

- A man named Jack was walking along the top of a steep cliff one day, when he accidentally got too close to the edge and fell. On the way down he grabbed a branch, which temporarily stopped his fall. He looked down and to his horror saw that the canyon fell straight down for more than a thousand feet. He couldn't hang onto the branch forever, and there was no way for him to climb up the steep wall of the cliff. So Jack began yelling for help, hoping that someone passing by would hear him and lower a rope or something. 'HELP! HELP! Is anyone up there? HELP!' He yelled for a long time, but no one heard him. He was about to give up when he heard a voice. 'Jack, Jack. Can you hear me?'
 - "Yes, yes! I can hear you. I'm down here!"
 - "I can see you, Jack. Are you all right?"
 - "Not really, but who are you, and where are you?"
 - "I am the Lord, Jack. I'm everywhere."
 - "The Lord? You mean, GOD?"
 - "That's Me."
 - "God, please help me! I promise if, you'll get me down from here, I'll stop sinning. I'll be a really good person. I'll serve You for the rest of my life."
 - "Easy on the promises, Jack. Let's get you off from there; then we can talk."
 - "Now, here's what I want you to do. Listen carefully."
 - "I'll do anything, God. Just tell me what to do."
 - "Okay. Let go of the branch. 'What?' ... 'I said, let go of the branch. Just trust Me. Let go.'
 - There was a long silence.
 - Finally Jack yelled, "HELP! HELP! IS ANYONE ELSE UP THERE?"
- God has a habit of asking us to do things which are completely opposite to what we think of sensible or safe or what we expect.
- The disciples in the boat must have felt a bit like that. Here was Jesus not a fisherman, but the one in whom they'd put their trust.
 - Here he was, asking them to put out into the notoriously dangerous Sea of Galilee where a storm could blow up out of nowhere. They were fishermen, they had set sail, a storm had started and Jesus was fast asleep in the bows of the boat. They knew only too well how dangerous it was, how there was a real possibility of drowning in the storm
 - Where was Jesus when they really needed him?
- But Jesus calmed the storm and the disciples were left in open-mouthed amazement.
- The standard experience of being a Christian, of following Jesus is just this. He asks you to do extraordinary things. He asks you to trust where no 'sane' person would trust. He leads you down a completely different way of life with completely different values from the world at large. A way of life where forgiveness, hope, acceptance and reverence for creation loom rather larger than power money, self-indulgence and time-saving energy using devices . This is going against the commonly held views of society.
 - And that's hard.
 - But it's valuable and it's exciting and it gives life meaning.
- In 2004 a Christian based charity, the Trussell Trust set up its first Foodbanks, 2 of them, to support those who were being forgotten by the political policies of the day and were so destitute that they didn't even have enough to eat. That's going against the established values of society when Christians have to step in, in this way. Jesus said 'Let go and trust me.' It wasn't easy but they did. Today there are nearly 1 000 foodbanks around the country and they are a vital safety net for large parts of that same society.

- Or in 2018, it is commonly known that you can buy books cheaper on Amazon. We have a Christian bookshop in Letchworth that is doing an amazing job providing Christian hope and a Christian presence on the High Street but which is faced with closure because of huge increases in rental costs. Do we save money and ignore the bookshop so it closes, or do we support it even though it costs more and keep the shop open? This Church makes a point of ordering from the Christian bookshop wherever possible and I urge you to do so too. It's more expensive but you get personal service and a warm smile and you know you are doing something valuable. That is also going against the commonly held views of society where if something is cheaper or easier to get hold of with one click, you do it no matter how much tax the company you are buying from is not paying to help fund things like Foodbanks!
- I put it to you that what we want for Bonnie Rose is that she grows up with the ability to be able to make choices about things like these, the wisdom to be able to see the moral rights and wrongs in these choices and the Christian love that comes from knowing that you really can trust in Jesus however unlikely or difficult it looks. I also put it to you that Christian baptism is the best start on this road we can give a child and a warm Christian community is the best way we know of allowing Bonnie Rose to discover the love and hope of Jesus for herself.
- I also put it to you that this is just as true for you and me, as it is for Bonnie Rose, no matter how old we are. Jesus really does change lives and the way we live them. Jesus really does allow us to see the beginnings of the Kingdom of God here on our poor wounded polluted earth.
- Bonnie we are delighted to welcome you into our Church family and we hope in Jesus that you and Kayleigh, your mum, discover how Jesus really does save you from the storms of life and give you the hope of the kingdom to live by. Amen.