CROSS COURIER

Proclaiming the gospel

Publication of the Reformed Churches in South Africa



Living with hope IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

When the future feels overwhelming, remember this: God is already there. He knows every day ahead of you and gives you enough grace for today.

There are times when tomorrow simply feels overwhelming. You don't know how you're going to get through the week. Your thoughts keep racing: *What if I fail? What if I don't have enough money? What if things don't work out?*

But Psalm 139 brings a quiet assurance: God is already in tomorrow. He held your life in His hands before you were even born. There isn't a single day, test, conversation or challenge that catches Him by surprise.

"Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

PSALM 139:16

GOD IS PRESENT IN EVERY DAY

This psalm reminds us that we don't have to control our own future because God is already there.

He doesn't only know our past, He also knows everything that lies ahead. When we're afraid of tomorrow, we're often really afraid of losing control. Yet that is exactly where God calls us to trust Him.
Jesus says in Matthew 6:34:

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

MATTHEW 6:34

It's an invitation not to live in tomorrow, but in today. The Lord gives us enough light for the next step each day. He doesn't promise that life will be easy, but He does promise to be with us.

It sounds simple, but it takes faith. Faith to believe that God really does know what He is doing. Faith to trust that He has already written your future in His book. And He has.

DAILY GRACE FOR DAILY FAITH

When you wake up in the morning feeling like you don't have the strength to face what's ahead, remember that you don't have to find that strength on your own. He will provide it.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

Faith is a daily choice. It's choosing to trust God today, even when you don't know what tomorrow holds.

When tomorrow feels too big, don't look ahead with fear and uncertainty. Instead, look up to God. He is already there, waiting for you with grace in His hands. †

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IS THE TIME

God offers us His grace, and we shouldn't put off responding to it. Discover why *today* is the right day to receive God's grace by faith.

BY REV RUAN STEYN

How often have you heard someone say, *"I've got plenty of time before I need to get serious about God"?* Not only young people, but plenty of adults too.

There are many reasons. Some fear what friends might think. Others believe they need to be older or more spiritually mature first. Some are waiting for life to settle down after studying, building a career or starting a family. Others feel they need more answers before committing themselves to Christ.

And many simply assume there will always be another opportunity. But Scripture points us in a very different direction.

DON'T WAIT TO TAKE YOUR FAITH SERIOUSLY

When we study God's Word, we see that the right time to respond to Him is never "someday". It's today. Paul writes to the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 6:1-2):

> "... we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain... I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation."

The grace Paul speaks about is the salvation God has accomplished through Jesus Christ.

Through Christ, God has shown us undeserved love and favour, making a way for sinners to be restored to him. But God's grace also calls for a response. Not passive agreement, but active faith, obedience and a life lived for him.

Paul warns believers not to receive God's grace "in vain". In other words, don't treat it as something unimportant. Don't fail to let it change the way you live.

WHEN WE KEEP PUTTING GOD OFF ...

Delaying your response to God's grace has real consequences. The longer we postpone something, the easier it becomes to keep postponing it.

We also become more vulnerable to temptation. Scripture reminds us that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of evil.

The enemy is always eager to distract us and pull us further away from Christ.

When we neglect God's grace, our witness also suffers. If Christ isn't shaping our lives, we lose opportunities to point others towards him. And the longer we wait, the less time we allow God to shape our character, deepen our faith and prepare us for a lifetime of walking with him.

RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE TODAY

The purpose of this passage isn't to frighten us, but to encourage us. Paul reminds the Corinthians of a wonderful truth:

> "Now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation."

God's gift of salvation isn't only a promise for the future. It's an invitation that can be accepted today.

The "right time" isn't someday. It's now. Today you can respond to God's grace by offering your life to him in faith and obedience (see Romans 12:1–2).

