

**Sermon Title:**  
**“Lord Save Us: Strategies for Living Through the Stormy and Turbulent Seasons of Life”**  
**Guest Preacher: Rev. Dr. Penny Brown Reynolds**  
**Biblical Passage: Matthew 14:22-33**

**Passage Background and Summary**

The passage today begins with Jesus sending his disciples to the boat while he dismisses the crowd. He knows that they desire to make him king, and it will be better for him to address it without the disciples there. He then spends time alone praying. By now, the boat with the disciples has been carried out into the sea by the wind. The following morning, Jesus goes out to them, walking toward them on the sea. They are afraid until they are comforted by Jesus who tells them not to fear. Peter asks permission saying, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” With Jesus’ response, Peter sets out toward him; however, the winds frighten him, and he begins to sink, crying out, “Lord, save me.” Jesus catches him and inquires into why he has doubted or why he has lost sight of the promise.

**Sermon Points**

As we are reminded of all that is going on in the world, in our country, and in our individual lives, we can cry out, “Lord save us.” While this scriptural story is familiar, it is relevant given all we’ve been going through. We’ve experienced a pandemic, Hurricane Ida hit the South and brought flash floods to the Northeast, the West Coast is dealing with wildfires, there are storms of oppression centered around voting rights with leaders choosing politics over people, storms of disinformation around vaccines and masks, storms of calamity are on every side, and we can look to the text today to reflect on storms. This sermon offers an opportunity to see storms differently, experience fear differently, and develop strategies to live through your storms and how to come out of them.

Storms are inevitable. Jesus often calls us to go into uncharted waters, and we go in faithfulness knowing that we won’t be abandoned. The storm is coming, and the disciples are used to storms. We may have experienced storms in our life at one point or another thus far. Still, the storm is threatening their (disciples) survival. In the moment, they are tired and exhausted. We may be tired and exhausted from the storms in our life, yet the scripture for today can offer us guidance and hope.

Faith allows you to let go of what you think is supposed to happen. While they are in a storm, it is the appearance of Jesus and not the storm that scares them. We have been using our faith as a rope around God’s neck to tell God what we want to be done. We have a promise to hang our faith onto, but we have to let go of something. Peter lets go of his fear and goes out into the storm. He does so with the knowledge of a promise. Maybe Jesus wants us to imagine how to

get to the other side in a way that's different. It's a reimagining of how to get through our problems. It's manifested through faith and a promise.

The other disciples stayed in the boat. What is your boat? It's that which gives you a sense of safety and security. Your fear will always tell you what that boat is. There is no guarantee that life in the boat is any safer than getting out of the boat and into the storm.

Thus, this is a call to reimagine how we do life and how Jesus operates. Peter got out of the boat and walked toward Jesus. He reimagined how to get to the other side of his problem. Although we are flawed and may sink, because we are faithful, we can still be favored. Maybe Peter sinking is a message to us that in life and in this journey toward Jesus, you may have to sink sometimes. Yet, we can hold on to the promise that God will be with us all the time and that God will never abandon us.

One of the striking aspects of the storm is that Peter asks permission first. Maybe we need to ask permission of God. Do I have permission to trust again? Do I have permission to believe that better can happen? Do I have permission to step out on faith and to reimagine myself in a different way? Lord, can I use your grace and mercy to get to the other side? We have to reach a point where we realize we are no longer in charge, and that is when our faith is activated. We get permission to affirm that we are going in the direction to which God is calling us. What is your evidence of Jesus? We must have faith when the storms come and even when we find ourselves under water, remembering the promises of God that God will be with us through it all.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What are some of the storms that you have experienced in your lifetime?
2. How do you respond to storms in your life?
3. What is your boat?
4. What are the pros and cons of getting out of your boat?
5. How might you reimagine the solutions to the problems in your life?
6. Is there anything that you need to ask God permission for or confirmation for?
7. There are many promises of God in the Bible. Which promise(s) do you hold on to when experiencing storms in your life.