

Life is a journey plagued by storms that we cannot face alone.

It can be compared to a trip by boat or aeroplane. It is easy to steer a boat or aeroplane, but only helmsmen who have been weathered by storms can survive them and keep us safe.

For us the Lord Jesus is like a weathered helmsman, who has already suffered and conquered everything, who knows storms and has already calmed many of them.

Often, however, we do not notice that the Lord is at the helm, but we have to believe it. Have you ever while on a boat or aeroplane trip seen the man at the helm ... no, but you know that somewhere someone in a steering cabin is weathering the storms on behalf of us – the travellers.

We can be hit by many storms such as in:

- 1 Job 1:19 ...when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you.
- 2 Isa 40:24 ...no sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.
- 3 Isa 54:11 O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires.
- 4 Jonah 1:4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.
- 5 Nah 1:3 The Lord is slow to anger and great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.
- 6 Job 40:6 (40:1) Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm...
- 7 Ps 50:3 Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and round him a tempest rages.

The storms make it impossible for us to go directly to our destination and a good helmsman does not take us through the centre of the storm. Our path therefore often resembles that of the Israelites, which sometimes was way off course from Canaan.

However, we have to go through many a storm, because we have to learn to trust and believe in the Great Helmsman, and we have to cast our unnecessary baggage overboard.

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As an example I think of Horatio Spafford, who, in spite of the loss of his business and five children, could still write the song: 'It is well with my soul' – see his biography on: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horatio_Spafford

The song is so beautiful that I repeat it here in its entirety:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

(Refrain:) It is well (it is well),
with my soul (with my soul),
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
(Refrain)

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
(Refrain)

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.
(Refrain)

And Lord haste the day, when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.
(Refrain)

We often experience the same storm over and over because we are concentrating on the storm and not on the helmsman. We must pray a standing prayer ... that the storms will not batter us in vain.

There are many examples, though, of the Lord being in the storm and in control, so that we need not be afraid:

- 1 Ps. 106:9 He rebuked the Red Sea and it dried up, he led them through the depths as through a desert.
- 2 Nah 1:4 He rebukes the sea and dries it up.
- 3 Ps 107:28 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. v.29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. v.30 They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.
- 4 Mark 4:38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" v.39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. v.40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"
- 5 I can relate my own narrow escape one evening in my aeroplane when the Lord also calmed the storm for me.

Usually our problem is that we do not recognise the Lord in the storm.

We can for example look at Mat 14:26 - When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

We perceive the Lord to be a ghost but do not recognise Him as the one coming to save us.

There is a lovely song which all of us can sing when we find ourselves in a storm: 'With Christ in the vessel I can smile at the storm.'