

Hope in a Troubled World

In this troubled world we all face storms – storms in the natural world and storms in our daily lives. However, even in troubled circumstances there is hope, for Jesus came – Jesus our Comforter, Saviour, Redeemer and Friend.

Are you fearful?

Do you feel worried?

Does anyone really care?

Now read on to find out some good news.

The Storms of Winter

From early December 2013 through to March 2014 Ireland was battered by a succession of violent storms, resulting in widespread devastation. Storms Christine, Ruth and Darwin left a trail of destruction in their wake.

As high winds swept through the country felling thousands of trees, blocking roads and tearing roofs from buildings people were fearful and troubled. Structural damage to homes and businesses was widespread. Power lines, telegraph poles and transformers were torn down by the violent winds. At one stage 260 000 homes were without electricity. The transport network was seriously affected, with some airports being forced to close temporarily. The rail network came to a standstill and a number of trucks overturned on the country's main roads, including the motorway. Torrential rains caused several of Ireland's rivers to burst their banks. High tides resulted in severe flooding in a number of coastal cities and towns. In some areas, families had to be evacuated after their homes flooded. An estimated 100 000 households were left without safe drinking water. Schools and businesses were forced to close because of a lack of clean water and electricity supplies.

The farming and agricultural communities were among those particularly devastated, as thousands of acres of farmland were flooded. Many farmers had to watch helplessly as their fields, one by one, were totally submerged. The fishing industry was also badly affected by the storms. Mountainous waves prevented fishing fleets from putting to sea. Other boats were caught in the storm and struggled to stay afloat in massive swells of up to twenty feet. The RNLI rescued four fish farmers who were in trouble off the coast of Clifden, County Galway.

These storms highlight the dangers farmers, fishermen and all of us face as we battle with the elements. Some storms are forecast and anticipated, while others can arrive suddenly. Many can be devastating and remind us of the precarious world in which we live. However, there is hope, for Jesus came to comfort us in times of trouble.

The Storms of Life

The 'storms of life' can manifest themselves in various ways and are not always related to weather conditions. They can be devastating, affecting people in a number of ways. For example, we have seen how the unexpected pressure inflicted on people through the economic downturn has resulted in many feeling they are now at breaking point. Today many people are struggling to exist on social welfare benefits. Some of these benefits, including those in the health sector, have been considerably reduced. Sadly, those who are unemployed are facing the painful choice of emigration or subsistence on state benefits. Many people struggle to keep up with mortgage repayments and are living in fear of having their homes repossessed by banks or building societies.

The storms of life are also wreaking havoc in the lives of many of our young people, especially teenagers. Many are extremely stressed as they attempt to cope with peer pressure, the lure of alcohol, the availability of drugs and the increasing scourge of bullying, including cyber bullying, which frequently results in self-harm and suicide. Devastated parents, who have lost a son or daughter to suicide, struggle from day to day to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

The storms of loneliness and poverty are also very evident. The number of people who are homeless continues to rise, with hostels unable to meet the demand for shelter. Consequently, there has been a marked increase in the number of individuals sleeping rough on the streets of our cities and towns. Many people are severely stressed as a result of discrimination levelled against them because of the colour of their skin or the fact that they are immigrants or asylum seekers. The increasing number of people depending on the assistance of charitable organisations from week to week bears testimony to the fact that many are currently living below the poverty line. Soup kitchens, originally established to cater for the destitute, now provide meals for people from all walks of life.

These are the storms many people face – loneliness, isolation, poverty, illness, fear and depression. They are the everyday experience of many who feel their lives have been shattered by the ‘storms of life’. However, there is hope, for Jesus came to comfort us in the storms of life.

Calm in the Storm

When life’s storms are raging and you are feeling battered and buffeted by the waves of trial and difficulty, it is comforting to know that there is hope. The Lord understands what you are going through and He cares for you. He says, ‘[You can be sure I have seen the misery of my people...I have heard their cries...I am aware of their suffering...So I have come to rescue them.](#)¹ [The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.](#)² [He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord’s favour has come.](#)³ However, sometimes when the storms intensify and you are at your wits’ end and feel you are about to go under, you may be inclined to wonder if God really cares.

This was the case one day as a boat was making its way across the Sea of Galilee. Without any warning, a furious storm arose. Some of the men in the boat were experienced fishermen who had battled storms in the past and knew how to handle their craft. However, as they strained at the oars and attempted to reach land, the waves continued to pound their boat which, at this stage, was almost filled with water. These seasoned fishermen discovered that, despite their many years of experience and their best efforts, there was nothing they could do to save themselves. In desperation, they asked Jesus, who was in the boat with them, “[Teacher, don’t you even care that we are going to drown?](#)”⁴ What an amazing question, “Do you not care?” Believing they were about to be lost, they cried out, “[Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!](#)”⁵ Jesus responded to their question and also to their plea. He arose, stilled the storm and ensured their safe arrival at their desired destination.

