

PEACE WITH GOD IN TROUBLED TIMES

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A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But Jesus was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Mark 4:37-39a

I know when I'm in trouble, that's exactly what I want: I want Jesus to take it all away, fix everything, and give me peace. And sometimes that's exactly what he does. Often, however, the storm seems to rage on. Things get worse, not better. But we still want peace. Is there a way for us to find peace in the midst of the storm?

A missionary friend who nearly died of dengue fever while serving in Africa told me that at her lowest point, she thought of all the people who were praying for her, and she felt surrounded by warmth. In fact, she felt such comfort and peace that, sick as she was, the experience was almost exhilarating! I'm not sure I've ever been exactly exhilarated in the midst of a storm, but God does offer us peace if we reach out for it.

The first step is always talking with Jesus and being just as honest and scared (and maybe even mad!) as the disciples were in the boat. This is no time to "act" like you have faith or peace or anything else. This is a time to tell Jesus exactly how you feel and leave nothing out, even if you're scared out of your skin and resentful to boot. This kind of prayer is modeled for us in the Psalms, and is real and cleansing. Until all this is out of your system and given to God, healing can't really begin. Be honest!

Remember that no matter what your circumstances are right now, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever: he is good, and compassionate, and understanding, and loving. He's true to his promise to never leave us nor forsake us; this means that at any given moment, you're with Jesus – the safest, most satisfying place to be in this life or the next. Remember that God's very nature is love. God is altogether good, and one of his specialties is to redeem even the hard times. God is the one who can take what seems bad and work it out for your good.

God is trustworthy. Remember all the times in your life when you look back and can honestly say, "I couldn't have gotten through it without God." In the midst of the trouble we may not always FEEL that, but our history with God shows us his faithfulness.

And talk to a friend. God uses those who love us to help us through troubled times. He provides for us always. Even in the midst of the storm, he's with us and we are safe and loved.