



THE UNITED CHURCH
IN JAMAICA AND THE
CAYMAN ISLANDS

Congregational
Disciples of Christ
Presbyterian

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OUR VISION: "Touching
Lives, Nurturing Disciples,
Seeking Transformation
through Christ"

SYNODICAL THEME:
"Renewal and Transfor-
mation: Discipleship for
Life"

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PRAY FOR:



Jamaica and Cayman, which have seen 473 and 78 confirmed cases, respectively, of the **coronavirus**; and against the further spread of the disease.

The local and world economies which are threatened by the spread of the coronavirus.

UCJCI UPDATE

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN JAMAICA AND THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

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Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Navigating the Storms of Life

The following is the reflection offered by Rev. Joel Downer, Minister of North Street United Church, on the UCJCI's United in Faith Programme on Radio Jamaica 94 FM on Sunday, May 3, 2020.

“In our text this morning, we learn much about the storms of life. We learn that: a) There will be storms b) Reaction is everything c) Realization is key.

Matthew 8:23-27 reads, “Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marvelled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

No matter what the storm may be, Jesus will always

be there to see us through it.

The first thing we need to recognize is... 1) **There Will Be Storms (vs. 23-24).**

This narrative begins with “Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.”

This goes to show that following Jesus does not make us immune to storms. They weren’t being disobedient,

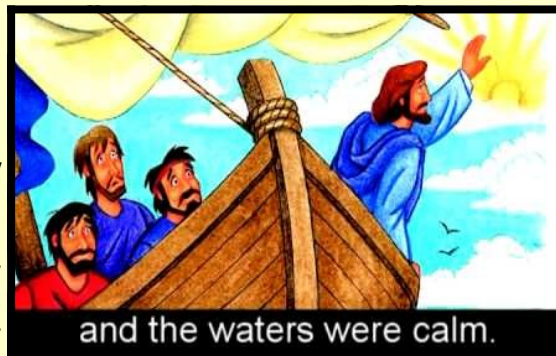
and preparedness do not make us immune to the storms. Preparation is good; experience is wonderful; but storms will still come our way.

Another thing about storms is that they hit unexpectedly. Matthew tells us in **verse 24**, “And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves.”

Storms in life will hit us when we least expect them, and often when things seem to be going well. Moreover, we learn that storms in life can be “fierce.” It was severe enough that these experienced fishermen where terrified. Indeed, storms of life will shake us to our core. They will challenge us to the limit. However, they are inevitable.

Another thing we learn about storms is that they are a part of life. You can’t avoid them. You can’t run from them. You can’t hide from them. So you might as well get used to them.

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back-sliding, or going astray. They were doing what they were supposed to do. Yet they still walked into a storm.

These were men who were accustomed to dealing with storms. These disciples, only four of whom have been named (Peter, Andrew, James, and John), had probably crossed the sea many times, being professional fishermen.

This shows that experience

CELEBRATIONS!



70:

Rev. Rohan Forrester

Rev. Dr. Leroy Walters

May 7

Rev. Dr. Dave Hazle

May 10

UCJCI HISTORY

The journey of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) began as far back as the 1880s, when efforts were made to bring about union between the United Presbyterian Church and Congregational Churches operating in Jamaica.

The first complete step in the process was made on December 1, 1965, when the Presbyterian Church in Jamaica and the Congregational Union of Jamaica became one church: *The United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman*.

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands was later formed, following a historic ceremony held on the grounds of Sabina Park in Kingston, Jamaica, on **December 13, 1992**. This marked the union of the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman.



Navigating the Storms of Life

(Continued from Page 1)

Storms will be sudden. They will come from out of nowhere. They will come when you least expect them. They will take you by surprise. At times, storms will be severe. They will shake you to your core. They will challenge your faith. They will test your resolve. They will check your character. However, they will not overwhelm you if you trust in God. God did not call you to abandon you in the wilderness. He will not leave or forsake you. He will always be there to help.

