

Even though we're still "sheltering in place" right now, I'm sure many of us are thinking longingly and have memories of flying off to wonderful vacation destinations. If you have been on a plane, have you ever been on a flight that experienced turbulence? I can remember one of our early flights to the British Virgin Islands. The seat-belt sign went on, and Richard and I were shaken for quite a while. Then, all of a sudden, it felt like the plane was falling out of the sky! It was scary. It didn't last more than a few seconds, but it seemed much longer!

Fast forward almost twenty-five years and many flights later, and Richard and I are much more poised when turbulence occurs. Last year, just before I began ministry here in Margate, we were on an international flight to France. Even before we left the ground, the pilot came over the loudspeaker and told us with pinpoint accuracy when to expect the turbulence. He cautioned us that we should expect a "rough patch" about an hour and a half into the flight. And guess what? It happened just as he predicted—exactly when he said it would happen. Unlike that other experience with turbulence twenty-five years ago, I was ready for this one. My seat belt was already buckled, there was no glass of liquid on my tray table, and, feeling relatively composed, I just said a couple of little prayers.

What made the difference in my composure? I trusted that the aircraft was made for that kind of turbulence, that technological instruments equipped the pilot to be prepared for these situations with tremendous precision, and that he was skilled and experienced enough to get us through the rough spots.

I would say that we're all hitting turbulence right now. How are you handling this bumpy ride called life? How are you coping with the havoc this pandemic is causing? Are you composed? Spiritually poised? Feeling some peace and tranquility?

It's inevitable that trials will come in this life, but, I think, how we handle difficulty and adversity speaks volumes about what we truly believe about God.

Just as I came to trust that an airplane is built for turbulence, we, as followers of Jesus Christ, need to grow into a faith that trusts God's design for our lives—and, more importantly, believes that God is still in charge over all of life. God has built us for adversity.

Remember, Jesus told his disciples: "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

In other words, we're not only built for adversity, we're also built for endurance. We are hardwired to overcome hardship.

And the other part of that promise is that we can have peace in the storm. Isaiah wrote this for us: "You, O God, will keep them in perfect peace, because they trust in you." (Isaiah 26:3).

The Psalmist said, "Many are the troubles of a follower of God, but the Lord delivers him/her out of them all." (Psalm 34:19).

Those writers sound like people who have experienced turbulence and are ready for it!

In the New Testament, Paul wrote a letter from a prison cell. Talk about a difficult ride! While jailed in a dungeon for being faithful to Jesus, he said, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7).

Whenever we find ourselves in the turbulence of life, try to remind yourself of two things: First, no matter how hard or difficult this situation is, we were made for this. We weren't built for smooth seas. We're not some cheaply thrown together vessels made out of flimsy materials. We were built for the fierce stuff of life and all the chaos that comes with it. God made us for the hard weather. And secondly, remind yourself that no matter how rough and complicated the circumstances may appear, God has the situation in hand—and more importantly, God's got you!

All the way back in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy we're told, "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27).

You know, in my opinion, I believe "faith" is sometimes a little easier as we get more mature. Life and life experiences give us the chance to look back at the times we faced difficult things—maybe it even seemed impossible! But somehow God brought us through. Over and over again throughout the course of our lives, God has proven faithful. God has sustained us through all the ups and downs, all the fiery trials, and all the mistakes and mishaps. God is faithful.

A wise person once said this: "God has brought you through the ocean, He won't let you drown in the bathtub."

There is no doubt we are going through quite a storm right now. We're afraid. We know the world is changing, and we can't see what the future will bring. But try to put your mind at ease and rest in the Lord. Remember, we don't know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future.

Just a couple of weeks ago we celebrated Easter. We were reminded that the God we trust proved entirely faithful and showed us that he is still in charge—conquering anything that could hurt us. May our communion this morning strengthen us for the journey ahead by helping us to remember God's promises and to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.