

Faithful on the Ocean

by Rev Dan Balsdon | February 2021 | read online at www.revdanbalsdon.com

***O Lord God of hosts,
who is as mighty as you, O Lord?
Your faithfulness surrounds you.
You rule the raging of the sea;
when its waves rise, you still them.***

Psalm 89:8-9

Last weekend a friend sent me a link to a song, saying God had placed it on his heart to send to me. It's a song I knew, but in that moment the song was just the thing I needed, and I'm so grateful I received it.

We've just begin lent, which we often begin by reminding ourselves of Jesus' period of solitude in the wilderness. We may imagine a deserted, desert like place – where there is little sign of life and fruitfulness - where Jesus is tempted and tormented after his Baptism.

For me, my wilderness right now feels less of a desert and more like an uncharted ocean, as we continued to navigate the uncharted waters of pandemic, it's longevity, it's impact on community, church life, on relationships and human connection.

In some ways, now that we're almost a year on from the first lockdown here in the UK, it feels like I may be cracking an old nut going on about the uncharted waters of pandemic. Surely we've got beyond some of the new-ness and unexpectedness of the pandemic, we've learnt to use new technology, and while we'd still prefer to sit across from one another with a fresh coffee, we've got used to spending more time on the phone.

But despite how long we've been navigating these uncharted waters, the storm is continuing, and while there are signs of hope, past signs of hope have already been knocked back by new, larger waves crashing onto the deck.

Despite being about a year into the pandemic, life and ministry still feels to me like a journey in the unknown. While each week holds within it joys and blessings, there is still a common feeling of muddling through and making do. Trying to be satisfied when I feel that I'm not serving grieving families with the 'best' I can

offer, despite knowing I'm doing all that I can within these restrictions. Knowing how much people long to be able to gather face to face and share fellowship, yet having to live with burden of reality that the fellowship we really want, where we can sing and talk with one another is just not possible at the moment. That's all without even beginning to think about all the uncertainties about how to lead and shape future ministry as we emerge from this pandemic sometime in the future.

That's why the song I received last weekend was so helpful for me. The whole song is filled with a reminder that life can feel like a stormy voyage on the ocean, but whether water is still or raging God is faithful – always. God is guiding us – always. God is with us – always.

***Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sovereign hand
Will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now***

[Oceans \(Where Feet May Fail\) Lyric Video - Hillsong UNITED - YouTube](#)

I encourage you to take a few moments today to listen, and draw close to God who is faithful to you and says to you 'you are mine'.

In the unknown, in the wilderness of this Lenten season and as we continued our voyage on these uncharted waters, may you find God's unfailing grace strengthening you, encouraging you and upholding you.

***I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.***

Psalm 89:1-2