

MEDITATION

Only Jesus can calm the storm



Dr. Jeff Hensley
Pastor
Kings Mountain
Baptist Church

In Mark 6:47-51 there is a story that is comforting to me. It is a story that begins with a storm. The term has sometimes been translated "adverse wind," or in the Old Testament it has been known as "chaos." The storm is a crushing, irresistible force that seems as if it is going to sweep over the lonely disciples. Such storms are many in our lives. They appear through a medical diagnosis, a broken relationship, a financial hardship, and in countless other forms, but they always bring anxiety and fear.

The text also says two other things. First, it tells us the disciples "strained" against the wind. They were attempting to make it on their own, but they couldn't because the wind and

the waves seemed to be winning. Perhaps it is in their nature to be too strong for us to control, and this is made even more significant by the second thing we are told: that He was not there - that Jesus was not with them. He was not far away, but as he walked on the water, he appeared to them as if he was a ghost.

The amazing thing is that they did not call out for him in the midst of their need. They just looked up and there he was, but they didn't recognize him. It is as if time seems to stand still in the story, for Jesus is there with them, but nothing happens... at least not until he speaks. Everything depends on his word, and that is as true today as it was long ago. All he says is: "It is I." He doesn't need to say his name, for they know it. This didn't think to summon him, but they know him when he says, "It is I."

Jesus' declaration of his presence through that one, small utterance is the unmistakable solution to the storm. The disciples didn't fully realize it then,

but Jesus was God in their midst - the Creator of heaven and earth with skin on - and the storm was no threat to him, so it was no threat to his followers. This is why Jesus says, "Don't be afraid... take heart." The disciples had lost heart. They were bewildered, anxious and afraid, and all of us know times like that in our own lives.

In verse 50 the disciples were with Jesus, but the storm didn't end until verse 51. Why is that? A careful reading of the passage seems to suggest that the reason is because Jesus expected something from the disciples. In that little space between verses 50 and 51 Jesus was giving them an invitation and they had to respond. It was as if he was saying, "Yes, there is a storm. But I am here. Listen to me. Look at me." It was an invitation to faith - an invitation God gives to all of us - and only when we accept the invitation does Jesus climb into the boat so that the storm ceases.

Open Heart Ministries dedicates new church

Open Heart Ministries will dedicate their new house of worship Sunday morning at 10 a.m. at 306 N. Piedmont Ave., across from the old Kings Mountain Depot.

"We are so excited," said Pastor Shane Reese, who said a group of 56 worshipers have been meeting for 10 months as a Bible study group. Mike Heath rented the group of buildings on the corner of N. Piedmont to the church for future expansion.

Rev. Robert Eng, pastor of New Life Worship Center, will lead the dedication service to which the public is invited.

Associate Pastors Stan Brucker and Craig Pittman and ministers Jim and Sue Thurman and Bill and Millie Mayes will also assist in the program along with worship leader, Tonya Parker; women's leader Dee Reese; and men's leader Craig Pittman.

Reese served for 11 years on the staff of Faith Ablaze in Kings Mountain and was senior pastor at Restoring Hope in Chester, SC. Son of Jack and Dee Reese of Belmont, he graduated from East Gaston High School and Grace Covenant School of Min-

istry in Cornelius. He is employed by U Haul Service Center. He is married to Tracy McAllister Reese and they have three children: Christian, 13; Caleb, 11; and Jeremy, 19 months.

Reese said the church is targeting areas where people are in need and are partnering with local pharmacists to help seniors with prescription needs.

"We preach and teach about God's Glory and we give all the Praise to God," said the pastor. He said that God changed his life as he worked with Faith Ablaze and was called to the ministry. "See what God can do," he said, inviting visitors.

Family training is held at the church on Wednesdays at 7 p.m.



Shane Reese

Fellowship & Faith

Church Service Directory

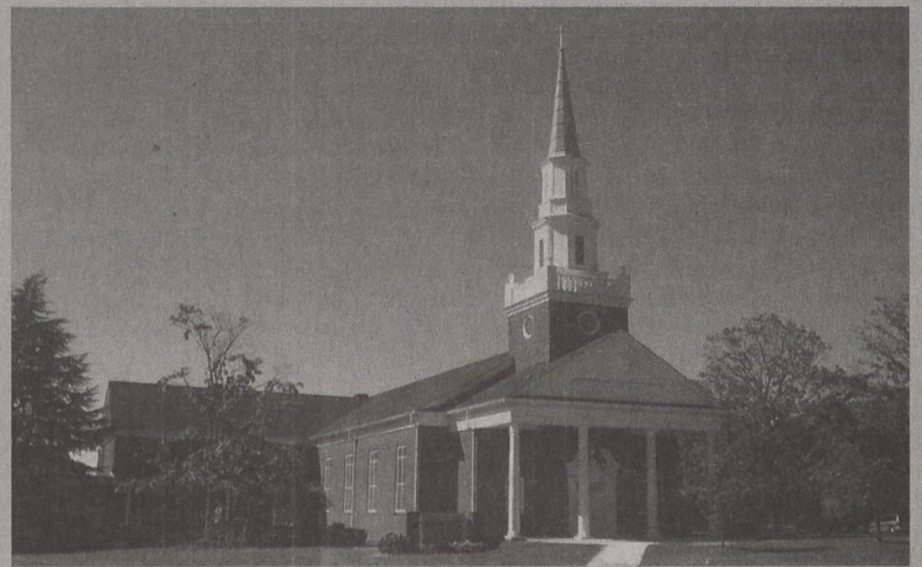
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New Testament Missionary Baptist Church



Featured Church of the Week:
Resurrection Lutheran Church

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