

Navigating Dire Straits

If we consider the scenario of a ship having to pass through a narrow strait of water in order to reach the next point in its charted journey, we know that the only way for the ship to pass safely through to the other side without crashing into the rocks on either side, is to set its rudder in a straight position and keep it there for the entire journey through the narrow dangerous place. James 4 speaks of the tongue as being a rudder:

Jam 3:4 *Behold also the ships being so great, and driven by fierce winds, yet they are turned about with a very small rudder, where the impulse of him steering desires.*

I believe the Lord is issuing a warning that in the stormy wind that is about to hit, we are to align our tongues to His plumb-line of Truth and bind them there. If He has given promises from the Word concerning our future (which lies in the large body of water on the other side of the strait), then we are to keep on speaking and believing this Word, no matter how narrow or how difficult the journey through the strait is. Paul speaks of a time when he felt pressed on every side:

2Co 1:8 For, brothers, we would not have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength; so much so that we despaired even of life. 2Co 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, so that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;

We are going into a time when we must place our trust completely in God our Father, no matter whether we always understand what is happening around us. It is time for the faith and trust of a little child, who will sit upon his father's lap with his big strong arms around him and know total peace, no matter the intensity of the lashing winds and lightening strikes overhead. This is why the Lord is stressing the importance of lashing the rudder of our tongues to the rock-solid Word and allowing ourselves to speak nothing contrary during our passage through the strait.

If we deviate from the plumb-line of His promise to us and begin to speak other thoughts and act upon those thoughts, we will find ourselves veering off-course.

Because the strait is so narrow there is no room for error in navigational calculations. We must trust Him, no matter what readings our natural senses are giving us! To chart our course using the readings of our eyes and ears at this time is to invite disaster. We have yielded our whole lives to Christ. He is the captain of our ships and we must line up with His spoken Word over us in order to traverse safely through this tropical storm Kyle.

There is a description of the people of God being in straits in 1 Samuel 13. It contains a very strong warning for those of us entering the strait ahead of us. The philistines had gathered to fight the Israelites. The sight of the enemy arrayed against them made them panic.

*1Sa 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a **strait**, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.*

King Saul was waiting for Samuel to come and he did not arrive within a week. So Saul took things into his own hands and offered up the burnt offering himself.

*1Sa 13:11 And Samuel said, What have you done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and you did not come in the days appointed, and the Philistines gathered themselves at Michmash, 1Sa 13:12 and I said, The Philistines will come down now on me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord. And I forced myself and offered a burnt offering. 1Sa 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. **For now the Lord would have established your kingdom on Israel forever. 1Sa 13:14 But now your kingdom shall not stand.** The Lord has sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him to be leader over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.*

Notice that Saul's rash choice during this time of dire straits caused him to lose his kingdom. He did things God had not appointed him to do because he leaned on his natural understanding and got into a panic. His natural senses were feeding him panic readings and he responded in the flesh. Sadly he did not realize that the narrow strait

he was passing through led either to the fullness of his destiny or his demise. Jesus himself spoke of passing through a strait:

Luk 13:24 Strive to enter in at the narrow ('STRAIT' in KJV) gate. For I say to you, many will seek to enter in and shall not be able. Luk 13:25 And once the Master of the house has risen up and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, and He shall answer and say to you, I do not know you; from where are you; Luk 13:26 then you shall begin to say, We ate and drank in Your presence, and You have taught in our streets. Luk 13:27 But He shall say, I tell you, I do not know you; from where you are. Depart from Me, all workers of unrighteousness! Luk 13:28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you will see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves being thrust out.

Beloved of the Lord, be aware of the season you are in. When you are pressed on every side, do not be tempted to come up with your own solution to the crisis at hand. Do not trust the feedback of your five senses. They will push you to lean on your own understanding and to make choices which cause you to deviate from the prescribed safe path through this strait. The only way you will navigate this strait is by declaring and decreeing the promise of God to you and by resting and trusting the Rock of Ages. Be hidden in Christ. The temptation in times like this is to DO something because the danger of destruction seems to be looming over you like the rocky ledges of the cliffs on either side of the strait. God wants you to rest and trust and listen to His still small voice rather than the shouts of your sense of self-preservation. There is another passage that warns of the danger of choosing your own plan of action:

*Isa 30:15 For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall you be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and you would not. Isa 30:16 But you said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall you flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. Isa 30:17 One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall you flee: till you be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill. Isa 30:18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious to you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: **blessed are all they that wait for him.***

There are some who say that they have been in a narrow place for some time already and that the Lord has likened it to experiencing the birth pangs and being propelled down the birth canal to one's destiny - and the question is 'surely it is not about to become even narrower?' I believe that the Lord would have me say to you that yes, you have been making progress down the narrow passage towards the full light of a new day and the pressure you have experienced has been the birth pangs of a new season approaching. However, you are about to experience the journey through the 'opening of the birth canal' so to speak. Although it is a very short distance relatively speaking when considering the long way you have come, it is the point of greatest resistance and intense pressure upon your mind. However it is the gateway to the large open place that He promised to bring you into. It is the point at which you need to die to your own understanding and your own wisdom and just rest and trust Him to bring to pass His promises for you and surely complete them. It is the place of being pressed beyond measure and trusting in God who raises the dead. It is the narrow strait which will birth you into the fullness of all you have seen only with the eye of faith. It is the time of the crowning of the head, the place of breaking through. He does not bring to the point of birth and not bring forth - so look not at the size of the cliffs, nor at the strength of the stormy wind. Lash your rudder to the plumb-line of His promise and confidently continue to declare in the face of the storm every promise He has given you.

2Co 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves; 2Co 4:8 we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; 2Co 4:9 pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; 2Co 4:10 always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body.

*2Co 4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; **we also believe, and therefore speak;***

Speak His promised Word to yourself. Declare to others who bring bad weather reports to you. Let the atmosphere resound with the sound of His spoken Word which cannot return void, and thus rightly aligned, let the ship of your life cut through those churning waters until you are safely in full view of all He has whispered to your heart.

Psa 18:15 Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. Psa 18:16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. Psa 18:17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. Psa 18:18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. Psa 18:19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.