



Gracious and generous God, we are grateful for the gift of life and for the chance to explore the beauty and the wonder of your marvelous creation. When the waters of life are calm and your Spirit fills our sails, our boat glides across the placid surface sending out gentle ripples that touch the hulls of fellow sailors. We soak in the warmth of the sun, we find joy in the festive sails and the acrobatic seagulls, and we marvel at the shards of light that sparkle as we voyage across the undulating field of diamonds.

But when the peaceful skies suddenly turn menacing, and viscous winds kick up angry waves that threaten to overwhelm us, we shudder. We call out to you through the turbulence and plead with you to still the storm.

Why is it Lord, that when the sea turns choppy, we imagine you asleep and unconcerned about our peril? Why is it that when rough waves batter us, we believe you have either stirred up the danger or do not fully recognize our plight?

Make us mindful that you have not predetermined our voyage, but have given us freedom to chart our own course. Such freedom makes our lives vibrant and exciting, but it also harbors risk. We confess there are times when we fumble the freedom you place in our hands. We make unwise decisions and steer head-on into hazardous waters. Sometimes ignorance lands us in a raging storm, other times foolishness lures us into predictable hazards. However, there are also times when we do our utmost to skirt perilous seas, yet gales seem to hunt us down and hurricane-force winds engulf us.

Help us to know, comforting God, that you are always in the boat with us and attentive to our needs. Although we may be filled with fear, although our confidence may be shaken, you can help us muster whatever courage we need to face each raging storm.

Help us to know, O God, that you are always at our side, and in you we can find the determination to withstand the ferocity of the chaotic forces that threaten to destroy us. Although we may think the strain will break us, you can stiffen our resolve not to be swept away by any violent squall.

Help us to know, faithful God, that you will never leave us, and we can discover in you wisdom for handling the storms of life. You teach us to bind our vessel together with others, knowing that it is better to face adversity united, than to attempt to face the turmoil alone.

Gracious God, since the death of our beloved pastor, Chad Miller, we have found ourselves assaulted by dangerous winds. Like small boats caught in a perfect storm, our lives have been battered and tossed. We yearn for you to calm the storm that rages within and guide us to a place of tranquility and peace. Prompt us to steer away from places of despair that threaten to drag us under and guide us to more gentle waters and the solace of Scripture. Grant us memories of glorious days when Chad lifted our sails and challenged us to set our course for exciting destinations. May these happy memories buoy us when we feel we are sinking. And finally God, help us to emerge from this storm, more confident about our own final voyage. Assure us that Chad and his brother, Chris, have sailed across the great divide and arrived in your port that is their true home.

Prayers: Stormy seas 6.21.09