Peter, one of the fishermen in the boat, truly experienced Jesus’ care when the Saviour rescued him during the storm. Peter also gained a much deeper insight into the extent of God’s love when Jesus saved him from an even greater danger - that of losing his soul for all eternity. Describing himself as ‘[a witness to the sufferings of Christ](#)’,⁶ Peter saw Jesus suffer and die upon the cross at Calvary as a substitute and sin-bearer not only for him, but for all who will repent of their sins and put their faith in Christ. Years later Peter wrote a letter which included words of comfort for all who are weighed down with trouble and worry. Referring to the Lord, Peter wrote, ‘[Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.](#)’⁷ Peter had hope in a troubled world – the hope of eternal life.

All is not Lost

Just like Peter, we too are in danger of being lost. Because of our sin we are in danger of losing our souls and spending eternity in Hell. According to the Scriptures, 'No one is good – not even one.'⁸ For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.⁹ Your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.¹⁰ The wages [penalty] of sin is death'.¹¹ This penalty includes not just spiritual and physical death but also separation from God for all eternity. However, by dying on the cross as our substitute Jesus paid the penalty for the guilt of our sins. By paying this penalty on our behalf, Jesus purchased for us a pardon. This pardon will be put to our account when we repent of our sins and trust Christ as Saviour.

The Scriptures make it clear that 'God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.'¹² For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.¹³ Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us'.¹⁴

Call for Rescue

As the storm on the Sea of Galilee intensified, Peter and his friends realised that there was nothing they could do to save themselves. They needed the Lord's intervention. Concerning the salvation of our souls, we are in exactly the same position.

Friend, there is hope in this troubled world. Why not do as the disciples did and call upon the Lord to save you? We are assured in the Scriptures that 'Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'.¹⁵ You can call upon Him today, invite Him into your life and ask Him to be your Saviour. You will then experience the peace of knowing that He will be with you to strengthen and uphold you as you encounter the storms and troubles of life. You will also have the assurance that when life's storms are all over He will bring you safely to your eternal destination, to Heaven. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever'.¹⁶

As you put your faith in Jesus you will know God's peace.

Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus'.¹⁷

STEPS TO FAITH IN JESUS

Jesus purchased for us a pardon by paying the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross as our substitute and sin-bearer. This pardon will be put to your account when you:

ACKNOWLEDGE the fact that you are a sinner, and that you cannot earn or merit salvation.

BELIEVE that when Jesus died on the cross He paid, on your behalf, the penalty for your sins.

COME to the risen Saviour in sincere repentance, confessing your need of His forgiveness.

DECIDE to reach out by faith and receive from God the gift of eternal life.

The following is a suggested prayer:

'Lord, I know I am not worthy of your mercy, but I believe you will not turn me away, for I come to you in sincere repentance, asking you to forgive my sins and to grant me the gift of eternal life. Thank you, Lord, for hearing and answering my prayer.'

A PRAYER IN THE STORM

***The storms of life, they took their toll,
And darkness has engulfed my soul.
Now as the waves of sorrow roll,
Lord Jesus, come and save me.***

***For many years I've gone astray
And tried to do things my own way;
Sin drags me under, night and day,
Lord Jesus, come and save me.***

***I now repent with bitter tears
For wasting all those precious years.
As I journey on, with mounting fears,
Lord Jesus, come and save me.***

***I feel life's storms will soon be past,
But the fiercest storm will be the last;
So before I face death's icy blast,
Lord Jesus, come and save me.***

***Life's journey it has proved too great,
Now I hope my plea is not too late.
I am sinking! Please don't hesitate,
Lord Jesus, come and save me.***

***My guilt and shame were on you laid,
My penalty you fully paid,
Now, as the light begins to fade,
Lord Jesus, come and save me.***

***Thank You for Your love and care,
In listening to this poor sinner's prayer.
I'm in need of rescue and believe You're there
Ready to forgive and save me***

***Lord, I invite You to come in,
To cleanse my heart of every sin.
You gave Your life my soul to win
And rose again to save me.***

***I thank You for Your promise, Lord,
That a sinner's prayer can still be heard.
By faith I take You at Your Word
And ask You now to save me.***

STEPPING STONES

If you have trusted Christ as your Saviour you are now a member of God's family and can call Him Father. In order to grow spiritually it is important that you:

Listen to your Heavenly Father. God will speak to you through His Word, so Bible reading is very important.

Learn to spend time with your Heavenly Father each day. You can speak to God in prayer.

Look to Him always for direction for your life. God's Holy Spirit, who indwells you, will guide and instruct you as you read the Bible and pray.

Scripture References

1: Exodus 3:7,8	2: Psalm 34:18	3: Isaiah 61:2	4: Mark 4:38
5: Matthew 8:25	6: 1Peter 5:1	7: 1Peter 5:7	8: Romans 3:10
9: Romans 3:23	10: Isaiah 59:2	11: Romans 6:23	12: Romans 5:8
13: Romans 5:10	14: Romans 5:1	15: Romans 10:13	16: Revelation 21:4
17: Philippians 4:7			