

THE CONTRARY WINDS

Matthew 14:22-33

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Matthew 14:22-33

*22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, **tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.** 25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 **But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"** 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 **And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.** 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."*



According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, the word **contrary** in relation to the word **wind** is from the Greek word - **ἐναντίος** (enantios — en-an-tee'-os) meaning opposing; not friendly; an enemy; to be against something or someone; can weaken; can destroy etc.

Mark, in rendering the version of **Matthew 14:24**, in **Mark 6:48** wrote that...**the wind was against them**. Paul, in giving the account of one his journeys stated in **Acts 27:4** that they had to...**sail under the shelter of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary**.

The word **wind** is from the Greek word - **πνοή** (pnoe — pno-ay') meaning a blast, like an explosion of the atmosphere; with power. It can be a storm with thunder and rain, hurricane etc.





Basically, contrary winds are storms, disturbing winds full of power, capable of causing anxiety, creating fear and destroying one. Contrary winds have never been friendly, they have always been at the opposing end.

However, contrary winds represent something else in our lives as Christians.

They mean circumstances, situations, conditions, which come into our lives against our desire, against our direction, against our progress, faith and hope.

They come to oppose us, not to befriend us. They have the power to frighten us, frustrate us and destroy our faith. They create for us an experience of confusion, darkness, and danger. They can lead us to physical death. They can lead us away from the direction of everlasting life to the direction of everlasting punishment in hell fire.

On 28 March 2022, an Abuja-Kaduna train was attacked in Katari, Kaduna State, Nigeria, by terrorists. A doctor identified as Megafu Chinelo, tweeted a cry for help on her personal Twitter handle that Monday night "I'm in the train, I have been shot. Please pray for me." Over 7 passengers died in that attack. *It was a tragic and horrific experience for the passengers in that train. It was a contrary wind in their lives.*

For those who have witnessed the death of their loved ones, the experience has never been friendly – it is usually an opposing one, causing us grief and pain and in some cases, make us to doubt God's ability to deliver us from contrary winds.

The contrary winds in our lives are of various kinds, coming in different ways - betrayal by friends, persecution by agents of darkness (spiritually and physically),

lying tongues that hurt us, job loss, business collapse, failed projects, failed exams, disappointments, worsening of a medical condition that had previously improved, accidents, attacks by cultists, robbers and terrorists, failed relationships, marriage collapse, sexual temptations, unmet needs, losing faith in God, falling away from the faith, lack of passion for the things of God, deriving pleasure in and giving approval for the evils of the society depression, addiction, etc.

Contrary winds (storms of life) are real, they are many and very much available around us, toward us and facing us. They can come to us suddenly and unexpectedly.

God's Word has given us limitless assurances and proofs, that by God's power, we can survive any contrary wind and still be able to continue with our Christian lives even after the contrary wind has passed or ended.

But there are things we must avoid, if we must enjoy those assurances and consolidate the benefits of such proofs.

TO FEEL GOD IS ABSENT FROM THE SCENE OF A CONTRARY WIND

In Matthew 14:22, we find a striking and frightening statement - *immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.*

Why will Jesus make the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side? Did he tricked them into facing the contrary wind or storm, so that their faith will shrink into fear?

Many have blamed God for not arriving at a scene of a sin or horrible situation, to forcefully prevent them from committing the sin or for failing to survive the horrible situation.

Many have blamed God for making Adam to be aware of the existence of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden, while still expecting him to restrain himself from eating of it. They expect God that would have either removed the tree

from the garden or make sure Adam was not aware of it.

Even, Adam blamed God for giving him Eve, who gave him of the tree (**Genesis 2:15-17; 3:11,12**).

Martha was not pleased that Jesus came after Lazarus had died - *Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died* (**John 11:21**).

Have you ever faced a situation, in which you strongly felt that God was completely absent from the location of that situation? Such a one could feel all alone in the entire world. Many have committed suicide, the moment they were swallowed up in such feeling. Many have sworn never to have anything to do with God, His Son and His church, the moment they were swallowed up in such feeling.

Let us know that Jesus did not trick the disciples. **John 6:15** revealed that Jesus knew the multitude had plans to come and take Him by force to make Him king. He had to avoid being with the disciples and the multitudes at that time.

Again, Jesus did not trick the disciples. The heavens and the earth cannot and can never contain the presence and size of God. God is everywhere. It's for us to develop faith that God is with us - whether at the entrance of the contrary wind, or at the middle of it or at the end of it or at all phases or stages.

Also, God Himself does not tempt anyone (**James 1:13**). That contrary winds come to us or was allowed to come to us does not mean that God sent it.

Jesus was not with the disciples physically but He was with them spiritually hence He rebuked Peter's faith.

The same applies to us - He still with us and always with us till the end of the world (**Matthew 28:20**).

We must build our faith to that level, in which we feel His presence and His control over the contrary winds, at all times.

