LWCC Marriage Ministries Email for August 2026

HANDLING STORMS!!!

I did a chuckle in putting the finishing touches to this contribution a couple of weeks ago whilst having a few days in the North England city of York, when my son sent me a photo of my car in his driveway covered in snow. Brrrrr. Apart from hoping the weather would improve by the time we got home, I'd been musing on Storms. Like most of you, I've been through a few over the years. One particular 3yr season came to mind – 1967-'69. Living in Wellington, in '67 we had a storm that raged for nearly a week and caused a lot of flooding and damage. The following year we had what became known as the Wahine storm, with the capsizing of the Lyttelton to Wellington Ferry and the loss of 53 lives. That storm started around mid-night and was a short extremely ferocious event. Then a year later, having moved to New Plymouth, we went through a lengthy storm that again saw flooding and massive damage.

I'm sure, as you've read that, a few storm memories have filtered through your mind. However, just like storms in the natural, we can also go through stormy seasons in life, even in our marriage. We wish it were not so, but most couples face times of disagreement or dispute, that sometimes linger, and sadly, occasionally grow in intensity.

One thing that makes these relationship-storms feel even worse is that in the midst of the storm, it can sometimes feel like God has gone quiet, particularly through, or during the most intense parts. Everything may be raging around us, we cry out to God in despair or utter frustration, and our prayers are met with what feels like deafening silence.

That kind of silence is distressing. It feels like, 'God where are you'!!!!!

Whilst in the Northern hemisphere, I received an email asking me just that: How do we deal with that kind of silence, and the added turmoil that goes with it?

I related back to the person a story in the Gospels that came to mind. Jesus and the disciples in the midst of an incredible storm on the Sea of Galilee, and I share it as this month's email in the hope it might provide someone else with a perspective that might help. It's found in Mark 4:35-37.

"*That day when evening came, He said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped."*

The disciples endeavour to follow The Master's request to get Him from Point A to Point B. Bad weather hits and the disciples become afraid. Think about that for a moment: the disciples, including at least 3 experienced boaties, became afraid, which suggests to me that this was no ordinary storm. But, when they look for Jesus, what do they find? First they panic because they can't see Him, then when they find Him, He's sound asleep (vr 38)!!! They wake Him, He performs a miracle, then looks around and exclaims, "Why are you so afraid? *Do you still have no faith*?"

I think there are three truths in this event that we can learn from.

1. Jesus is still in your boat. When you go through a storm, remember where Jesus is – He's still in your boat. He hasn't left. He promised He'd never leave you, and He keeps His promises. The rain is falling, the boat is rocking, the sea is threatening, the disciples are afraid, BUT, Jesus was there

the entire time. He never left the boat. Even during our storms, when we look and can't see Him—he is still there, very present.

2. He is still in control. Jesus may have been sleeping, but don't read into it that He didn't care. Jesus died for us. Surely that's proof enough, once and for all, that He cares. If He slept, it must have been for another reason. May I suggest to you that it feels like He's silent every now and then because He's just not stressed out by our storms? He is still in control. It seems like He's sleeping, or far off, because He knows how it is going to play out.

You may feel battered and bruised by your storm, and may wonder where Jesus is. The truth is that, as he was with the disciples, He is there with you, and He's going to get you to the other side. And maybe, He just knows, change and perspective, and better communication and conflict resolution skills, often take time to develop, so He'll just wait for you both to get that.

3. He will act. By His grace, and in His time, He will act. That's what He does. I don't know how they woke Him up (or how they decided which one of them should wake Him up – sorry my quirky sense of humour). But I do know that He woke up. He turned to the wind and the waves and said, "Quiet. Be still." And what happened - that storm was Calmed.

In the midst of the turmoil, the heartache, the stress and emotion of a protracted storm, I hear what you are thinking – seriously, it is hard to park your emotions and feelings, and carry on. And that's so true. But it's also true that the disciples had had much personal experience of what He could do. We too know what He can do - By Faith!!! In the midst of our storms, the chasm between 'in person' and 'by faith' can seem so huge! Never-the-less, we need to keep perspective, and push into the fact that He is still in our boat – still in both our boats – He is in control, and He will come through for us.

Perhaps if this is you right now, you could pause and speak to Him: *"Lord where we're at right now is really messing me up. I give 'us' to You again right now. I thank You for the reminder that You Are in this boat with us. Please help us to see Each other; to see what we each need to 'see' in this situation, and in the broader picture of our journey together; and help us to get to 'the other side' in a different place. Amen."*

My favourite part of that passage in Mark is at the end of the story. The disciples see Him calm the storm and wonder to themselves, "Who is this guy?", and in the aftermath, ended up in a different space because they got to know something about Jesus they didn't know before. In the midst of your storm, when He comes through, our prayer is that you too will not only experience release and restoration, but maybe, you will see something of Him you had not seen before.

Blessings, as always from the Marriage Ministry's Team – Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen, Phil & Mel.