PRACTICAL WAYS TO RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE

1. Say "yes" to Christ today. Confess your sin, trust in Jesus and ask God to continue changing you through his holy Spirit.
2. Find mature Christian mentors. Ask someone with a strong faith to study the Bible with you, pray with you, and encourage you as you grow.
3. Become part of a Bible study or small group. Growing alongside other believers helps us mature in our faith.
4. Build healthy spiritual habits. Make time each day for prayer and Bible reading, and look for ways to serve in your church and God's kingdom.

DON'T WAIT

None of us knows what tomorrow will bring. That's why Scripture doesn't tell us to wait for the perfect moment. It calls us to respond while God is speaking.

Don't put it off. *Now* is the time to receive God's grace by faith.

To ignore that grace is to reject the greatest gift ever offered. But to receive it *today* is to begin a relationship with God that will last forever.



Editor's note

Life has a way of catching us off guard. One day everything feels under control, and the next we're facing uncertainty, exhaustion, or questions we never expected to ask.

If you've ever wondered what God has to say in moments like these, this issue is for you.

As you read through these pages, we hope you'll be reminded that God is already waiting in tomorrow, that He cares for you when you're too tired to carry on, that the Holy Spirit prays for you when words fail, and that even your hardest "Why, God?" questions don't push you beyond His love.

Most of all, we hope you'll come away with this assurance: our hope doesn't rest in having all the answers. It rests in the God who is faithful, who keeps His promises, and who is leading His people towards an eternal future with Him.

We pray these articles encourage you, strengthen your faith, and remind you that whatever you're facing today, you never face it alone.

About us

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LIVE IN THE CERTAINTY OF *YOUR ETERNAL FUTURE*

Death can feel like the end. But for those who belong to Christ, it isn't. Your life has a destination, and your future is secure in Him.

ADAPTED FROM A SERMON BY REV ATTIE BOGAARDS

We often think life simply unfolds on its own, that things happen as they happen. But the Bible paints a very different picture. God is working out a plan, and that plan begins not with us, but with His grace.

From the very beginning, God established a covenant with His people, a covenant of grace. It isn't something we earn or choose for ourselves. It begins with God.

Think about Abraham. He wasn't searching for the Lord. He worshipped other gods. Yet God called him, led him, and entered into a covenant with him. Not because Abraham deserved it, but because God is gracious.

The same is true for us. The reason we can belong to God's family today is not because of anything we have done. It is because of one person: Jesus Christ. Through Him we become God's children. Through Him we receive the gift of eternal life.

This life is not the end

Even though we belong to God's covenant of grace, life in this world is still broken. One day it comes to an end.

God told Abraham:

> ***"You will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age."***
>
> GENESIS 15:15

At first, that may sound like a strange promise. God was telling Abraham that he would die. Yet it was also a promise of peace. Abraham belonged to God.

We see the same hope in God's words to Daniel:

> ***"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."***
>
> DANIEL 12:13

These words remind us that death is not outside God's plan. It is not an accident or something beyond His control. Even the end of our earthly lives rests safely in His hands.



For many people, the thought of death brings fear. But for those who belong to Christ, it brings a different perspective. It brings peace.

The moment we depart

What happens when a believer dies? The Bible gives us a glimpse through the life of Stephen. Filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, he was being stoned when he prayed:

> ***"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."***
>
> ACTS 7:59

His body remained on earth, but his spirit went to be with Christ.

There is mystery here. We will never fully understand everything this side of eternity. But Scripture makes these truths clear:

- Our bodies die and return to the dust.
- Our souls go to be with the Lord.
- Jesus Himself receives His people.

WHY IS THIS POSSIBLE?

Because Jesus opened the way. He died on the cross for our sins. He bore God's judgment in our place. And He rose again. Because He lives, death is no longer the end. It is the doorway into God's presence.

You are not heading into the unknown

Many people have only vague ideas about what happens after death. The Bible gives us something much firmer than uncertainty. Jesus said:

> ***"My Father's house has many rooms ... I am going there to prepare a place for you."***
>
> JOHN 14:2

We are not travelling towards an unknown destination. We are travelling towards a home that Christ Himself has prepared.

