

# Holy Trinity Church : Formby

7<sup>th</sup> February 2010

8.45am Holy Communion

Revelation 4

Luke 8 vs 22 - 25

10.30am Holy Communion @ Redgate

## "Christ the Rock"

### INTRODUCTION

As I was preparing this sermon a number of hymns came to mind that will hopefully be an encouragement to you - but more about that later.

Firstly - let me set the scene:

The disciples were experienced fishermen

They were used to the sudden changes of weather on Lake Galilee

One minute all could be calm - the next a small fishing boat could find itself being tossed to and thro.

Which is exactly what happens in today's Gospel story of Jesus and his disciples journey across Lake Galilee.

One minute all was calm - the next they are in danger of being swamped.

Let's hear this familiar story

### READ THE GOSPEL

### TEACHING

It must have been quite a storm for the disciples to be afraid.

And yet Jesus is able to sleep.

Some people can sleep through anything - either through exhaustion or simply being completely at peace.

I'm sure that if any of you are like me - there will have been occasions when you have woken in the morning and, when asked what sort of night you've had - you have replied.....

*"Not a good night I seem to have been awake off and on all night"*

To which your wife or husband has said something along the lines of.....

*"Yes I know-I was kept awake by the thunder too"*

To which I have been known to say

*"Thunder? - I didn't hear any thunder"*

Well we don't know if the disciples were experiencing thunder and lightening on Lake Galilee - the bible simply calls it a squall.

Actually the Greek is better translated as a 'sudden storm'  
Now a storm is much worse than a squall - both in its intensity and length.

I'll never forget our honeymoon journey to Paris the day after our wedding.

We travelled down to Dover by train from London - to catch the Hovercraft across to France.

As we got mid channel the waves got bigger and bigger and we were asked to remain in our seats.

This particular hovercraft was captained by a Frenchman, who came on the tannoy to declare in English that there was a slight swell

Then in French he announced that

*'La mer est assez agitee!'*

Which, if you speak French, you will know does **NOT** mean a slight swell - far from it!!

Suffice it to say - no more hovercraft bounced their way across the English Channel that evening!!

For the disciples in the boat on Lake Galilee - whether they had been French or Greek

*'Le lac etait assez agite!'*

**SO WHAT DO THEY DO ?**

**THE DO WHAT WE WOULD NO DOUBT HAVE DONE!**

They turn to Jesus

After all we can read in John 6 : 67 how, when some of those who were following Jesus, found it too challenging, Jesus had challenged the disciples, as he asked them

*"You do not want to leave me too, do you?"*

To which Peter has replied

*"Lord, to whom shall we go?*

*You have the words of eternal life.*

*We believe and know that*

*You are the holy one of God"*

- What about us?
- What about you?
- What about me?

Do we have that same assurance - as the author of the my first hymn '**Blessed Assurance**' penned.....

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!*

*O what a foretaste of glory divine!*

*Heir of salvation, purchase of God,*

*Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.*

Then that wonderful refrain

*This is my story, this is my song,*

*Praising my Saviour, all the day long;*

*This is my story, this is my song,*

*Praising my Saviour, all the day long.*

"Blessed Assurance" was written by Fanny J. Crosby and the music composed by Phoebe P. Knapp.

Phoebe Knapp who was the second president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company

She knew all about Insurance and Assurance.

She and Fanny Crosby knew where their faith lay - firmly rooted in Jesus Christ - a faith that had sustained Fanny through her life - a difficult life - having lost her sight at just 6 weeks of age.

Their faith was firmly rooted on Christ the Rock

Perhaps it was through the singing of other hymns - hymns written 100 years earlier that they were sustained in their faith and encouraged to compose themselves.

Which brings me to my second hymn = Keith Ward's 'The Solid Rock'

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
  
When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.*

Then a wonderful refrain...

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

In the closing words of our Gospel - when the people saw how Jesus calmed the storm - they asked

*"Who is this?"*

Hymn writers such as Fanny Crosby and Keith Ward - they knew who this Jesus was and who this Jesus is.

All of which brings me back to our verse for this year

**Come to Him, the living stone.**

The disciples turned - at their point of real need - they turned to the one - indeed the only one - the one who could meet their need at that time.

And what did Jesus do?

Well I can tell you what he didn't do - he didn't turn over, pull the sheet up over his head and sleepily tell them to go away.....

No - he got up - he stilled the storm = he met their need.

So - when we feel that we are sinking under the weight of all that is pressing down on us - when we feel frightened or helpless or afraid - what does Jesus invite us to do?

Well - to quote from what we call 'The Comfortable Words' - words spoken by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount -

***"Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest."***

## **CONCLUSION**

Let me end by quoting from another hymn - my third hymn = one which sums up what I am saying this morning.

Words written towards the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by Priscilla Jane Owens in 1882

It's known as the **THE BB HYMN** **"Will Your Anchor Hold?"**

***Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?***

*When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,*

*Will your anchor drift or firm remain?*

Christ the foundation stone upon which we build our faith

Christ the solid rock.

**Refrain:**

**Amen**

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul*

*Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;*

*Fastened to the rock which cannot move,*

*Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

*Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,*

*When the breakers roar and the reef is near?*

*While the surges rave and the wild winds blow,*

*Shall the angry waves then your bark o'erflow?.*

May our anchor hold in the storms of life - an anchor that

is firmly attached to Christ = Christ the Rock