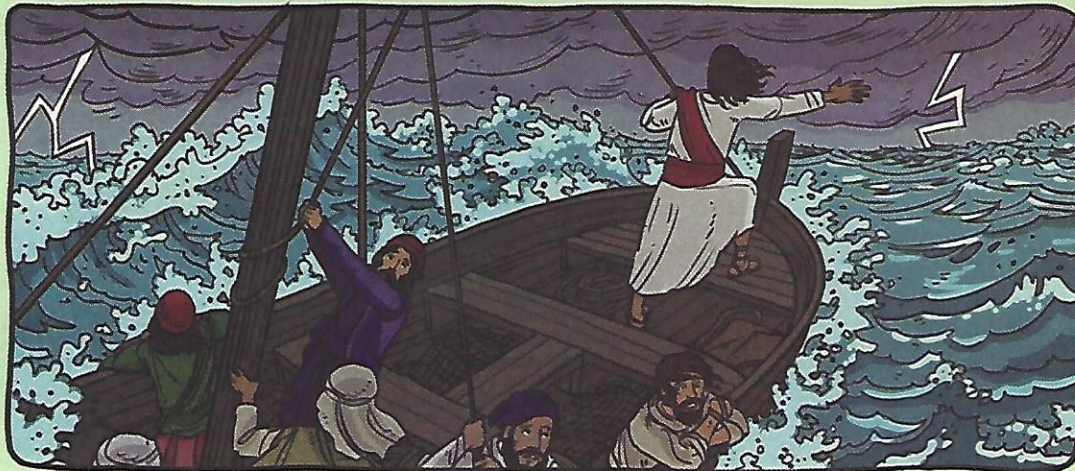


Chapter 7: Jesus Helps Us Always



Introduction

You may remember what a thunderstorm is like. The sky gets cloudy and dark. Then comes the crashing of thunder and bright flashes of lightning. The wind blows and the rain falls. Sometimes it is kind of scary. It is best to be inside during a thunderstorm!

Everyone is afraid sometimes. Even brave people are afraid at times, but they might not show it. We should be afraid of things that can hurt us, but we do not have to be frozen with fear. We can still make good and brave decisions because we know that God is always with us.

Scripture Story: Jesus Helps Us in Times of Trouble

One time Jesus was in a thunderstorm with his disciples. They were out on a lake, in a boat. This is what happened:

Jesus got into a boat, and his disciples went with him. Suddenly a fierce storm hit the lake, and the boat was in danger of sinking. But Jesus was asleep. The disciples went to him and woke him up. "Save us, Lord!" they said.

"We are about to die!"

"Why are you so frightened?" Jesus answered. "What little faith you have!" Then he got up and ordered the winds and the waves to stop, and there was a great calm.

Everyone was amazed. "What kind of man is this?" they said. "Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:23–27)

Many of the disciples were fishermen. They knew how to handle boats. But this storm was too big and too powerful for them. The boat was about to sink!

The disciples called on Jesus to help them. Jesus calmed the storm. The disciples wondered, "What kind of man can do this?" We now know who Jesus is. Jesus is the Son of God, and he can calm every storm.

Stormy Times

Sometimes we call hard or difficult times in our lives "stormy times." These stormy times can be caused by many things. Maybe it is a big change in your family. Maybe it is just the way you feel about something. Maybe you are having a hard time at school.

At those stormy times, we can do what the disciples did. We can call on Jesus for help. Jesus is our friend, who is with us in any trouble. He is our Savior, the Son of God, who came to save us from sin and death. He can save us from every evil, bringing us to eternal life and joy with him in Heaven.

Jesus is especially with us when we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus knows when we are going through hard times. He knows when we have made wrong choices. Jesus knows and, if we are sorry, he will forgive us and bring us peace.

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

We are the disciples of Jesus. We are his close followers. He wants to take care of us and to save us, just as he saved his disciples in the storm. One of the ways Jesus saves us is by forgiving our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

After we confess our sins to the priest and are given a penance, we are given **absolution**. Absolution is the forgiveness of our sins, through the words and actions of the priest. The priest extends both hands, or just his right hand, as he prays the prayer of absolution. This prayer ends with the priest saying, "Through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (number 46)." We answer, "Amen."

We then give thanks to God and the priest sends us forth, saying this or another similar prayer: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace" (*Rite of Penance*, number 47).

Pardon and peace are two great gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We are given peace with God, ourselves, and others. Here are some other gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

- We are given grace, God's own life in us.
- We grow closer to God and to all God's people, the Church.
- We are given a peaceful **conscience**. (Our conscience is the knowledge we have within us of right and wrong.)

- We are given grace and strength to avoid sin and live as a Christian.
- We are able to repair some of the harm done to our relationships that our sin caused.
- We are helped to stay in friendship with God in this life so that we can be happy with him forever in Heaven.
- We are saved, if we have confessed a mortal sin, from being separated from God forever after we die.
- We are more ready than ever to follow Jesus as his disciples!

Things to Remember

- Jesus is the Son of God who saves us in times of trouble.
- We are disciples of Jesus who call on his mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.