

A word of explanation. My name is Jeff Baldrige, and I am a member of Vestry at St Francis. I have 200 of these short meditations from a really tough period in my life, just after I retired from the USAF after 30 years. If you have ever been in the fire and felt God's hammer on the anvil you will understand. The meditation below is almost exactly 17 years ago, but is still as relevant in my life and I trust it will be for yours. Blessings as you navigate the seas that face you.

And Who Will Be the Captain of Your Ship? Reflections coming to work – March 11, 2003

Mark 4:35-40 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, and rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

Sunday evening the storm broke. It was tumultuous as most of my storms are. This particular storm broke over intense frustration. Frustration is the combination of worry, stress and lack of understanding...and it is a powerful force in my life. The reason for the frustration was not important; the reaction, the act of frustration was. We'd prayed that evening at church about the "cause"—that is Teena did...you see God created woman to be a helpmate to man – because he knew very well man would need a lot of help...I typify that man. But, getting home, the storm grew, the waves of stress from the previous week's work broke over the bow of my ship; the wind blew at the sails of stress from repeated attempts and failures; the howling of the storm grew loud from the worry of life which seemed to be building to a giant crescendo – and where was my God in all this? Oh, He was there – He always is. But you see, I chose this night to be the captain of my ship...and there I was in the middle of one of life's major storms. Sunday night was a night of tossing and turning – the ship was being battered.

Monday morning dawned and somehow, it seemed brighter. Somehow, things seemed clearer. In that precious time driving to work, I began to see how I'd blown this storm up into giant proportions. I prayed that my Father would take over my ship, "take the helm LORD, I'm a lousy captain!" I prayed on a hedge of protection and God's armor and asked Him to come right into my office. The day went amazingly smooth, especially the element involving the night's storm. It was so amazingly calm all of a sudden. The "wind and the waves" seemed to obey my Captain. As I played the piano last night, praising my Savior, I felt an even more intense calm. Why? Indeed, Why?

This morning, God came into my truck yet again, and He explained. "You see Jeff, every ship needs a good crew. You are one of My crew. But when you decide to takeover the ship, You take Me out of control by your choice. Then you become the captain of your ship...and you saw the results." Humbly: "Yes

LORD." But, when you chose to turn over the ship back to Me, then came the calm – your storm was over – indeed, you received a blessing from Me." Humbly again, "Yes LORD." Now, remember My word and remember the song Shauna sings...'cause My anchor WILL HOLD in spite of the storm...because there will be storms in life – BUT with ME, the anchor will hold, and you and I will ride out the storm together!

It was indeed a very special morning ride to work – He was there, gently explaining, just like a loving Father would. And now, the question: who IS the captain of your ship?

AMEN