The apostle Peter describes it like this: "... an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade" (1 Peter 1:4).

For us this means that our inheritance:

- will never end;
- will never be spoiled;
- will never fade away.

And one day, when Christ returns, everything will be made completely new. Our bodies will be raised, and we will share fully in His glory.

A future without tears

The Bible also gives us a glimpse of heaven:

> ***"Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst ... For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd ... And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."***
>
> REVELATION 7:16-17

It is difficult to imagine, but we know this much: life with God will be perfect.

There will be no more pain. No more sorrow. No more sin.

This is the future God has prepared for His children.

Live with eternal hope today

These promises are not only for some distant future. They shape how we live today. *Because* Jesus lives:

- your life is not an accident;
- your death is not the end;
- your future is secure.

That changes the way we face each day.

We do not have to cling desperately to this life as though it is all there is. We can face suffering with hope. We can live with peace, knowing that God's plan does not end here.

One day, every one of us will leave this world. That is a certainty.

But for everyone who belongs to Christ, it is not something to fear. It is a homecoming.

The Lord Jesus Himself will welcome you. And because of that, you can live today with peace in your heart, hope for the future, and confidence in God's perfect plan.

When you don't know what to pray



When a crisis leaves you speechless, you don't need to find the right words. Romans 8 reminds us that the Holy Spirit prays for us.

BY REV ALISTAIR VAN HEERDEN

There are moments in every Christian's life when a crisis leaves you completely overwhelmed.

You know you're hurting. You feel the weight of it deep inside. But when you try to pray, the words simply won't come. Your mind fills with questions. What should I say? Where do I begin? Should I pray for healing, for strength, for patience, or for God to change my circumstances? And then... silence.

When prayer doesn't come

Romans 8:26–27 speaks directly into moments like these. Paul doesn't say that Christians always know exactly how to pray. In fact, he says the opposite.

"... the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

ROMANS 8:26–27

Not knowing what to pray isn't a sign of weak faith. It's part of living in a broken world. But that's not where the story ends.

The Holy Spirit doesn't leave us alone in our silence. He meets us in our weakness and intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he does so perfectly according to God's will.

PRAYER ISN'T A PERFORMANCE. IT'S A RELATIONSHIP.

GOD DOESN'T ONLY HEAR POLISHED PRAYERS

Faith during a crisis doesn't mean suddenly having all the answers. It means running to your heavenly Father precisely because you don't have them.

Through Christ, we have access to God. And when our own prayers feel weak and inadequate, the Holy Spirit carries them to the Father. That means something incredibly comforting.

God doesn't hear you because you've found the perfect words. He hears you because you belong to Christ.

Prayer isn't a performance. It's a relationship. Even when your prayer is nothing more than a sigh, it is still a real prayer before God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT CARRIES YOUR PRAYERS

Romans 8 gives us a beautiful promise: Even when your prayer is little more than a cry from the heart, the Holy Spirit takes it before the Father. And he presents it perfectly, in complete harmony with God's will and God's love.

This is especially comforting because, in the middle of a crisis, our own desires are often confused. We naturally want the pain to end. It's not wrong to ask God for relief.

We long for quick answers, and God invites us to bring every burden honestly before him. But we don't always know what will ultimately be for our good. The Holy Spirit does. He understands our deepest needs even better than we do.

So you never have to think, My prayers are too weak for God to hear. Your weakness is met by the strength of the Holy Spirit, and your confused heart is understood by the Father who knows you completely.

When your words run out

Even when you have no words, you don't have to stop praying. Sometimes you simply need to pray differently.

1. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Your prayers don't have to be long or eloquent. Sometimes they're as simple as:

- → "Lord, help me."
- → "Lord, I don't know what to say."
- → "Lord, please stay close."

