have coffee and chat all afternoon if you want to.

Or you can go for a walk with Dawn. Or you can do some aerobics. No, no. There is something exercise you can do. Tea and coffee is upstairs after the service.

[63 : 15] So please take note on that. And also, if you'd like prayer, there'll be people with badges or if you missed out. Or if you want to continue praying after the service, please feel free.

We all need prayer. We really do. So we'll do that. And we're going to close with a song. You hear me when I call. You are my morning song.

Though darkness fills the night, it cannot hide the light. Whom shall I fear? You crush the enemy underneath my feet. You are my sword and shield. Though troubles linger still.

Let's stand and sing this together. You hear me when I call.

You are my morning song. Though darkness fills the night, it cannot hide the light. Whom shall I fear?

[64 : 29] You crush the enemy underneath my feet. You are my sword and shield. Though troubles linger still.

Whom shall I fear? I know who goes before me. I know who stands behind. The God of angel armies is always by my side.

The one who reigns forever. He is a friend of mine. The God of angel armies is always by my side. My strength is always by my side. My strength is in your name. For you alone can save. You will deliver me.

Yours is the victory. Whom shall I fear? Whom shall I fear?

[65 : 31] I know who goes before me. I know who stands behind. The God of angel armies is always by my side.

The one who reigns forever. He is a friend of mine. The God of angel armies is always by my side. Whom shall I fear?

I know who goes before me.

I know who stands behind. The God of angel armies is always by my side. The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine The God of angel armies is always by my side I know who goes before me, I know who stands behind The God of angel armies is always by my side The one who reigns forever, he is a friend of mine The God of angel armies is always by my side What a promise, what a promise, do we know it?

[67 : 34] Let's close with a blessing. Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will and may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Amen. Please be seated. Enjoy prayer or a cup of tea or both.