

For Such a Time as This

A Daily Devotional

Friday, May 9, 2025



From Matthew 14:

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."

And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

This story of the stilling of the storm offers us much assurance. We can be assured that there is nothing that we might encounter in this world that Christ is not Lord over. There is nothing that happens that can surprise God or take God unaware. God is Lord of all creation, even the creation that we have corrupted as humanity. As well, we are assured that we are not set free in Christ to live apart from Christ's presence. We are freed by God's action in Jesus Christ to live, but not to live without the providential care of God. Even if we are swallowed by the tumultuous waves, still we abide in the providence of God – that even in death we are not alone. Yet, in this story, Jesus stills the water, calms the storms and allows the disciples to go about their business.

Anna Case-Winters, New Testament professor, offers this take on the part of the story that relates to the church:

Leaders may cling to an illusion that there was a Golden Age in the past when all was well in the church; whereas now there is only gloom and death ahead. We are wrong on both counts. It was never so – not for mainline denominations in the United States and certainly not for the church in Matthew's day. Conflicts and divisions are ever with us in the church, then and now. The changes ahead may worry us as the storm worried the disciples. The church today needs as much as ever to hear Jesus' words, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

This too is an appropriate interpretation – a way to bring this story from the past into our present. We worry about much as a modern-day, shrinking-in-influence church, but this worry and angst only distracts us from the tasks of the church that Christ has always called us to be about. This story bids us to 'take heart' and know that still, Christ is with us.

Prayer for the Day: (From *The Valley of Vision*)

Father of mercies, keep me sensible of my weakness, and of my dependence upon thy strength. Amen.

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