

Amid the Storm

Problems and difficulties often distract our attention from God. We almost act as if the presence of one or another problem were a sign that God is no longer in control or has abandoned us. We gather together to sing and praise God, but we leave to worry with things over which we have not the least bit of control. How can we learn to rest in God in the midst of life's storms?

Jesus had just fed more than five thousand people. The disciples had seen his authority and power. The waters, however, were understood as representing chaos and evil. It was believed that in the act of creation God had pacified the chaos agent or monster, but had not annihilated it. The waves on the sea were visible reminders that there was still some power of opposition to God, even if it were limited under God's sovereignty and oversight. If God were simply to turn his back on creation, the sea would once again wrest control of the world as in Genesis 1 before God began establishing order from the primal chaos.

When the waves began rising and the winds continued to blow with increasing strength, the disciples allowed their fears to take control of their lives. They felt abandoned by God amid the chaos of the developing storm. Seeing Jesus nearing the boat, they imagined a ghost and their fear only grew. He told them to be courageous, calm down, and give no room to their fear. Soon Peter came asking for the chance to be allowed to walk over the waves to Jesus. All went well while Peter kept his eyes on Jesus.

Perhaps that is our biggest problem. We see God and sing his praises, but amid the storms of life we see the waves and action of the winds, taking our focus off the One who wants to grant us peace. Are we ready to give the proper attention to Jesus, or will we leave our eyes on the storms which do not worry God at all?

—*Christopher B. Harbin*

Matthew 14:22-33

¹²Then Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people away. ²³After sending the people away, he went up a hill by himself to pray. When evening came, Jesus was there alone; ²⁴and by this time the boat was far out in the lake, tossed about by the waves, because the wind was blowing against it.

²⁵Between three and six o'clock in the morning Jesus came to the disciples, walking on the water. ²⁶When they saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said, and screamed with fear.

²⁷Jesus spoke to them at once. "Courage!" he said. "It is I. Don't be afraid!"

²⁸Then Peter spoke up. "Lord, if it is really you, order me to come out on the water to you."

²⁹"Come!" answered Jesus. So Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he was afraid and started to sink down in the water. "Save me, Lord!" he cried.

³¹At once Jesus reached out and grabbed hold of him and said, "How little faith you have! Why did you doubt?"

³²They both got into the boat, and the wind died down. ³³Then the disciples in the boat worshipped Jesus. "Truly you are the Son of God!" they exclaimed. (*GNT*)