2) Reaction Is Everything (vs. 25-26)

There are two completely different reactions to this storm. The reaction of fear or of faith. In the midst of this violent storm, the disciples reacted in fear. Matthew tells us, *"Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!'"* This must have been a most powerful storm for these disciples to be afraid. They cried out, *"Lord, save us!"* The disciples woke Jesus up and pleaded with him to save them from certain death by drowning. They allowed their fear to consume them.

But on the other hand, *Jesus' reaction is very different*. Matthew tells us, *"Jesus was sleeping."* The ability to sleep during trouble was often a sign of faith in God. (Psalm 4:8 [NLT] reads, *"In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe."*) Furthermore, when Jesus woke up, He was more concerned about their lack of faith than He was the storm. He said in vs 6, *"Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!"*

True faith will enable us to trust in God's care even when the circumstances do not look promising. Just as Jesus demands that we express our love for God by trusting Him for material provision, He demands that we trust Him for safety. After dealing with their weak faith, He deals with the storm. Matthew tells us, *"Then He got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly all was calm."*

So do you have faith or fear? You see, faith enables us to move through the storms, carrying our calm with us. So 1 Peter 4:12-13 (NLT) encourages us, *"Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing His glory when it is revealed to all the world."*

Reacting by fear will only bring us more trouble. a) It will not lessen the storm. b) It will not increase our faith. c) It will not bring us closer to God. d) It will not solve anything. **However, reacting by faith will cause the storm to work in our favor.** a) It will cause our faith to be strengthened. b) It will cause our character to grow. c) It will cause others to grow. d) It will enable us to deal with the storm. James 1:2-4 (NLT) says, *"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing."*

Finally, **3) Realization Is Key**. In vs. 27, Matthew tells us, *"The disciples were amazed."* These men had been called by Jesus, and left everything to follow Him. They had seen Him heal lepers. They had seen Him feed a multitude. They had seen Him raise the dead. Yet they still had not truly come to grips with His true identity. They asked themselves, *"Who is this man? Even the winds and waves obey Him!"* If the disciples thought the boat might sink with Jesus aboard, it was because they did not understand Jesus' identity. His power over the sea, however, forces them to grapple afresh with that question.

We need to ask ourselves, in the midst of our storm, *"do we really believe that Jesus is who He claims to be?"* If we truly believe that He is the Son of the Living God, *why do we fear when storms come our way?* If we truly believe that He is the Great I AM, *why do we doubt and overreact when storms come against us?* If we truly believe that Jesus is in control, *why do we worry when the storms of life come crashing in on us?*

Conclusion: 1. What do we know about storms in life? a. They will happen b. Reaction is everything. c. Realization of Jesus' identity is the key. **2. I don't know what storm you're facing today, however, this is what I know:** a. Jesus is bigger than your storm. b. Jesus will never allow your storm to destroy you. c. Jesus gives you the faith to endure the storm. d. Jesus gives you the authority to overcome your storm. **3. What are you going to do in the midst of the storm?**

Send comments and news about your congregation to: ucjciupdate@gmail.com

LEADERSHIP CORNER

Leadershift from Career to Calling (PART 3)

Our calling is the gift we give to the world while we are still alive. Our legacy is our gift to the world after we die.

We discussed in the previous two (2) weeks some characteristics of a calling. Here we recap them and share more.

Your calling matches who you are. Your calling taps into your passion. Your calling is important to you, but it's not about you. Your calling is bigger than you. Your calling changes your perspective.

YOUR CALLING GIVES YOU PURPOSE. There is a sense of purpose that comes with a calling. Take a look at the benefits of the strong sense of purpose that accompanies calling:

*Purpose will motivate you—***Passion.**

*Purpose will keep your priorities straight—***Discipline.**

*Purpose will develop your potential—***Stretch.**

*Purpose will give you power to live in the present—***Awareness.**

*Purpose will help you elevate your progress—***Growth.**

*Purpose will direct your habits—***Consistency.**

*Purpose will perpetuate an intentional life-style—***Significance.**

Parker Palmer said, "Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling who I am."

