

FAITH CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

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"From the Pastor's Desk..."

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SAVE US LORD, WE ARE DROWNING

Lord Save Us, we are going to drown.... Matthew 8:25 NIV

Recently, after having survived the past five years of a heart attack and four-way bypass, my Cardiologist, Dr. Steven Foreman, informed me that it was time for a physical checkup. Well, after a stress test, and taking some pictures of my heart I received a call that there is some kind of "abnormality," as the doctor put it. So he decided to schedule a procedure called angioplasty; with the intention of putting a stint in if there is a need to clear a blocked artery to the heart.

The news, for me, naturally became a cause for concern. Such news has a way of giving one the "jitters," and is able to create a state of anxiety, concerned not so much for one's self, but for those of my household and parish. Not that I cannot be replaced, because I can, and will be eventually. But nevertheless, I like being alive and healthy and would prefer a few more years with Ginny, our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren --as well as a little more time in the Pastorate with a great to church which we have given leadership over the past twenty-five years.

After I received the news from my Doctor, I came under what I call a Spiritual attack from the enemy of my soul, especially in the later hours of the night. The following day, at 5:00 in the morning I was awakened again with anxious thoughts running through my head. In times like this, it has been my custom to go to God's Word for peace of mind.

So I opened the Word to a scheduled devotional passage in Matthew chapter eight. This chapter tells of an experience that the disciples had with Jesus when He got on a boat with them on the Sea of Tiberius. The "ship," in which they sailed, was probably a small open boat with sails, such as was commonly used for fishing on the lake. No sooner had they started on the journey when "suddenly there arose a violent storm on the sea...so that the boat was covered up by the waves." (Matt. 8:24 Amp)

My eyes became fascinated with the verse which described the panic the disciples displayed by what they were witnessing: "**Lord, they cried out, save us we are about to drown. (Or) save us we are about to die.**" (Matt. 8:25) Jesus' response is what also captured my attention. "**Why are you so fearful?**" Now, they should have remembered that the Son of God, their Messiah, was on board. They should have remembered that His purpose was to come and seek and save them that are lost, not to drown on any sea that they might travel. Eventually they would learn that with Jesus they were safe, but apparently on this day they didn't seem that confident.

The morning I was awakened with alarm for myself and the future, it is apparent that I too had found myself in the same state of mind that the disciples were on that day; that is why this passage stood out to me so strongly. I felt God was asking me the same question that He had asked the disciples that day: "**Why are you so fearful?**" In other words: "Gwyn, why are you, after all these years back returning to your old ways of the past and giving into this anxiety of heart? You wrote a book about it when you wrote, "*When Your Back is against the Wall.*" Now practice what you write! Practice what you preach!"

Then Jesus adds a little statement: "**O ye of little faith.**" Please note: He did not say **no** faith. He said of "*little faith.*" They lacked the kind faith of to match the storm in which they found themselves enveloped. This is something that we must examine in our own lives when we encounter the storm of our lives. Does our faith match the storm that God allows to come our way?

Remember, the reason they were in this particular storm is because they had chosen to be with Christ. This is what happens when we are traveling with Him. Just because we are aging does not mean God will cause the storms to cease on account of our age. But remember the words of the Psalmist: "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread." Ps. 37:25

NO ORDINARY STORM

Now, before we are too hard on Peter and Christ's disciples please note the description of the storm. It was no ordinary storm! It was indeed something to be alarmed about in the natural. The Scripture said: "...the ship was covered by the waves." Which means; they probably saw more water than they saw of the ship. Does this sound familiar? This wasn't just waters lapping against the boat and shaking it up a little bit. The waters were leaping up into the boat. When the water is entering the boat faster than you can bail it out, there is a strong possibility you may have a very serious problem. And you need help.

However, there was another problem. The storm Remover was asleep. And He was silent. Apparently, the Lord's silence added stress to their situation. Because like most of us would have wanted, they wanted the Lord to do something. But when they awakened Him, instead of Him standing up and calling the storm to cease, He called for calmness of mind among his disciples by asking: "Why are you so fearful?" And they probably wanted to say, "Are you not seeing what we see.....we are about to drown."

We are told in Scripture that "*Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth,*" (Prov. 6:2) which means that a person by the very words he speaks can be entrapped into a mindset or predicament out of which there is little hope of escape. Ask those who have made wedding vows in haste, or made financial obligations without counsel, etc. But note what the writer of Proverbs said to his son who he was advising at the time: "*free yourself*" (Prov. 6:3). How do we do this? We do this by humbling ourselves and making a confession of being wrong.

How do we respond when the storm rages in our lives? Do we buckle at the first signs of danger? Do we spend our time crying or bailing the water out of the boat? Or have we learned to simply trust even when we know He is silent? Are we amazed that even the winds and the sea obey him? **Please note: Christ chose to calm the storm in the souls of his disciples before He calmed nature's storm.** Once He talked with them about their faith He then rebuked the winds and the sea and there was a great calm. Christ knew He would have no problem getting the wind and sea to obey him; it was those fearful, men, lacking in faith that He became concerned about.

JESUS REBUKED THE WINDS

After Jesus addressed His disciples about their fear, He then rebuked the winds and commanded them to be still. What power this displayed not only for His disciples but for us as well. What irresistible proof that He is divine, the Son of the Living God. His word awed the tempest and allayed the storm! There was a great calm. The winds were still, and the sea ceased to dash against the vessel that endangered their lives.

One of the precious things about the Word of God, once we allow it to be spoken to us, will have a calming effect upon our souls. I am happy to say that my spirit lifted that morning and has remained calm ever since. At this writing I am still facing possible coronary angioplasty stint on April 3rd but have the full assurance that He is on board this ship of mine and will carry me through whatever is necessary that we must face.

Life at its best is temporal for us human beings. If the Lord should tarry His coming, we will all go the way of the grave. This Easter we should be reminded of His words, "*In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live also.*" John 14:19 **What did He mean when He said this?** I believe He meant, "as surely as I shall rise from the dead, so shall ye. My resurrection shall be the proof and pledge of yours. And because I live a life of intercession for you at the right hand of God, ye shall live a life of grace and peace here, and a life of glory hereafter." So in the words of the Apostle Paul: "**For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.**" Philippians 1:21 Thus we cannot lose, the storm has ceased. Hallelujah.