

Sunday 23rd June 2024; Trinity 4. Benefice BCP Holy Communion, Stonegrave.

It is one of the metaphors of life that when something comes along which challenges, we sometimes refer to it as a ‘storm’. Many of us will be familiar with the term ‘a storm in a tea cup’. In a lyric of a favourite song of mine, the writer describes her character not as a ‘blue, calm, sea’ but ‘having always been a storm’. All these terms attempt to offer an understanding of circumstances and people in a very dramatic and vivid way.

In Scripture there are many forms of metaphor and theologians over the years have developed similar techniques to interpret meaning. One of these is described as ‘storm theology’. Every person here could be described as a walking “Storm theology.” It is about how you behave and what you believe about God when a challenge or a crisis comes into your life and God allows it to happen? When you pray during the storm do you see God as caring or uncaring based on how He answers and despite the circumstances are you still able to praise Him from the perspective of who He is, rather than from where you are?

So, in the light of those questions, we can make several points. Firstly, these metaphorical storms are a test because it is during the storms of life you discover what you really believe especially when you lose a loved one, you are let go at work, when you can’t afford your bills anymore, when your health begins to leave you or when your relationships fall apart. Some lessons can only be learned in the middle of the storm, and this can have a way of revealing the truth about you.

Secondly storms can happen suddenly. That’s the way life is. One moment you are doing fine and the next the bottom falls out. One phone call and you find yourself in

the middle of storm. One doctor's visit and you are in a storm. One conversation and you are in a storm. What do you do? Do you battle on or go to awaken the Saviour who is always with you? Thirdly, storms can teach you about God. Listen carefully, when you are in the middle of a storm, it is there that God can demonstrate who He is very clearly. There are a lot of lessons we learn about God in the middle of the storm, most of all is a promise and that promise is that Jesus is with us, quietly speaking with authority through the torrent and wind, the words, "*I am with you.*". The Gospel initially seems to tell us today that Jesus seems to be oblivious to the storm around him or care that the disciples are afraid, but what it is saying is that is He is in control when he is asleep as much as when he is awake!

Finally, storms can teach you about yourself because you will learn something about yourself in the middle of a storm. You will learn where your faith really lies. The reality is that when are either headed into a storm, in the middle of a it, and coming out of one, God is teaching you something about Himself, about you, and about the storms of life because not all storms come to disrupt life, some come to clear a path and enable us to see some things more clearly. Sometimes as well, we need help to get through the storm because it may be hard being alone. Maybe then we need someone else to provide some shelter, and so we need each other.

Let us then each day adopt a 'storm theology' and see the storms of life as an opportunity for God to display who He is because when you come out of the storm you won't be the same person that walked in. That's what the storm is all about because you will see Jesus differently and you will see yourself differently and echo the words of the disciples on the boat, "even the wind and the sea obey him."

Thanks be to God. Amen.