

**SermonBytes: In Stormy Times**  
**Matthew 8:23-27**

**November 26, 2017**  
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There is this friend on Facebook with a young niece about 6 years old named Matthea. Matthea was going out on the ocean in a kayak in British Columbia for the first time. She was going with her aunt who would help her not only paddle, but also keep upright. She was asked how do you feel about this trip? She said: I feel, scared, terrified and happy!

I remember similar mixed feelings going out on a sailboat in Sydenham Lake a number of years ago. Glenn and I went with a friend, who provided the boat and the lifejackets. It was a beautiful sunny day in early September. Sydenham Lake is long and narrow and sometimes has gusty winds. Not sure what or how it happened but – we tipped over, into the lake, all of us and the boat went upside down. Glenn and our friend got it turned over, but it was still 3 feet under! Fortunately there were other boaters out on the lake who came to our rescue- they took us to safety and towed the boat to shore. We were fortunate to have our life jackets on and to have others there to help us... I was not afraid during this dunking adventure, not until afterwards when I thought about how it could have been different.

As a hymn about Jesus in the boat, Peter's shanty says: there are times when we are out where the water is deep, the clouds are black, the wind is gale force, the waves are leaping high and the rain is pouring down. Our boat is tossing, our sails are torn and down, and we look for help! Is there a captain who can help? We call for someone to give us hope- Mayday! Help! Come save us from the awful deep!

~The disciples went to their friend, their teacher, their master and woke him up! How could anyone sleep through the storm?

~Jesus woke up and scripture says he rebuked the wind and the waves: Silence! He said.

~In Mark's version of the story he uses these words that I remember: Peace! Be still! These words come to mind when I feel overwhelmed.

~And all became calm.

~Peter's shanty says:

Tempestuous winds broke off their wail,  
 waves calmed and lay at peace.

And Peter's shanty takes this story into our life journeys. We may be facing a new challenge- a new adventure right now, a new illness, a new treatment, travel to a new place... a change of plans...new directions for the United Church in 2018 ..."uncharted water", where we have never done it this way before.... wherever we are on our life journey...

Peter's shanty tells us:

So, friends although the sea be wide  
and though your boat be small,  
There's naught to fear from time or tide,  
The Master's Lord of all,  
The Master's Lord of all.

This is the good news – when we align ourselves with the way of Jesus, we put ourselves in the boat with him. We will never be alone in our fear; we can be comforted and saved from the storms, so we can sing boldly and bravely – the one who made the surging sea still rules the wind and wave.

And here is the challenge for us who are in the boat with Jesus, who follow his way:

We are to sing bravely and boldly that it is Jesus who can calm our storms. That it is God, our creator who is with us.

We are called to be the light of God in the world. We are called to have all lights burning bright so that others can see where there is hope, and find God's way too.

There is a woman called Vicki Keith who has her lights burning brightly. She is the one who has made the swim across Lake Ontario. She and another woman Abi Trip (a Para-lympian) are hosting a swim for Easter seals kids. Everyone could join the swim; there were different lengths of courses 3 kilometers is one, but it is especially for people who feel they can't do it, to find out that they can do it. They were able to swim with someone who already knew the way and knew the techniques to do it. Vicki and Abi were letting their lights shine for others.... The swim was August 19<sup>th</sup>- many people watched it and cheer cheered as well. Now let us find ways to let our light shine to others in the storms of life so that we can be hope and help to others.