Those aren't weak prayers. They are honest.

2. PRAY THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

Jesus gave his disciples a model for prayer: "Our Father in heaven..." Matthew 6:9–13. When you don't know where to begin, begin there. Pray it slowly. Let each phrase become your own prayer.

3. PRAY THE PSALMS

The Psalms are full of prayers for people who have run out of words. When you can't find your own, borrow theirs.

- → Psalm 13 when you're discouraged.
- → Psalm 42 when your soul longs for God.
- → Psalm 86 when you need God's mercy.

God has already given us these prayers for days just like these.

THE HOLY SPIRIT PRAYS FOR YOU

Faith holds on to God even when we no longer have the strength to hold on ourselves. Think of it like this:

- → Faith doesn't say, "I understand everything." It says, "My Father knows."
- → Faith doesn't say, "I know how to pray." It says, "The Holy Spirit helps me in my weakness."
- → Faith doesn't say, "I can already see the outcome." It says, "Christ has redeemed me, the Father holds me, and the Spirit is praying for me."

That's why Romans 8:26–27 is such a steady anchor for every believer.

When you don't know what to pray, the Holy Spirit is already praying for you. He carries your prayers safely to the Father. And even when your words come to an end, God's grace never does. ✝

WHEN YOU ASK, "Why, God?"

If you've ever wondered why God is allowing your suffering, you're not alone. Even Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Psalm 22 shows us that God is not afraid of our questions.

BY REV DANIËL MYBURGH

There are moments in life when almost every Christian asks the same question: "Why, Lord?" Why am I struggling? Why haven't You answered my prayers? Sometimes we feel guilty asking these questions. We know God is sovereign, so we wonder whether it's wrong to question Him. But when we open the Bible, we discover that many of God's people asked exactly the same questions.

GOD IS NOT AFRAID OF YOUR QUESTIONS

One of the clearest examples is Psalm 22. David doesn't pretend everything is fine. He pours out his heart to God with complete honesty: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1). David remembers how God rescued His people in the past. Yet he doesn't feel rescued. He feels abandoned, mocked and alone.

Psalm 22 reminds us that God welcomes honest prayers. He already knows what's in our hearts, and He invites us to bring even our deepest questions to Him.

WHEN THERE ARE NO ANSWERS

We still ask the same questions today. Why did I lose my job? Why did someone I love die? Why hasn't God changed my situation?

Often, we don't receive the answers we're looking for. Some questions remain unanswered for years. Others may only be answered when we are with the Lord.

The Bible does not promise that we will understand everything God is doing. But it does give us something we can hold on to: God Himself.

JESUS ASKED THE SAME QUESTION

Psalm 22 is more than David's story. It points us directly to Jesus.

As Jesus hung on the cross, He cried out the opening words of this psalm: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46)

Many details from Psalm 22 are fulfilled at the cross: Jesus was mocked, crucified, and His clothes were divided by lot.

What David experienced in part, Jesus experienced completely.

THE ANSWER WE CAN ALWAYS TRUST

There is one question the cross answers with complete certainty: Has God abandoned me? For everyone who belongs to Christ, the answer is no.

Jesus was forsaken so that you never have to be. Because of His death and resurrection, you can know that God sees you, loves you and holds you, even when life makes no sense.

Your circumstances may remain difficult. Your questions may remain unanswered. You may never know why God allowed a particular thing to happen. But you can know that God is with you.

God's presence does not depend on whether you understand His plans. Even when you don't know why, you can still know that you are not alone.

And sometimes that is the faith we are called to hold on to: not knowing why, but knowing God. ✝



WHEN YOU'RE TOO TIRED TO KEEP GOING

There are seasons when you're not just discouraged, you're completely worn out. Not only emotionally, but physically too. Even simple tasks may feel overwhelming. Your mind feels foggy. You struggle to pray. Sometimes you can't even explain why you feel so drained.

