

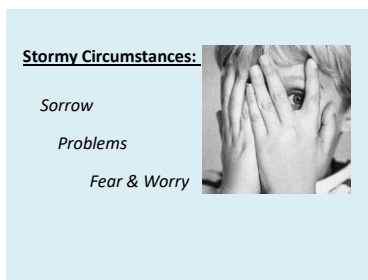
## SERMON: 24 February 2019 – Robert Alexander

### “Do not be afraid” (Isaiah 43:1-7 and Mark 4:35-41)



Do not be afraid.....easy to say but a wee bit harder to put into practice. After all we are all human and there are many, many things all around us that are scary/that we naturally are fearful about/that we worry about..... What's your fear – what are you afraid of..... no answers please...we could be here all day. Suffice to say there is a phobia for almost everything.

Can I suggest we are afraid because of stormy Circumstances in our lives.



Sorrow (Loss of something or someone)

Problems (Family, friends, home, money, work)

Fear/worry (snakes/spiders/heights.....closed spaces/crowds etc/unknown)

Chris/Mike read to us the passage from Mark's gospel of the fear the disciples experienced when a storm rose and of how Jesus calmed the storm and kept the disciples safe (passage we have all read numerous times - in church, in groups or in our own time of devotion). It's a passage we know well and are familiar with.

Mark 4 – the chapter starts with 'Jesus began to teach by the lakeside '.... new venture for Jesus/out of synagogue/speaking to everyday people. As he taught, Jesus spoke in Parables:

An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.....(something Jewish teachers and his audiences were familiar with).

When teaching make a story/lesson real/make it come alive.....one of the greatest virtues in teaching in parables is that it compelled his listeners to think for themselves....compels us to do the same.

At the beginning of Mark 4, Jesus teaches about:

- Parable of the sower (farmer scatters seed: some fell on path/rocky places/thorns/ good soil).....
- Lamp on a stand.....light under a bowl / bed
- Growing seed.....where things will be done on earth as perfectly as they are in heaven
- Mustard seed.....smallest seed, but when planted.....large plant

Then we come to passage read by Chris/Mike.....

Starts with 'Let's go over to the other side of the lake.

Was it end of day/leave for rest/disciples/listeners to think for themselves.

We don't know - we are not told..... but into the boat they went and set off for the other side of the lake.



All CALM at the start.....let's watch a short video of the same passage.

Lake of Galilee was notorious for its storms.....came out of the blue. Weather could be good, sky clear.....but, totally unexpected and out of nowhere, with great suddenness, a great storm would rise.



The disciples (even the fisherman - on their territory) were afraid / terrified. 'Master! Master!', they yelled, 'don't you care if we drown?'

Meanwhile, Jesus was asleep.

They awoke him ..... and Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves –



‘Quiet, be still’ ..... and the wind died down and water became completely calm.  
It went from storm to completely calm.

Words to wind and waves ... same used to address the demon-possessed man earlier (Mark 1:25 “Be Quiet” said Jesus, sternly “Come out of him” (v26: The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him).

Just as an evil demon possessed the man, people believed in those days that the evil power of the demons were at work in the realms of nature.

But this passage is more than controlling the weather.....

When the disciples



realised the presence of Jesus with them....the storm became calm. Once they knew He was with them, fearless peace entered their hearts. To voyage with Jesus is to voyage in peace (whatever the size and format of the storm).

So, in the passage:

- Calm
- Sudden violent Storm
- Fear/afraid/situation was dire (drowning)
- Rebuke/the presence of Jesus gave fearless peace.
- Calm

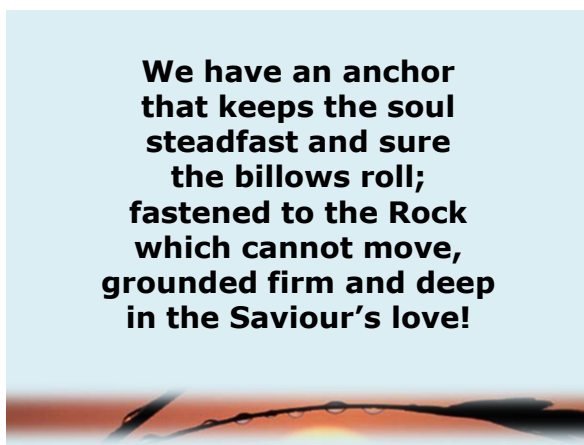
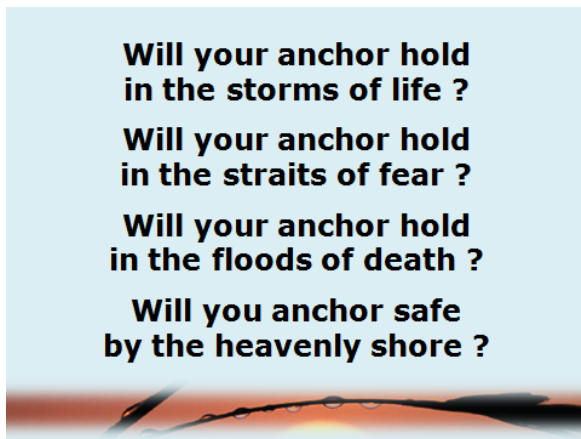
Same for us:

- Calm (all going well/to plan)
- Sudden violent Storm
- Fear/afraid/situation was dire (drowning)
- Rebuke/the presence of Jesus gives fearless peace.
- Calm

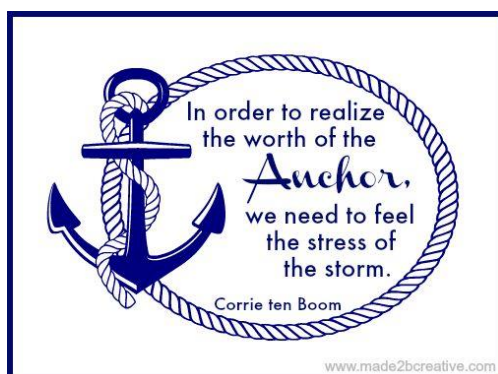
Now, we sang ‘Will your Anchor hold’ earlier in this service:

Not because it’s one of my favourite hymns nor because it’s the BB hymn (by the way, both perfectly valid reasons .... in my book)

But we sang it as a reminder to us all:



I borrowed this from Robert and Isabell Gardiner:



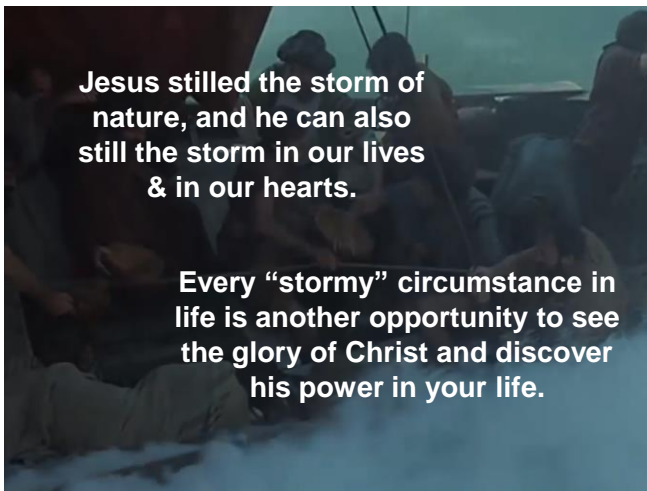
The presence of Jesus gives fearless peace.....



“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.  
When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned;  
the flames will not set you ablaze.



Isaiah 43:1-2



The presence of Jesus gives fearless peace..... DO NOT BE AFRAID.

Amen.