

**“Quiet! Be still!”**  
**“Why are you terrified?”**

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Once upon a time**, there was a man by the name of Melvin Collins. His wife was Gertrude. They were the parents of six children. Like all parents, they felt a need, one day, to get away for a few hours by themselves. So, they put their kids on their best behavior (none were pre-schoolers) and they drove to a nearby lake to spend a day on a small sailboat.

*What happened next is best described in Melvin’s words:*

*The breeze was strong, and before long, we were far out on the lake. Then, all of a sudden, the sky turned dark, the breeze turned violent, and huge, angry waves began to engulf us. Minutes later, our boat capsized and, to my shock, it disappeared beneath the swirling waters. It wasn’t supposed to do that. But then, none of this was supposed to happen!*

*Gertrude and I clung to two small safety cushions. For two hours, we battled the angry waves, all the time, trying to stay together. By now, the weather had turned cold. We were both shivering and exhausted. Without saying so, we sensed that the end was near. With our last bit of energy, we prayed together. Then, we released our hands and, with our strength completely depleted, we slowly drifted apart.*

*Five hours later, I was, somehow, still afloat, but in a semi-delirious state. I began to call out Gerty’s name. But, when I got no reply, I began to lose hope that she was still alive. I thought of the agony of having to tell the children that their mom had drowned. Then, it struck me that... I might not live to tell them the tragic news. It was at this point that I recalled a line from Psalm 50: **“Call upon me in time of distress; I will rescue you, and you shall glorify me.”** <sup>Ps. 50:15</sup>*

*So-o, I began to call out to God with faith and trust in his Psalm-50-command. That’s when IT happened. A rescue boat spotted me and within seconds, they had pulled me aboard.*

**“Do you have my wife?”** I screamed.

**“No,”** they said. **“We haven’t seen her.”**

*My heart sank. Guilt flooded my mind. How I dare live ...and leave her behind?*

*And that’s when they spotted my-Gert! When we reached her, she was freezing cold, shaking violently, but still alive.*

*It was a tearful reunion followed by a prayer of Thanksgiving ...and then, hot, black coffee.*

*I share that story with you because it bears a striking resemblance to the story I just read to you from St. Mark’s Gospel.*

*Both stories involve frightened people ...caught at sea... in a storm.*

*Both stories involve people who... in their fright... called out to God.*

*Both stories involve people whose prayer was heard AND... whose faith... was greatly increased as a result of their experience!*

**“Interesting, but what’s it have to do with us?”** you ask.  
**Well...I am glad you asked that question!**

*You see, both stories carry a 2-fold message that we tend to forget...of which we need to be reminded.*

**I<sup>sd</sup>**, the storms of life are often occasions that draw us closer to God and one another.

**Notice:** I said, ‘The storms of life are **often** occasions that draw us closer to God & one another.’

Such storms can do just the **opposite**. They can create an abyss between God and us...and others.

**2<sup>nd</sup>**, the 'difference' between the storms of life that bring us **closer to God** and the storms of life that **carry us away from God** (...to an abyss) is ... **PRAYER!**

Now, just stay with me here. I am not talking about just any kind of prayer. I am talking about the kind of prayer that places all our trust in God **and** in God's will for us.

It's the kind of prayer that Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, the night before Golgotha.

After great anguish, he completed his prayer with, **"Not my will, but Thy will be done."**<sup>Lk.22:42</sup>

**LISTEN TO ME:** a prayer that is not prayed in the spirit that God knows what is best for us ...is not really a prayer at all!

A prayer that is not prayed in this spirit... treats God as a servant, not as a loving Father. It betrays a basic selfishness on our part & a complete lack of trust that God knows what is best for us.

That may be a whole, new '**perspective**' for you, so let me put it this way.

**Once upon a time**, there was a mother, who was raising four small children by herself. One day God told her to prepare for her death. The mother protested, saying,

**"Who will take care of my small children?"**

With that, God transported her to the bottom of the sea with him. He picked up a small shell and opened it. Inside, there was a tiny worm. God said to the worried mother,

**"If I did not forget this tiny creature inside this tiny shell, I certainly will not forget your children."**

The mother said to God,

**"I do not understand why you are taking me, but... I trust you know what is best for me and for my children. I shall prepare for my death."**

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I now close with the same poem I closed one of my very first homilies here, nearly 3 yrs. ago:

**"Up in a quaint old attic, as the raindrops pattered down,  
I sat paging through an old schoolbook –dusty, tattered, and brown.  
I came to a page that was folded over, & across it was written –in a childish hand:  
'The teacher says to leave this now, 'tis hard to understand.'  
I folded down the page and read, then nodded my head and said,  
'The teacher was right—now I understand.' "**

Like the many storms of life, many pages in the book of life are hard to understand. There are many pages that we have to turn down and write,

**"The teacher says to leave this now..."**

Then, someday, perhaps only in heaven, we will unfold those pages and say,

**"The Teacher was right, --now I understand."**

Until such a time, we simply must trust that Abba-God, our loving Father, knows what is best for us.

We must do our absolute best.

And, trust God... with the rest.

May Almighty God bless you, **especially on this Father's Day weekend...**  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.