

NBC Devotional
February 24, 2021
“And Jesus Got Into the Boat”
Mark 6:49-51

“And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out: for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” Then He stepped up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.”
(Mark 6:49-51)

I want to start by saying a very heartfelt thank you to Dr. Graves for inviting me to share with you all today on your Zoom Chapel call. It is my privilege to serve as a trustee for NBC, and I fervently believe in the mission of our beloved Bible College! Thank you to each professor, staff, and student who has chosen to invest in NBC. You are fulfilling a wonderful calling, whether you are teaching, encouraging, studying, or helping others seek God’s will for their life. We so deeply appreciate all that the President, his cabinet, the staff, and all of the professors do to make NBC an exemplary Bible College in the preparation of men and women for ministry! Thank you seems not nearly enough but know that you are loved, valued, appreciated and prayed for!

As most of you know, we have had a historic winter in Texas! We are now looking at T-shirts that say, “I survived Covid and Snovid!” On January 29, my husband, Roger, tested positive for Covid 19. His symptoms were light, but we went into “fighting mode” with vitamin supplements, rest and quarantine. Then, on February 1, I received a phone call that my friend who suffers from Alzheimer’s, and I am her POA, had reached a point where the facility where she was living could not control her and were sending her to the emergency room at the hospital. I was in quarantine, so I couldn’t go and assist her. She is totally unable to answer any questions for herself and has no idea what is happening! I also learned that she could not return to her residence without a complete psych and medical re-evaluation.

Praying like crazy, I get on the phone and with the help of some wonderful care givers, find a place that will take her immediately. We then had to arrange to have all of her belongings moved from one facility to another, and because I had been exposed to Covid, I could not enter either facility or see her to talk with her. She goes from the hospital to a new facility, and I simply have to trust God to take care of her. Meanwhile “back at the ranch,” Roger is doing ok but is seriously fatigued. I am pumping him full of vitamins and supplements, and taking them myself as well, praying that I will be asymptomatic, and he will be getting better. We have friends and family praying for all of us, and we know that God is faithful. We are managing to get through our quarantine days and are ready for liberation, and then the Pandemic Ice Storm of the Ages hits Texas. Suddenly, we have ice and snow and are without power and water!

Fortunately, we have plenty of food and water to drink and are able to melt snow and boil water to clean with and flush commodes when the power is on during our rolling blackouts. Needless to say, we are in survival mode. We discovered that we had broken pipes throughout the house and in the apartment below our home. The two young people who live there move into our upstairs spare bedroom, because it is warmer. The drama continues as we try to stay warm, cook and boil water when we have power, and get a taste of “living the life of the pioneer folks!” Unbelievably, we were self-contained on our hill in the Texas Hill Country for 6 days!!

Can you believe that it is 80 degrees today, and the ice and snow have melted? Roger, along with help of friends and family, was able to finally repair all the broken pipes in our house and we were able to have running water for the first time in 8 days. Our renters were able to return to their apartment, and Rog is

free of any Covid symptoms! To say that we have been in a storm for three weeks with Covid and ice is an understatement! However, God has miraculously been working in every part of our situation and has kept us safe, warm, and of a sane mind! My friend is in her new place and doing well! What a blessing to be able to trust Him and know that we have His peace!

You might be wondering why I am sharing all of this with you... As you know, Jesus was a master story teller. His teaching was relevant and tied to every day occurrences and activities. As I was praying and seeking direction as to what to share with you, the Lord said, tell your story. He then reminded me of a recent Bible Study we hosted on Zoom. We meet on Thursday evenings and were able to meet last week, because we all finally had our electricity on! We are studying the book of Mark, and we were in Chapter 6.

In Mark 6:49-51 it states, “And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” Then He stepped up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.”

Those words just jumped out at me, because it just seemed to fit where we are as individuals, as a country, and as a body of believers! You might remember that the disciples had seen Jesus do miracle after miracle and had just experienced the feeding of the thousands! However, once again, they find themselves in the midst of a storm on the sea of Galilee! And then, here comes Jesus walking on the raging sea! Not only is He walking on the water, but when He steps in the boat, the winds cease, and it is calm!

