



From my 12 years working as the Chaplain on cruise ships, I know full well that, even in the Caribbean, the sea can get very rough. The disciples found the same experience when Jesus decided that they should take a trip across the lake. Jennie and I have escorted Cruise Ship Shore Excursions to the Sea of Galilee. We were told that, even today, sudden squalls can whip the calm waters of the Sea of Galilee into a violent frenzy. Even today, lives are sometimes lost.

Jesus must have been exhausted, for he was sleeping through it all, when the terrified disciples woke him saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing". His reaction was to calm the wind and raging waters and then to ask them where their faith had been.

I would love to use this story to support the line that, if we simply put our trust in the Lord, we will be saved. That would be easier if the disciples had woken Jesus with a request that he save them all. But that is not what St Luke tells us happened. They woke him to tell him that they were all going to drown. They were not putting themselves in His hands and seeking His help. They were giving seven blasts on the ship's siren and telling people to go their muster stations. Or they would have done if it had been a much bigger boat and hundreds of years later.

However, Jesus reacted as if they had put themselves in His hands. He resolved the problem - and probably went back to sleep as the boat continued to the other side of the lake.

Luke uses this story to indicate the point at which the disciples realised the extent of Jesus' authority. With the benefit of hindsight, knowing as much as we know from the whole of scripture, that should not be in any doubt for us.

So what can we take from this little story? I think it can still support the importance of placing our lives in God's hands. In this case, the solution was what they needed, even if it had not occurred to them that it was possible; the storm was abated.

We must remember that our cries to God for help must always include the words, "Not my will, but yours", for God's way in any situation will not always be our way, and His will for us may not be as we expect it.

But we know that, whatever His will for us, He has the power and authority to see it through, subject only to our willingness to ask and to listen. And to remember that our listening is the most difficult and important part, especially at the height of a storm in our lives.

