

TOSSED IN A HURRICANE

The Rev. James David Ford was the 58th chaplain of the United States House of Representatives for two decades. A Lutheran pastor, he ministered to House members and their families from 1979 until his retirement in 2000.

In 1976, Ford celebrated America's 200th birthday by joining two others from the United States Military Academy at West Point (where Ford was then serving as chaplain) in sailing a 31-foot boat from Plymouth, England, to West Point. The trip covered 5,992 miles. During the adventure, they encountered a hurricane.

"Some of the waves were 35 feet high, and frankly, I was scared," he recalled. "My father had said, 'Don't go. You have five children. Wait until they're grown.' The hurricane went into its third day, and I thought of my father's words about the children. I thought, 'Why am I out here? Was this thing that I thought was courage and adventure really just foolhardy?' The skies were black, and clouds were scudding by. I wanted to pray for God to stop the storm, but I felt guilty 'cause I'd voluntarily gotten into this. I didn't have to go across the ocean."



Finally, Ford said he came up with "a marvelous prayer, seven words: 'O God, I have had enough. Amen.' Within half an hour of that simple prayer, the sky in the west lifted like a screen in a theater, and there was blue sky. Was my prayer tied to the opening of the sky? I don't worry about it."

Ford's prayer offers us some insight into our communication with God. Simple, sincere prayers are sufficient.

God wants to know our heart, and we can tell him plainly.

As Jesus said in Matthew 6:7-8: And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

– Beecher Hunter