

Dear Fellow Redeemed by the blood of God's own Son,

As we sit here today, we are all keenly aware of the many troubles we face in our nation. We may be in the greatest crisis of our history. I'm not referring to the "Covid Crisis" or the troubling policies of our politicians. I'm talking about a crisis of trust. Who do we trust to calm the troubled waters and keep the "ship of state" from sinking?!

The sea of our lives is often troubled, even turbulent and deadly on many levels! Rembrandt's famous painting of the storm on the Sea of Galilee, represents all our troubles in the most dramatic way!

But this is not the storm described in our text. In the storm Rembrandt painted from Luke's gospel, Jesus is with the disciples in the boat. The storm described in our text came later, when Jesus was NOT with the disciples in the boat.

In these two storms, our Lord was strengthening the disciples' trust in Him. In the first storm, Jesus seemed near when they could see him in the boat. In the second storm, the disciples also needed His power to save them, but they could not see Him.

The children of the world may say: "Who needs a God I can't see, if everything is going well for me? When trouble comes, they can't find Him! But the Word of our God says:

I. TRUST IN JESUS IN EVERY TROUBLE!

Trust in Jesus because He knows exactly. After Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 people, they tried to make Him King to provide their material needs. (Jn. 6:15) Our Lord needed

some quiet time to be alone with His Father. So He sent His disciples in a boat to the other side of the sea. Then He sent the multitude away.

Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble! Strong winds and high waves were keeping their boat from making land. They were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, exhausted, tossed by the waves, in danger of death!

But they were only following Jesus' command, weren't they? He is the one Who told them to get into the boat and get to the other side of the lake! So it is with us also! We try to be good workers, wives, husbands and parents. We try to obey our Savior's Word and walk as God's children, and trouble comes upon us!

Should we be surprised? The way of trouble is the path which God has chosen for His believing children. Jesus says in Matthew 10:38: "He who does not take up his CROSS and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." Paul told the disciples at Antioch: "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22)

When our troubles come, it may seem like we are alone on a deadly sea. The hidden God does not suddenly appear to us, and it may seem as though there is no help for us! But we have forgotten our Savior. Jesus knew exactly how great the disciples' trouble was. Mark tells us in his gospel that Jesus "*saw them straining*" as they tried to row against the wind. (Mk. 6:48) The disciples felt that they were alone, but they were not forsaken!

To this day, our Lord never leaves us outside of His care. As Psalm 17:8 tells us, He guards us as the "*apple of His eye*," especially when our need is great! He saw us from heaven when we needed a Savior from sin, will He close His eyes when other troubles surround us? Surely not! He sees all our troubles and knows them exactly! Not only that,

II. Trust in Jesus because He comes to us with His almighty help!

At His own determined hour, at exactly the right time, the Savior drew near to His disciples. But they did not know Him. They thought He was a ghost! "How could they NOT recognize their Savior?" Because their trouble had exhausted them!

The disciples were already worn-out from a previous missionary journey, when Jesus fed the 5,000 who followed Him. That evening, tired as they were, the disciples were commanded to go to the other side of the lake. Exhausted from rowing all night long against a strong wind, and blinded by the water spray, they were not able to see and think clearly! Besides, Mark tells us that Jesus *"appeared as if He would pass by them."* (Mk. 6:49)

Our Savior often draws near to help us also, but we do not see Him. He is there, but in our physical and mental exhaustion, we imagine the worst – that Jesus is only passing by! The things that frighten us are in our FACE, and we have only a near-sighted FAITH!

What then? We need to remember and TRUST HIM in His WORD. So Jesus called out to His disciples: *"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."* (v. 27) By His Word alone, His disciples knew Him.

Peter was so certain of Christ's Word that now he even wanted to go out upon the sea! He said: *"Lord, if it is you, command me to come to You on the water."* Jesus' word to Peter was *"Come!"* Peter made a good start on the sea of his troubles. But then Peter took his eyes off Jesus and focus on the stormy sea one again! He forgot Christ's word to Him and began to doubt! Then Peter began to sink and cried out, *"Lord, save me!"*

It was our Savior's almighty power that made Peter able to walk on the water in the first place. Even when Peter doubted, Jesus reached out his hand to hold him up! By His almighty hand, Jesus stilled the storm and brought the ship *"immediately to land."*

We are told that when they were all safe in the boat the disciples worshiped Jesus and said: *"Truly, You are the Son of God!"* They had forgotten in the midst of their trouble that their Savior, their, truest Friend, is the ALMIGHTY Son of God!

To such an almighty Savior we may give complete trust in time of trouble. Only those of "little faith" refuse to trust Him. And then our Savior scolds us: *"O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"* Indeed, why should we doubt? Remember 1Corinthians 10:13: *"God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tested beyond what you are able, but with the testing will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*

Through His unchanging word to us, Jesus STILL says in our time of trouble: *"Be of good cheer. It is I; do not be afraid!"* Can we walk on the sea of our troubles without sinking into despair? Yes, if we trust our Savior's Word. What sea of trouble are we talking about? The sea of sickness, loneliness, disappointment, pain, temptation, or sorrow? Whatever our sea of trouble, we can walk on it with Jesus' almighty help. For He is near with His Word: *"It is I; do not be afraid." . . . "COME!"*

Let this fact move us in the midst of our own troubled seas! Then we shall have comfort and hope that our Savior knows our trouble exactly and that He will come with His almighty help precisely at the right time! The Lord Jesus, Who has purchased us with His own precious blood, will never forsake us! Trust Jesus in time of trouble! Amen.