Apostle Paul recognized this secret and declared that Christ is always with Him. **Philippians 4:13** - *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

The Hebrew writer emphasized the need to build our faith, as it is the key of receiving deliverance from contrary winds - *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him* (**Hebrews 11:6**).

If we don't avoid the feeling of God being absent, that itself becomes a contrary wind to us.

THE ILLUSION THAT CONTRARY WINDS WILL NOT COME TO US BECAUSE WE ARE CHRISTIANS

John 17:18,16 declares that we have been sent by Jesus Christ into this world, though we are not of the world. **Matthew 28:19** re-emphasize Jesus' command to us, to go into the world...

John 16:33 declares that in this world, we will have tribulation (face contrary winds).

Wherever Jesus sends us to - let us know that contrary winds will meet us there. Contrary winds are real and are everywhere.

It was because they *were* in the boat out on the lake that they got caught in the contrary wind (storm).

Truly, our sins sometimes result in suffering, hardship, problems or may cause contrary winds to come to us but the case of the disciples is not due to their sins.

The point is, the disciples obeyed Christ to into the boat. Yet they met the contrary winds. This means that our obedience to the will of Christ will not always results in smooth sailing, good times and pleasant situations.

In **John 16:33** Jesus confirmed to us that in the world we will surely have tribulation.

Contrary winds are part of life, whether we are righteous or not. Job said that every human being born into this world certainly has few days on earth which will be filled with troubles (contrary winds) - **Job 14:1**.

Sometimes God allows contrary winds in our lives because we *do* need correction, for our enlightenment in certain areas of our lives and the perfection of our

faith. Our focus in every contrary wind should be on the ability of God to rescue us and also upon the positive lessons we can learn from the contrary winds.

Prophet Jonah faced a physical contrary wind because he was running away from God and from the task which God had commanded him to carry out (**Jonah 1:3-4**). **Hebrews 12** tells us that God disciplines those whom He loves.

Jesus uses the occasion of the storm to further reveal Himself to His disciples and to strengthen their faith.

³¹And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³³Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Life is filled with contrary winds - troubles and distress. Even as Christians - children of God, walking close to God we are still beset by contrary winds that threaten to weaken or destroy our faith.

THINKING THAT WE ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO EXPERIENCE CONTRARY WINDS

We don't need to think we are the only ones who has experienced contrary winds.

Prophet Elijah had similar thinking when a contrary wind of death faced him. He thought he was the only one left to stand for God. But he did not there were others faithful children of God who also were facing contrary winds (**1 Kings 19:10,14,18**).

Heroes of faith in the Old Testament such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Job, met contrary winds in their lives.

They had to face the contrary winds of misrepresentation, betrayal, hate and persecution, their faith in God sustained them. They made the obstacles (*stumbling stones*) into stepping-stones for more useful service.

The apostle Paul had to battle "the contrary winds" in his lifetime. He described some of the "contrary winds" he had faced.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 - *Are they ministers of Christ? —I speak as a fool—I am*

more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

The faith of some Christians has been destroyed by such thinking even before the impact of the contrary winds.

Some have been consumed by bitterness and jealousy towards others just because they were battling with their contrary winds. Others have taken to isolating themselves from brethren or speak only negative things around brethren just because they were battling with their contrary winds.

Everyone is battling with his or her contrary wind.

As we experience them, we can use them as stepping-stones to a more useful, responsible life. They test us and reveal our worthiness to be saved.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ -
1 Peter 1:6-7.

THINKING THAT GOD DOES NOT HAVE THE ABILITY TO RESCUE US

²⁵Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

Have you ever wondered why the disciples did not recognize Jesus when they saw Him coming to them on the water?

Aside from the darkness and confusion of the storm, they did not

recognize Him primarily because they just were not *looking* for Him in that situation. Quite naturally, they never expected to see Him out there!

Unfortunately, we sometimes do not expect to see Him during our contrary winds either, but those are the very times we should be looking for Him the most.

We need to *expect* to see Him act on our behalf, because He has promised that nothing can ever separate us from His love (**Romans 8:31-39**).

When in distress, we should ask with eager anticipation, Lord, I know You are here with me. I trust in Your ability to rescue me. Give me Your divine help. I need it more than ever before.

It is frequently during our times of contrary winds that we come to know Christ as never before.

As one Christian man with the right idea once said that after he had lost his job and had no prospects of another, he would say, *It's always exciting to see what the Lord has in mind!*

God always care for us. He knows our limits. He is never too late. He always act at the right time. He is right there at every phase of the contrary wind.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Our contrary winds don't escape Jesus. Jesus made His way to the disciples despite the sea that separated them.

CONCLUSION

We are certainly sailing through some contrary winds today, with the COVID virus, corrupt and economic effects and the political battles swirling around us we are living in contrary winds.

Contrary winds are real, everywhere and will come. We will not always be shielded from the contrary winds. The contrary winds, however, enable us to see Christ more clearly and understand His power more completely.

We are never far from God where He will not be able to reach us. Jesus brought calm and peace for the disciples and He will do the same for us.

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