

## Moravian Women's Association- Devotional Paper – April 2024

### Fruits of the Spirit

But the Spirit produces love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23a GNB)

#### Read Matthew 8:23 -27



When I was a little girl, one of my favourite hymns was “Eternal Father, strong to save” (267 in the green hymn book, 702 in the black hymn book). I liked the dramatic music and words. It painted a picture in my head which, unlike other hymns and indeed readings in the Bible, I could relate to. I wasn't a country child and I didn't go to the countryside as a child so farming images were somewhat remote. However, I had been to the seaside and seen the sea. Even when calm, the sea looked dangerous and if you have ever, like I have, walked down a promenade – in my case Blackpool – when the weather is bad – you know how powerful and dangerous the sea is in a storm.

Eternal Father, strong to save is in part, based upon the reading we have just had from Matthew. Jesus brings peace to the Sea of Galilee and in doing so, brings peace to the frightened disciples.

I would imagine there have been times in most of your lives when you have been really frightened. It is an absolutely, horrible feeling. When my oldest son was 2, he decided to go looking at some toys in a shop whilst we were standing in the queue to pay. The fear and panic that struck me when I looked down and realised he wasn't beside me was horrendous. Thankfully, it only lasted a few minutes.

Sometimes, frightening events in our lives don't just last a few minutes. They go on. I don't think that the message we should take from our reading is that Jesus will always make everything alright. I think the message is that we believe in a Jesus who has power. A Jesus, who when he was here on earth could control stormy weather. This Jesus has power to calm us, to be with us during the inevitable storms we encounter in life.

#### Read John 14: 25-27

These words of Jesus recorded by John, were spoken to his disciples during the Last Supper. Jesus knew trouble was coming but he knew the resurrection was coming too. He also knew that once he had returned to God, his Father, the Holy Spirit would descend upon his followers. The Holy Spirit which can produce in us the fruit of peace.

**For Consideration:**

1. Have there been troubled times in your life when you have experienced peace? If you can share these experiences with others, please do.
2. If you can, look at the hymn "Eternal Father" – can you see the other Biblical stories that are referenced in it?
3. As I have been researching this paper, I have been unable to ignore thoughts of wars in Ukraine, Gaza and elsewhere. Nor when I decided to use "Eternal Father" have I been able to ignore the plight of refugees, taking to dangerous seas in flimsy boats.

Perhaps in your Circle or even when you are home, you could pray for peaceful resolution to these problems in our world.

Sr Janet Cooper