

## Reflection

Sadao Watanabe (1913–1996) was a printmaker celebrated internationally for his depictions of biblical subjects using traditional Japanese folk art techniques. Assisted by his wife Harue, Watanabe created his prints in a small studio in his home in Tokyo. He came to faith in 1930 after spending two years in bed with tuberculosis. That gave him plenty of time to read the Bible. He believed his eventual healing came about through the power of prayer.

The scene depicted here is of Jesus and the disciples in a boat during a storm. (Mark 4:35-41) The Book of Jonah, chapter 1 has a very similar story. In each story, the main character, Jesus and Jonah, gets on board the boat and then falls asleep. A storm arises and sailors panic. In traditional Japanese art, the faces of the characters rarely show emotion. In Sadao's print, the sailors look either seasick or stoic. They wake their guest and plead for help. Their guest then calms the storm and the sailors respond with wonder and awe. In the case of the Jonah story, the crew becomes worshipers of Yahweh.

The striking feature of Watanabe's painting is that the sailors are all together. The winds billow the sail and the angry fingers of the sea threaten to capsize the little boat. All survive together or drown together. Jonah told the sailors in his story that he was running away from the Lord and the storm was his fault. He said, "Hurl me overboard and the sea will calm." In spite of that, the sailors did all they could to protect his life. It was with great reluctance and pleading with God for mercy that they threw him overboard.

We are in this together. When the storms of life come, hope is found when families stick together, church communities stick together, neighborhoods stick together, nations stick together, and the world sticks together.

Image from [Scriptum.com](http://Scriptum.com)  
Reflection by Steve Stuckey



### Boat in a Storm

By

Sadao Watanabe 1981