

“Learning to Trust in the Storm” (Matthew 14: 22-33) August 9, 2026

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Some storms come upon us in nature, and there are storms that come into our lives. Some storms come through broken relationships. Some come through the unexpected loss of a job. Some come through illness and the changes it brings to our lives. And some storms come when we lose someone we love, especially when the loss comes unexpectedly.

I know something about storms—not only metaphorically, but literally.

On November 12, 1977, a cyclone struck my hometown of Nagapattinam, a small coastal town in Tamil Nadu, India. In India, because of their tropical nature, these storms are called cyclones, and Nagapattinam is particularly vulnerable to them during the northeast monsoon season. The wind speed exceeded 165 km/h. The cyclone left a massive trail of destruction, killing approximately 560 people, destroying 23,000 cattle, and affecting nearly one million people.

That cyclone devastated our lives, too. Our house was destroyed. The roof was completely blown away. Floodwater swept through the house, destroying our furniture, photographs, certificates, books, and almost everything we possessed. We lost our livestock and suffered heavy financial losses.

But the greatest tragedy was what happened to my sister. Only days before the cyclone, she had undergone skin-transplant surgery for severe eczema. The surgery had been successful. But when the roof disappeared and the floodwater entered our house, the surgery was ruined. Her condition

could not be successfully restored for twelve years. In 1989, she underwent another surgery, but she did not survive it. She died from septicemia.

I was young, but I have never forgotten that storm.

And I remember something else: my mother continued to hold on to Scripture. In the middle of devastation, she trusted God.

That experience taught me something I have carried throughout my life: **those who trust in God may not be free from storms, but they will never be without God in the storm.**

That is what I hear in today's Gospel.

1. Storms Can Come Even When We Are Obeying Jesus

Matthew tells us that immediately after feeding the five thousand, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him while he went up the mountain to pray.

And then the storm came.

Notice something important: the disciples were not in the boat because they had disobeyed Jesus.

They were in the boat because Jesus had sent them there.

Sometimes we imagine that if we trust God, everything will become smooth and trouble-free.

But this passage tells us otherwise. Faithfulness does not provide immunity from storms.

The disciples were doing exactly what Jesus told them to do, and still the wind became fierce, the waves became threatening, and they found themselves struggling through the darkness.

We should never interpret every storm as evidence that we have done something wrong.

Some storms simply come because we live in a fragile and unpredictable world.

The question is not, "How can I make sure I never face a storm?" The question is, **"Where is God when the storm comes?"**

2. Jesus Comes to Us in the Middle of the Storm

The disciples had been struggling for hours. It was the fourth watch of the night—somewhere between three and six in the morning. They were exhausted, frightened, and far from shore.

Then they saw Jesus walking toward them on the water.

But they did not recognize him. They thought he was a ghost, and they cried out in fear.

And Jesus said, **"Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid."**

Those words are at the heart of this passage.

"It is I" can also be understood as **"I AM."** The same language takes us back to God's revelation to Moses: "I AM WHO I AM."

Jesus does not first say, "The storm is over."

He says, **"I am here."**

That is a profound difference.

Sometimes what we want most from God is the removal of the storm. But what God gives us first is the assurance of his presence within it.

When the diagnosis comes, when the relationship breaks, when the job disappears, when grief enters our home, when the future becomes uncertain, Christ still says:

"Take heart. I AM the One who is here. Do not be afraid."

3. Faith Means Hearing Jesus Above the Noise of the Storm

Then Peter says, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

Jesus simply says, **"Come."**

And Peter steps out of the boat.

Think about what that means. The boat was his place of security. Yet Peter was willing to leave what was familiar because Jesus had called him.

For a moment, Peter walked on the water.

But then he noticed the wind. He saw the waves. His attention shifted from Jesus to the storm, and he began to sink.

Isn't that often our experience?

We begin with courage. We trust God. We take a step forward. But then circumstances become frightening, and suddenly the problem becomes larger than the One who called us.

The storm captures our attention.

Peter's mistake was not that he stepped out of the boat. His mistake was that he allowed the storm to become greater in his vision than Jesus.

Faith does not mean pretending that the wind is not blowing. Faith means refusing to let the wind have the final word.

4. When We Begin to Sink, We Can Cry Out to Jesus

Peter's faith was imperfect, but his prayer was simple:

"Lord, save me!"

And Matthew says, **"Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him."**

Notice the order.

Jesus did not lecture Peter before saving him.

He did not say, "Peter, you should have had stronger faith."

He reached out his hand.

Then came the correction: "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

That is grace.

There may be moments when our faith is strong, and there may be moments when we are frightened and sinking. But even our weakest cry can become a prayer.

We do not have to come to Jesus with perfect faith.

Sometimes all we can say is, **"Lord, save me."**

And that is enough to begin.

5. The Storm Can Lead Us to Deeper Trust

When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind ceased.

And the disciples worshiped Jesus, saying, **"Truly you are the Son of God."**

The storm became the setting in which they came to recognize Jesus more deeply.

That does not mean we should romanticize suffering. The cyclone that destroyed my home was not a blessing. The loss of our possessions was real. My sister's suffering was real. Her death was real.

But through that storm, I learned something that has remained with me: **God's faithfulness is not measured by the absence of storms, but by his presence in them.**

There are storms we cannot prevent and storms we cannot immediately understand.

But we can learn to trust the One who is with us.

So perhaps the question today is not, "How do I get out of every storm?"

Perhaps it is, **"How can I learn to trust Jesus while I am in it?"**

When the storm comes, remember:

Jesus may not always remove the wind immediately, but he will not abandon us to it.

When fear rises, listen for his voice: **"Take heart. I AM. Do not be afraid."**

When he calls us forward, step out in faith.

When we begin to sink, cry out.

And when we discover his hand holding us, let our fear become worship.

Storms are not the end of the story.

The One who walks on the water is also the One who walks with us.

We may not be free from storms, but when we trust in Christ, we never face the storm alone. Amen.