

Worship at Home, Sunday 20 February

Welcome to Worship at Home for 20 February

Introduction God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Prayer Lord, most of the time we manage. But there are times of crisis, when we do not know where to turn. When that happens, help us to turn to you. You are always there, always available, our ever-present help. We get great comfort from that knowledge. Thank you, in Jesus' name. Amen

The reading for today is Luke, chapter 8, verses 22 to 25.

One day Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side of the lake.' So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying, 'Master, Master, we're going to drown!' He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. 'Where is your faith?' he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, 'Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.'

Reflection We could spend a lot of time discussing what really happened. Most of us would say that Jesus commanded the winds and waves, and the storm stopped, as the Bible says. Others of us might think: yes, but Jesus' presence, when he woke, was so reassuring that the hubbub of the storm subsided in the minds of the disciples, and his presence made them mentally calm... But such a discussion misses the point. This story was recorded by Luke, who was a doctor, to give his readers, us, reassurance that whatever storms life throws at us, Jesus is there in the storm. There is no need to panic. Jesus is with us in the storm, calming us, giving us deep peace. We all get battered by the storms that life throws at us. Sometimes, it is the death, or serious long-term illness, of someone close to us. Sometimes, it is simply the sheer volume, the sheer pressure, of things that are expected of us and we just do not have the time, or energy, to deal with them all. But in any one of those life's storms, we can turn to our Lord Jesus in prayer, as the disciples on the lake did.

Our hymn this time is Singing the Faith, 561, 'Now I have found the ground wherein sure my soul's anchor may remain...'

Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain--
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
Before the world's foundation slain;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heav'n and earth are fled away.

Father, Thine everlasting grace
Our scanty thought surpasses far,
Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
Thy arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste, and live.

O Love, your fathomless abyss,
Has drowned my sins eternally;
Covered is my unrighteousness,
No spot of guilt remains on me,
While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies
'Mercy, free, boundless mercy!' cries.

Jesus, I know, has died for me;
Here is my hope, my joy, my rest;
To him, when hell assails, I flee,
in him alone I shall be blessed.
Away, sad doubt and anxious fear!
Mercy is all that's written there.

Though waves and storms break overhead,
Though strength, and health,
and friends are gone,
Though joys are withered all and dead,
And every comfort is withdrawn,
Steadfast, on this my soul relies:
Father, your mercy never dies.

Fixed on this ground I will remain,
Though heart may fail and flesh decay;
This anchor shall my soul sustain,
When earth's foundations melt away.
Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
Loved with an everlasting love.

Prayer

We come to our time of prayer. Let us pray.

Lord, we thank you that, when the storms of life assail us, you are there to reassure and comfort. Help us never to forget that you are always there. Thank you, Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We think, Lord, of those places on earth where there is little peace, and even the threat of violence. We think of Afghanistan and the famine there. We think of the tension between Russia and Ukraine. Be with their governments and the world leaders as they strive to maintain peace,

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here at home, Lord, we remember all those affected by the fuel crisis to a greater or lesser degree, in fact all of us. But some have to choose between feeding themselves and their family and keeping warm. Be with them, Lord. And guide our government as they continue to seek ways to mitigate the crisis.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we think of those close to us, our families, fellow church members, and personal friends, who particularly need our prayers: people bereaved, people ill, people awaiting a medical diagnosis, people worried about those close to them. We name them before you now... [pause]...Be with them, bless them and comfort them.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Finally, Lord, we pray for ourselves. Keep us faithful to you. And we pray for the leaders of Christ Church, our minister and elders. Guide them as they seek to help us to move forward to a new normality in our church life.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Amen

A final collect

God our Father,
when Jesus and his disciples were in the midst of the storm,
he calmed the wind and the waves.
When we are assailed by life's storms,
calm our fearful hearts,
bring rest to our minds.
Free us to continue our life's journey
praising you on our way,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

A Blessing

Lord, we thank you for this time spent consciously with you. As we go back to our regular daily life, you are with us, our refuge and our strength. Thanks be to God.
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be with us all.
Amen.

Revd Tony Coates