

Let us pray,

Lord, when life gets rough, give us the wisdom to trust in you.

Amen.

βασανίζω basanizō

That means “to be tormented in soul”.

The disciples were tormented in soul in the boat.

The very boat that Jesus told them to get on.

Not asked, not suggested, told them.

Jesus did not give an option,

he made or compelled, the disciples to get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side of the sea.

Why is this important?

Well because Jesus forced his disciples into treacherous territory.

And we don't like a Jesus who does that.

We don't like a Jesus who actively put the disciples in harms way, so much so that they were, "Basanizo", tormented in soul, by the waves.

They were quite literally fearing for their lives, because of Jesus. I can only imagine what kind of thoughts were running through their heads about Jesus in that moment.

Im not sure how much praise and glory they were giving him. But then, in the midst of their torment, Jesus shows up, on the water, completely unbothered by everything that is happening.

And for a moment, the disciples quite the storm in their minds and are completely focused, on Jesus, who is standing on water! Jesus, redirected their attention.

Peter, wanting to be a faithful servant, gets out of the boat, and while focusing on Jesus, is also able to walk on water.

Still ignoring the chaos that is happening around him.

But the moment he realizes once again that the world is crashing down around him, he falls into the water.

Can't life feel like this sometimes?

Can't life and all the bad stuff that is happening, all of the things that torment our soul, get in the way of us following Jesus?

How much of our attention is put on the chaos all around us, rather than the glory and the miracles that are happening right in front of our eyes.

Peter just demonstrated how easy it was to walk on water when he was focused on the right thing, Jesus.

But then he also demonstrated how easy it is for us to get distracted by everything else and fall into the water.

Now I am not saying that if we believe in Jesus that we can go and walk on water.

I think this was a one time event to prove a point.

We don't hear of Jesus walking on water again, let alone Peter.

Because the walking on water was the lesson, not the goal.

The point that Jesus was trying to make, is that when we keep our focus on Jesus, on God, the things that we can do will be outside of what we think possible.

If we want a better world, then we have to have our concentration on the right things.

We have to stop allowing the noise to dictate what we pay attention to.

We must learn to drown out the torments of our souls so that the savior of our souls can speak and guide us.

As far as I know, none of us had a choice in whether or not we were born.

Our parents decided that on our behalf.

Just like the disciples, they did not have a choice when it came to going on the boat across the sea to the other side.

But the choice they did have, was what they did during the ride.

We may not have chosen to be on this boat called life, we may not have chosen our bodies, our brains, our circumstances, but we still have decisions to make.

Hope and trust or fear and distrust.

As with everything Jesus calls us into, this is easier said than done.

Sometimes, fear can feel kind of rewarding.

It can become almost addictive.

It can seem like the rational and reasonable reaction to much of life.

And here is the funny thing about that.

Fear may be the most rational and reasonable reaction to much of life, but that doesn't mean that it is the healthier or even better option.

Because fear keeps us stuck, it keeps us trapped in our own torments.

Hope, however, provides us with a way out.

Hope provides us with the ability to walk on water during a horrendous storm.

Hope provides us with a path forward, when no path forward is seen.

Humans 100 years ago could not have fathomed what today looks like.

And similarly, we cannot fathom what 100 years will look like in the future either.

Heck, we can't even predict what will happen tomorrow.

The future is unknown, and our current realities can change in an instant.

So we have a choice in the present.

We can see the future as a source of fear, or as a source of opportunity and hope.

I want to be real with you, being hopeful does come with a potential cost.

It doesn't always work out.

We don't always get the outcome we hoped for.

But even with the chance of being disappointed, I truly believe it is better to have hoped and be disappointed than live in constant fear and torment.

All fear does is basanizō, torment the soul.

So may we learn to trust in Jesus, hope in his vision for our world, and trust in his promise of paradise after this life ends.

Because only then will we know peace, even in the midst of horrendous storms.

Amen.