

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY'S WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
February 7 in the year of our Lord 2018 - #727

On a snowy, icy, rainy, dreary day ... be careful out there!

Panic!

It was one of those bitter cold days recently. The high for the day didn't make it above 20 degrees. And there was a harsh, bitter breeze, and a gray sky that made it feel even colder. I stepped out of the front doors of our church to get the mail; carefully leaving the door ajar behind me ... no coat ... it's just a few steps from the door to the mailbox. But as I was about half way to the mailbox a gust of cold wind blew and I heard the church door slam shut behind me. Immediately I knew ... I was locked outside!

Suddenly I felt even colder! And a wave of panic swept thru me. When this has happened a few times in the past I had a little secret up my pastoral sleeve. The old (ancient) windows into Shepherd's Hall (the old fellowship room) are just at ground level and were "locked" by a stick that sat in the window between the upper & lower sash. A little jiggling of the window and the "lock" stick would fall out and I could open the window and climb right in. Pretty tricky! Got me out of a few jams!

But now ... here I stood ... jacketless ... in the bitter cold ... with the church locked tight with all its brand new securely locked windows! I began to calculate my options. I could try to walk to the Julius' ... but figured I would die before I could walk that far. I could see the *York Dispatch* headlines,

LOCAL PASTOR FOUND FROZEN TO DEATH ALONG BERMUDIAN CHURCH ROAD ... POLICE SUSPECT FOUL PLAY

How long would it be until Cathy got worried about me and sent someone? They would find the Pastor Popsicle and wonder what happened. In a last ditch effort to save my life I could find a concrete block and smash one of the brand new windows. Hmm, Stewards probably wouldn't like that. I could flag down a passing car. Oh yeah, the bridge is still out just past the church and very few cars pass by these days.

All these thoughts raced thru my mind in a few brief seconds. I knew I was going to die!!! Well it's been a good life.

Then I remembered. Oh yeah. Butch Warren had reminded me recently about the Firemen's Lockbox on The Gathering Place. The little armored box has a key pad with a code that you punch in. It pops open and there is a master key to all the doors in the church. My frozen fingers punched in the code and soon I was warming myself and letting my mind clear from my "near death" experience.

I've always been fascinated by the story of Jesus and the Disciples and the storm on the Sea of Galilee. You'll find the passage in Matthew 8:23-27. Jesus & His men have been busy in ministry. They have begun to see His power and abilities. They have experienced His incredible power for healing. While crossing the Sea a storm comes up. To be fair, it was a fierce storm. The text uses the Greek word "*seismos*" which means "shaking" or "earthquake." In English "seismology" is the study of earthquakes. This was not a little thing happening around their boat! Jesus is asleep. No doubt weary from a busy day of ministry. The frightened Disciples wake Him.

"Save us, Lord!" they said. "We are about to die!" Matthew 8:35 GNT

Jesus wakes up, a little angry with them for waking Him, and "rebukes" the storm and all becomes calm! He's amazed at their fear,

"Why are you afraid? You don't have enough faith." Matthew 8:26 NCV

And they are amazed at His power,

"Who is this man?" they asked. "Even the winds and waves obey him!" Matthew 8:27 NLT

We read the story and shake our heads at the foolish Disciples. They were right there with Jesus and yet so afraid. What fools!

But wait ... are we so different? We get ourselves all worried and panicked over things. A relationship tangle. A financial dilemma. A health crisis. Plans gone awry. A nation in crisis. A church problem. Real problems! Real issues! We become so sure this is it!!! *"Lord, we are about to die!"*

And yet all the while ... if you are a follower of Jesus ... the Lord has been right by your side. The dilemma hasn't surprised Him, and it doesn't worry Him. It may seem like He's sleeping ... and sometimes His silence is disconcerting. But the reality is that your Lord loves you, is totally in control, and has never left your side! You have nothing to panic about! You have nothing to be afraid of! You have nothing to worry about!

Are there some storms blowing in your life today? An "earthquake" shaking things up? Dear one, know with certainty that your Lord is never far away. He WILL help, comfort, guide, heal, and provide ... He really will! Don't panic ... trust!

Unfrozen! Pastor Larry <><