YOUR CALLING BRINGS FULFILLMENT. Nothing in life is as rewarding as fulfilling your calling—*nothing*. Wealth, fame, achievement, recognition: all of them fall short.

I've observed and known many who live without a calling. As the years pass, their deepest needs and desires go unexplored. They are busy, but they develop a vague anxiety that their life has not achieved its ultimate meaning and significance. They live with a rest-

lessness because they are not firmly attached to the moral purposes that give life its worth. Because they don't follow a calling, they lack the internal compass to make unshakable commitments. They never develop the inner consistency that they long for. Every day they come up short in obtaining the fulfilment they crave, and it frustrates them.

Calling changes everything. It's the missing piece in the puzzle. The plot in a good story. The musical note that completes the piece. When you engage in your calling, that sense that you experience is, "I was born for this!"

FINDING YOUR CALLING.

So, what is your calling? Have you already discovered it? Or do you need some help finding your way? Fred Swaniker said, "Every now and then, we come to a fork in the road that requires us to either stay on our current path, or change course and do something radically different."

If you have not already found your calling, then you are at the fork in the road. I hope you will take the bold way, the radically different path that represents your calling. It may be frightening. It may be uncomfortable. It may feel uncertain. But I can assure you, if you find your calling, you will never regret the difficult journey taken to pursue it, because there's nothing else like it.

Here are three questions to ask to help you understand yourself and find the pathway for your life.

What do I sing about? What fills my heart?

What do I cry about? What breaks my heart?

What do I dream about? What lifts my heart?

You might be in a season of your life where you know your calling and

you're working out what to do with it. If that describes you, then I want to give you some advice to help you to maximize your calling. And if this does not yet describe you, then mark these words for when you do enter your calling season.

Integrate a Daily Focus with a Long-Term Perspective. I think of this as using both the clock and the compass. The *clock* helps me to stay on track with what I'm doing today. It encourages me to invest in my daily activities and to keep appointments. The *compass* helps me to stay on track with my destiny. It allows me to focus on the vision. It helps me know where I'm going. I maintain my overall values. I keep the vision before me. It allows me to fulfil the mission of my calling.

Set a Clear Path in a Worthwhile Direction. *When you die, if people were to describe your life in a single sentence, what would you want it to be?* The direction of your life and the journey you fulfil will write that sentence. You cannot choose where your life will end up. But you can determine the direction you take today.

Ask Others to Join With You and Your Calling. Because every person's true calling is bigger than the one who has been called, it always requires the aid of others to fulfil it. People who are successful often leave an inheritance for others. People who fulfil a calling leave a legacy in others.

I hope you will do whatever you can to search for your calling, and then work with everything you have to fulfil it.

Source: "Leadershift" by John C. Maxwell

Career to Calling

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS FEATURE

UCJCI'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Individual Prayer:
Every Wednesday
from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

(2 Timothy 1:7)

POINTS FOR PRAYER

- * A stop to the spread of the disease.
- * Those who are infected with the disease.
- * Strength, comfort and peace for the loved ones of persons who have died from the disease.
- * For the children who are confused and fearful during this time.
- * That all persons will take this matter seriously, and responsibly take the necessary precautions.
- * Our healthcare systems and workers who are on the frontlines.
- * All elderly persons and those with co-morbidities.
- * The needy and those who have lost, or will lose, their jobs.
- * Our local and world economies.



FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US
A SPIRIT OF FEAR,
BUT OF POWER
& OF LOVE
AND OF A SOUND MIND.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

HOW
ARE
YOU?



Quarantine can lead to loneliness – especially for older people or people who live alone.

Loneliness can contribute to poor physical and mental wellbeing. Connect with other people, through social media, telephone, and online communities, and maintain #MentalHealth.

#COVID19 #coronavirus