When Elijah was exhausted and overwhelmed, God gave him food, rest and renewed strength. In 1 Kings 19 we see that God cares for our physical needs as well as our spiritual ones.

EVEN GOD'S STRONGEST SERVANTS GROW WEARY

In 1 Kings 19, we find Elijah in exactly that place. This is the same prophet who had just witnessed God's power on Mount Carmel. Yet now he's afraid, exhausted and ready to give up.

Then something remarkable happens. Before God speaks to Elijah about his mission, he sends an angel. Elijah finds bread and water beside him. He eats, drinks and goes back to sleep. And then the angel returns: "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you" (1 Kings 19:7).

GOD BEGINS WITH CARE, NOT PRESSURE

God doesn't begin by saying, "Pull yourself together" or "Try harder." Instead, he provides food, water and rest. Only then does he prepare Elijah for what lies ahead.

That tells us something important about God: He cares for the whole person, not only our spiritual lives but also our bodies, our emotions and our physical strength.

WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE ELIJAH

Many Christians feel guilty when they become exhausted. We can easily assume that mature faith should always feel strong. But even God's faithful servants can reach the end of their strength.

You don't always have to understand why you're struggling. You don't always have to feel strong or find the right words to pray. God meets us not only in our strongest moments, but also in our weakest ones.

GOD RESTORES YOU BEFORE HE SENDS YOU

Only after Elijah had eaten, rested and regained his strength did God speak to him again about his calling. This matters: Sometimes the best thing you can do is to simply rest.

WHEN YOU FEEL YOU HAVE NOTHING LEFT

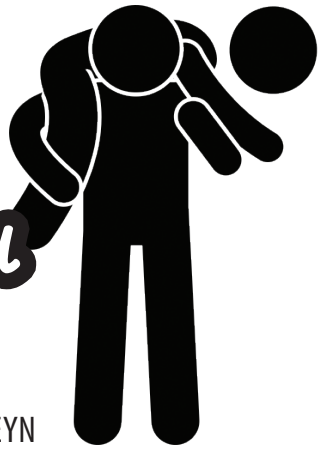
If that's where you are today, remember:

- → You don't have to get your life together before coming to God.
- → You don't have to regain your strength before you can pray.
- → You don't have to have all the answers before God begins caring for you.

God is not only the God of your strong days. He is also the God of your weary ones. He sees your exhaustion, understands your burden and meets you there with His care.

1 Kings 19 reminds us that the God who calls us is also the God who carries us. ✝

SOMETIMES *faith* MEANS LETTING OTHERS *carry you*



The paralysed man's friends carried him to Jesus. Sometimes faith isn't about being strong, it's about letting others carry you.

BY REV RUAN STEYN

We live in a culture that celebrates self-made people. We're taught to admire those who solve their own problems, stand on their own two feet, and face life's storms without asking for help. But life doesn't always work that way.

There are seasons when we simply can't keep going on our own. Seasons of grief, illness, depression, disappointment, or spiritual struggle that can leave us feeling drained.

It is in moments like these that the gospel reminds us of a beautiful truth: we were never meant to walk to Jesus alone. Sometimes we need to be carried. As Paul reminds us, we are called to "carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

WE'RE NOT MEANT TO FOLLOW JESUS ALONE

In Mark 2:1-12 we read one of the most moving stories of friendship and faith in the New Testament.

A paralysed man is brought to Jesus by four friends. When they arrive, the house is packed. The crowd blocks every entrance.

Most people would have given up and gone home. Not these friends. They climb onto the roof, make an opening, and lower the man down until he is lying right in front of Jesus.

Then we read these remarkable words:

> "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven.""
>
> MARK 2:5

Notice what Jesus sees. He sees the faith of the friends.

There are times when your own faith feels weak. When your prayers dry up. When your heart is too heavy and your eyes too full of tears to see clearly. In those moments, the faith of your brothers and sisters can carry you. Their prayers become your strength. Their hope holds you up when you feel like giving up.