What a comfort to know that when our life is raging, He is with us! The Bible says, “They cried out!” He saw that they were troubled, and He climbed into the boat! Aren’t you thankful that when we cry out, He gets in the boat with us and brings us peace!

So, I’d like for us to consider His three sentences... It wasn’t a lot, but it was powerful!

“Be of good cheer!” I am sure as they looked at the waves around them and as they were growing weary fighting the storm, they probably felt like they were going to drown. “Good Cheer” was not on the tip of their tongues! However, Jesus knew they were ok and wanted to encourage them and allay their fears. The NIV says, “Take courage!” Regardless of the choice of words, Jesus was speaking encouragement to very scared hearts, and they needed to hear that! I can hear Him saying that to us as well! I have to admit, I was not full of good cheer as I melted snow in order to flush commodes, but regardless of the situation, Jesus is saying, “Be of good cheer! Take courage!” As we look at the challenges ahead with Christian higher education, virtual learning, and the future with a new president for NBC, He says to you ... as He says to me... Be of good cheer! Take Courage! He is in the boat with us!

Then He said, “It is I!” What an affirmation for them! He did not want them to wonder who He was... He wanted them to know that He, the One who had been doing miracles, casting out demons, raising people from the dead, and feeding thousands, was with them... in the boat!! I am so thankful that He is affirming that to us as well. It is I!!! We can trust Him and know that His plans for you, for NBC, for our families, for our churches, and for our country are in His Hands! He is able!

And finally, He said, “Do Not Be Afraid!”

It is very easy to fixate on the storm and the waves and allow fear to control our thinking as well as our actions and attitudes. Today, I believe the Lord is saying to us, just like He said to the disciples, “Do Not Be Afraid!” He has a plan! He is able to run interference for us and to bring His perfect will to pass in

our lives. The media, the world, and the devil would have us to be fearful! It must not be so! Change is disconcerting! We wonder what is going to happen in our country. We wonder what is going to happen to our educational system to our beloved NBC... we need to reflect on this story in Mark... storms come... storms go... Jesus is our constant. He is at work, and He will be with us! I believe the best days for NBC and for you lie ahead! I saw a quote today that said: The future belongs to the optimist! I know our future belongs to God, and His ways are perfect! Our hope is in Him! We dare not allow fear or distrust or any storm of life keep us from trusting in Him 1000% percent!

My husband loves to say, "There's never been a storm that didn't pass." I know that is scientifically true, but I have to tell you that over these past three weeks I wondered if we were going to ever get back to a normal life! Today, we are healthy! We have electricity and water! We never went to bed hungry, cold, or thirsty! God provided and to Him be all the glory! The storm passed, and thank you, Lord, for being in the midst of everything, speaking words of comfort, peace, and encouragement.

Covid, ice storms, and winter disasters, family problems, political shifts, cancer and illness, divisions of people, and a spiritual falling away from the Lord are storms that are raging around us... They have not taken the Lord by surprise. He is with us, and He says to you as you pursue your degree, as you counsel your students, as you prepare men and women for ministry, as you attend to the needs of your family of your church... "Be of good cheer! It is I! Do not be afraid!"

Father God, thank you that You are with us in the storms of life! Thank you that our faith in You is rock solid and that You are at work in us, through us, and around us! We are so blessed to call you Father and lean on you in every circumstance! Please be with each student, each professor, each staff member, and each family member who supports them. Bless them! Provide for their needs! Encourage their hearts and give wisdom to all of us as we endeavor to serve you in the days to come! We love you and give you praise. Amen!

Dr. Peggy Stark-Wilson, NBC Secretary of the Board of Trustees and an Executive Committee member, Retired Administrator and Educator: Taught elementary school grades K, 3rd-8th; Served as an Elementary and High School Principal, Associate Superintendent, and Interim Deputy Superintendent of the San Antonio Independent School District, Member of the Board of Southern Nazarene University and has served on the South Texas District Advisory Board, Married to Rev. Roger L. Wilson and resides in the Texas Hill Country, Northwest Austin Area