

Lee Abbey Retreat
Crossing an unknown sea

Reflection 2: 'Don't you care we are perishing?'
- faith under threat -



Daily prayer of turning and away and towards – to help us settle and focus.

.... I turn to Christ. (see Reflection 1)

This a story about storms. For many today this is a time of fearful and threatening storms. Let us begin by praying for those for whom life is like that - and perhaps it is for you too.

Remember us, oh God, during this time.
Strong storms are raging.
The winds are strong and the waters rising.
There is little light to see by,
And chart bearings.
In this fragile vessel we call life
It is easy to feel afraid and very lost.
We need you to awake ...

Reading: 'On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?' Mark 4.35-41

Notes

What is the good news in this story? That Jesus is incredibly powerful?

In the storm – and your saviour is asleep!

Disciples wake him up and have a go at him.

He shows no anxiety about the storm.

Translations go for – 'rebuked', 'ordered'.

'Be muzzled' is a more accurate – the same way he speaks to demons elsewhere.

I think it's the tone we miss.

'He told the wind to pipe down and said to the sea, "Quiet! Settle down!" The wind ran out of breath; the sea became smooth as glass.' The Message. Informal. Even playful. (cf God talking to Job)

Then he turns to the disciples.

Why are you afraid? Still no faith?

Afraid = phobos. The word used here is 'deilos' - more often means timid

[See 2 Tim 1.7 NRSV: the spirit of *cowardice* (deilos) or NIV: For the Spirit God gave us does not make us *timid*. The Message: God doesn't want us to be *shy* with his gifts.

Reflect

Where does this find you?

We too are trying to make a significant crossings in life faith, vision, ministry, mission ...

We too know what it is like to feel the wind is against us – buffeting ... storms

We are facing the uncertainty of whether we will survive it all.

'Don't you care we are perishing?'

Do you know the feeling that Jesus seems to be asleep?

Notes - praying in the bible is rarely as polite as ours.

'Still no faith?'

We too are part of a story of faith from the beginning. We are part of a bigger story. In light or in darkness, in fruitfulness or lean times - we can trust him in it.

'Why so timid!' – where do you hear this challenge?

Might it change the how you prayer and speak to Jesus?

So what is the good news here?

Is it really that he can still storms and do cosmic acts of great power?

The storms, the buffeting are not a problem to Jesus. He can sleep through them.

The things that threaten and disable us are no threat to him.

But he stills them - there was a *dead* calm ...

'Dead calm' may be a gift – or an obstacle

Rather than wanting everything stilled, tamed and safe – what if, with Jesus, we can be bold in it all. 'Why so timid?'

What different response might the disciples have made? What does faith in a storm with Jesus look like?

Reflecting and praying

How does this story change your praying?

How might it change your faith?

How might it energise and re-nerve your ministry?

Do you recognise your own life in this story?

Where are winds and storms buffeting you or those you love?

There may be other ways you would express what life is like for you.

Do you find it difficult to be as blunt as the disciples when talking to Jesus about what is hard?

Are there thing you particularly need to ask for – or cry out for – to Jesus?

Can you do that now?

Two prayers for the storms

Lord, I am praying for a storm tonight!
One of your very wildest kind!
Let it sweep across my cluttered home
and empty me with me.
Send lightening flashes bright enough
to charge my tired hope,
And let the thunder be so loud
it scares all apathy away.

Lord, open up your clouds
and drench me to the heart
with the rain that's meant for healing.
Baptise me once again.
Let the waters of your heavens
refresh my tired soul
and give me strength for swimming
but let me see the shore

Lord I beg for a storm tonight,
The wildest that you know.
Let your winds awaken me
and shake me to the core of my being.
Sweep across the desert places
and leave them moist with you.

Lord, I'm praying for a storm tonight!
One of your very wildest kind!
A storm that will clean me out
and give me the chance to begin again – brand new.
Bill Burnett

Lord, all around us the waters are rising. I feel so helpless, for I cannot stop the rain from falling or the waters from rising. I feel so powerless, for the current is strong and my body is tired. I feel so empty, for our possessions are floating away or anchored in the muddy water. Lord, all around us the waters are rising. Grant me your strength, since mine is somewhere downstream. Grant me your patience, since mine is drowning. Grant me your perspective, since my loss is in replaceable things, not irreplaceable grace. Give me eyes to see how precious your gifts are: family and friends, faith and mercy. And Lord, when the waters rise around me in my spirit, and my faith and hope are swept downstream, help me to remember how you got me through this flood. In Your Son's name. Amen. John G. Hamilton

If you wrote your own prayer for times of storm what would *you* pray for?