HAVING THE COURAGE TO ACCEPT HELP

Perhaps the hardest part of this story is not being one of the friends carrying the mat. It is being the person lying on it.

Asking for help requires humility. It means putting aside our pride and saying, "I can't do this on my own." That kind of honesty is uncomfortable because it allows others to see our weakness. And yet, this is often where healing begins.

As long as we pretend we are managing, we remain outside the house where Jesus is at work. But when we allow ourselves to be carried the body of Christ can become what it was always meant to be: people who carry one another's burdens.

REAL FRIENDS DO MORE THAN SYMPATHISE

There is a world of difference between feeling sorry for someone and helping them. The world is full of people who offer sympathy. The church is called to something much deeper.

The friends in Mark 2 didn't simply sit beside the paralysed man and tell him how sorry they felt. They lifted his weight onto their own shoulders.

But more important: Their goal wasn't simply to improve the man's circumstances. Their goal was to bring him to Jesus.

If we only help one another survive emotionally or financially, we've missed the heart of our calling. Our greatest privilege is helping one another draw closer to Christ.

JESUS GIVES MORE THAN WE EXPECT

When the man finally lies before Jesus, something unexpected happens. Jesus doesn't heal him immediately. Instead, He says: "Son, your sins are forgiven," (Mark 2:5).

Jesus knew that the man's deepest need was not physical healing, but reconciliation with God. Only afterwards did He restore the man's body. In doing so, Jesus showed that He came to make the whole person new.

When others carry us to Jesus, we often receive far more than we expected. We may come looking for strength for today, but Christ gives us something even greater: forgiveness, peace with God, and the hope of eternal life.

True friends don't only stand beside us in our physical struggles. They help lead us to the feet of Jesus.

WHO CARRIES YOU WHEN YOU CAN'T GO ON?

Life moves through different seasons. Sometimes you are strong. Your faith is vibrant, and you have the strength to support others. When that is true, look around you. Who is lying on a mat today? Who needs someone to carry their burden? Who needs help getting closer to Jesus?

Perhaps today you are the one who feels exhausted. Perhaps you're the one who feels unable to take another step. If that's you, don't isolate yourself. Allow the church to be what God designed it to be.

Sometimes faith simply means lying still while those who love you carry you to Jesus. Why is that enough? Because Jesus is not merely a good teacher or a compassionate man. He is the Son of God, the One who forgives sins, restores broken lives, and reconciles us to the Father.

There will be seasons when you are the one carrying others. There will also be seasons when you are the one being carried. Don't be ashamed of those seasons.

Sometimes faith isn't about finding the strength to keep going on your own.

Sometimes faith is trusting others to carry you to Jesus. And when they do, you discover that the One they are carrying you to has been waiting for you all along. ✝

Children's Corner

WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN



JESUS CALMS THE STORM

It was evening, and Jesus and His disciples were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had spent the day teaching people, and now He was tired. He lay down in the boat and went to sleep.

Then a big storm came.

The wind blew hard, and waves began crashing over the boat.

The disciples were afraid. Some of them were experienced fishermen, so they knew how dangerous a storm could be.

But where was Jesus?

He was still asleep!

The disciples woke Him and asked, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" They were scared, and they didn't understand why Jesus seemed so calm.

Jesus got up and spoke to the wind and the waves. He said, "Quiet! Be still!" And suddenly, the wind stopped. The water became calm. Then Jesus asked His disciples why they were so afraid and whether they still had no faith. The disciples were amazed. Even the wind and the waves obeyed Him!

ARE YOU FEELING WORRIED?

Sometimes we can feel like the disciples. We may not be in a boat during a storm, but we can still have things that make us worried or afraid. Maybe you are worried about a test, a friendship, something happening at home, or something you don't understand.

