

It was late in the evening when Jesus finished praying. As He looked across the water, He saw the disciples fighting for their lives in the storm.

After the disciples were on the water for about eight hours, Jesus went to them. Even though the water was tossing high with waves, Jesus walked without difficulty. It was around three o'clock in the morning when He came close to them and started to walk past them.

As He continued walking, they saw Him and screamed out in fear. Jesus went to them saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." When He got into the boat, the wind and storm stopped. The disciples were so startled at what was happening, they didn't know what to do. The Bible says they had forgotten the miracle of Jesus feeding the huge crowd and their hearts were dull at this time toward Jesus and His teachings.

Your life is in many ways like a sea voyage. There are many waves of difficulty, danger, disappointment, and depression. These and more troubles may sweep over you as waves mount over a small ship. If you take Jesus on board, it will be a very different experience than trying to cross life's sea alone. Without Him you will make shipwreck of your life. With Him your voyage may seem rough but He will calm the storms. If you allow him to stay in your life and obey all His orders, He will bring you, at the end of your voyage, to His haven of safety, which is heaven. Jesus knew long ago that your life would have times of distress. He says to His followers and to you, "In the world ye shall have tribulation [trouble and sorrow]: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

If you are not a Christian, this assurance does not apply. In order for His delivering power to be effective in your life, you must allow Him to enter your life and take control. Remember, the stormy sea became calm when Jesus entered the ship. The life of the sinner is shown in Isaiah

57:20, 21. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

If you want the peace in your life that only Jesus can give, ask Him now to enter your heart. To do this you must pray the sinner's prayer, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." He will come into your life with a calmness more real than the calmness of the sea. The Apostle Paul speaks of this peace in Philippians 4:7: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

As a Christian, you may have times of storm and unrest. This may be caused by a cooling of your relationship with Jesus. He wants you to be hot in your love toward Him. In speaking to the Church of Laodicea in the Book of Revelation, He said, "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue [spit] thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15, 16). If this condition makes Jesus sick, it is no wonder that a man feels as though he is in a storm when this condition exists.

It may be that Jesus allows times of testing. He brings circumstances into our lives to show us our direct dependence on Him for everything. He may have caused the storm on the sea to test the faith of His disciples. Jesus watched them during the storm, perhaps waiting for them to call on Him for help.

Why does Jesus allow such times of testing to come on those He loves? He knows that even as Christians we have a tendency toward sin and selfishness. Even at our best we cannot live a righteous life in our own strength. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah said in a prayer, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). We can surely see from this Scripture that we must receive our

guidance and strength from Him. The Apostle James says in James 4:8: "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

Jesus has done so much for us by showing us how to live a life pleasing to God. He died on the cross to give His blood as an offering to God for our sins. He has done all He can without running against our will. So, when He comes to your life with tests, don't do as the disciples did, crying out in fear, thinking He has come to harm you. Be sure you are in right relationship with Him when the waves of testing come, so you can grow in your faith to a closer walk with Him.

For the disciples, the storm in their hearts was more frightening than the storm on the sea. As Christians, we should not let outward conditions affect the peace in our hearts. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

Another reason Jesus allows testing times is to teach us faith, so we can help other Christians in their testing times. The Bible says that God "comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:4).

When testing comes, the Bible has many promises of God's care. God allowed many difficult times in King David's life. Sometimes when David sinned, God worked in his life to bring him to see where he stood with Him. Often it seems David allowed his troubles to get him "down." He wrote in the Book of Psalms of his struggles. Psalm 10:1 says, "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" Psalm 13:1: "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? . . . how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" Psalm 22:1: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the