The disciples didn't know what was going to happen next. But Jesus was in the boat with them. And Jesus is with us too. We don't always know what tomorrow will bring. But we can trust God when we are afraid because He is with us and He cares for us.

AFTER YOU READ ABOUT JESUS CALMING THE STORM (MARK 4:35–41), ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW:

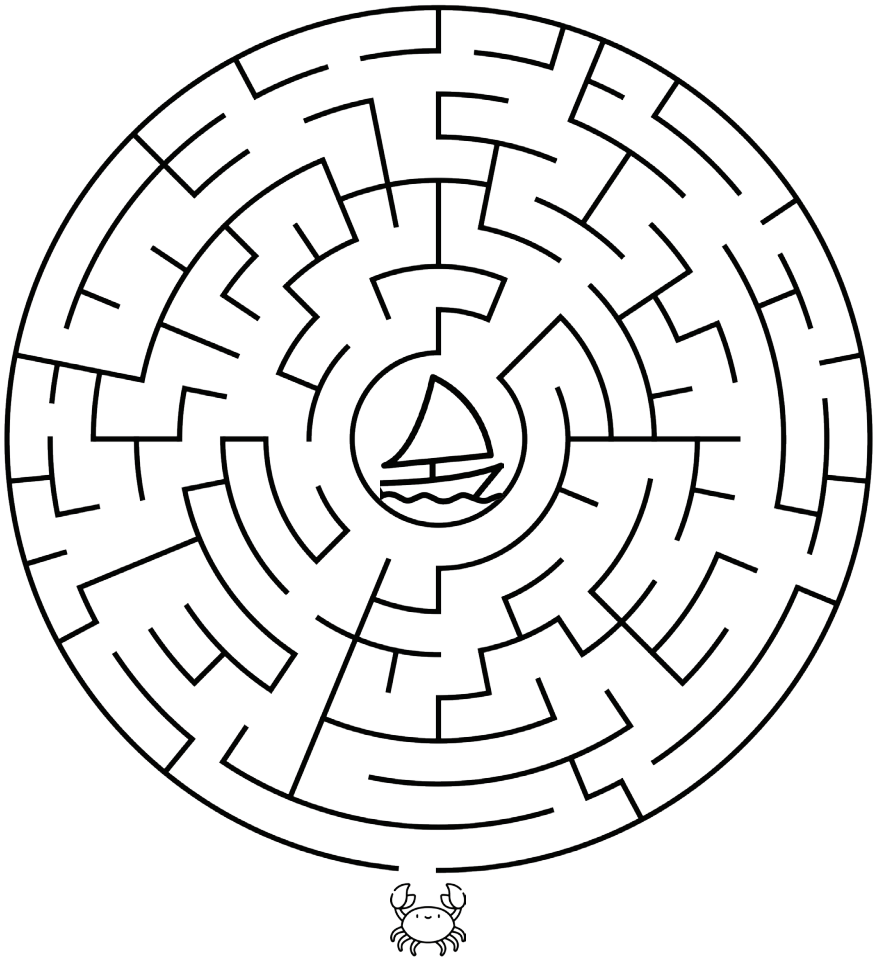
1. What happened while Jesus and the disciples were in the boat?
2. What was Jesus doing during the storm?
3. How did the disciples react when the storm became worse?
4. What did Jesus say to the storm?
5. What happened when Jesus spoke?
6. How did the disciples feel after the storm was over?
7. What can we do when we feel worried or afraid?
8. Why can we trust Jesus, when we don't know what will happen?

Memory verse

PSALM 56:3

"When I am afraid,
I put my trust in you."

Can you help the disciples?





God does everything in His perfect time

Life moves through seasons of joy and sorrow, beginnings and endings. Ecclesiastes reminds us that time belongs to God, and that our lives have meaning because He is working out His purpose.

BY REV. JOHAN NEL

When we think about time, we are thinking about something God created. He made day and night and the seasons, and He gives each of us time in which to live.

Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that there is "a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). A time to be born and a time to die. A time to weep and a time to laugh. A time for war and a time for peace.

These things come and go time and again. The writer of Ecclesiastes describes life "under the sun", life as we experience it here on earth. If we look only at this earthly cycle, life can seem pointless. Everything changes, generations come and go, and nothing lasts. But Scripture gives us a bigger picture.

GOD IS IN CONTROL OF TIME

God created time, and He has given each thing its appointed time. This is what gives our lives meaning. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says: "He has made everything beautiful in its time."

Our lives may not always make sense to us, but they are never outside God's care or purpose. Most importantly, God entered our history through Jesus Christ. At the right time, He sent His Son into the world. Jesus became human, took our sin upon Himself, died in our place and rose again. Through Christ, we receive forgiveness, new life and the hope of eternity. We are not simply people passing through time. In Christ, we are redeemed people.

LIVE AS A REDEEMED PERSON

God calls us to live this new life faithfully, but that does not mean life will always be easy. We still face suffering, temptation, discouragement and doubt. But God has not left us to face these things alone. He has given us the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Helper. The Spirit reminds us that we belong to Christ and gives us strength to live as redeemed people.

LIVE WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW

Ecclesiastes 3:11 also says that God has "set eternity in the human heart". We must live with eternity in mind. Scripture reminds us that our present troubles are producing "an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

When we are anxious, we can bring everything to God in prayer. When we struggle with sin, our hope is in Jesus Christ. And when earthly things become too important Colossians 3:1 says to set our hearts on things above.

GOD IS LEADING US TOWARDS ETERNITY

One day – at God's appointed time – we will meet Jesus. Until then, we must live as redeemed people, trusting God through every season of life. We may not understand why things happen when they do, but we can trust the God who created time and holds our lives in His hands. The most important thing is to live close to Jesus. With Him there is true life, both now and for eternity. ✝

SEEK God's eternal kingdom

God's kingdom is here, and one day it will come in all its fullness. What does it mean to seek God's kingdom today while looking forward to eternity?

BY REV HANNES LEE

Jesus gives His followers a clear instruction in Matthew 6:33:

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

But what does it mean to seek God's kingdom? God's kingdom is wherever He reigns as King. He is the Creator of heaven and earth, and nothing is outside His authority. God has always been, and always will be, King.

When humanity rebelled against God, sin entered the world. Instead of living under God's rule, people chose to live for themselves. Yet God did not abandon His creation. From the beginning, He promised to restore what had been broken, and His plan of salvation ultimately led to Jesus Christ. Through Christ's death and resurrection, the way was opened for sinners to belong to God's kingdom. **THIS IS NOT SOMETHING WE EARN: IT IS GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM?

When we pray, "Your kingdom come," we are asking God to rule in our hearts through His Word and Spirit. We are asking Him to shape our lives so that we willingly submit to Him as our King.

Seeking God's kingdom means making His kingdom our highest priority. We don't simply pray for His kingdom to come. We live as people who already belong to it.

That means allowing God's Word to shape our decisions, relationships and daily lives. Kingdom people love God, obey His Word, serve others, forgive and trust their heavenly Father.

We cannot live this way through our own strength. The Holy Spirit reminds us who we are in Christ and gives us the desire and strength to live for our King.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE KINGDOM

God's kingdom has not yet come in its fullness. We still live in a broken world marked by suffering, temptation and sin. But this is not how the story ends.

When we pray, "Your kingdom come," we are also looking forward to the day when Christ returns.

One day Jesus will return as King over all creation. Evil will be defeated, and God's people will live in His presence forever, free from sin, pain and death. That is the future every believer can look forward to.

Until that day, Jesus calls us to keep our eyes fixed on His kingdom. **THE KINGDOM WE SEEK TODAY IS THE KINGDOM WE WILL ONE DAY ENJOY FOREVER.** ✝