

Life's Unexpected Storms

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November 11, 2018

Today: Life's Unexpected Storms — *those times in life that we all face, where something comes out of nowhere that rocks our whole world.*

- **Concern** — over the years as a pastor of a large community, I've watched: 1) folks have storms 2) others have watched them have storms; 3) realized that storms do happen; 4) then had their own; and 5) had a total crisis of faith — *like storms would never happen to them.*
- **Friend** — you are NOT exempt from an Unexpected Storm. The sooner you realize that, and settle your faith BEFORE the storm comes, the stronger you'll be WHEN the storm comes —even though some storms can never be fully prepared for.
- **Since we gathered last week** — another mass shooting, 12 dead; another wildfire that has consumed more structures than any fire in California history; 2 firestorms affecting thousands of lives — fires, shootings, tornados, earthquakes, car wrecks, cancer reports, affairs, divorces, the list goes on and on. Storms happen, no one is exempt.
- **Today** — unpack a story that is full of spiritual truth that will help us understand and deal with Life's Unexpected Storms...
- **Mark 4:35-41**
On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "**Let us cross over to the other side.**" Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "**Peace, be still!**" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "**Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?**" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

There's No Guarantee Against Unexpected Storms!

- Cool air from Mt. Hermon comes down, crosses the Golan Heights, descends further to meet the warm air of Galilee which is 600-700 feet below sea level, and unexpected storms rise out of nowhere. You could start your journey to the other side of the sea and before you know it, there are wind and waves threatening your life.
- no guarantee against storms, **even while obeying, with Jesus in your boat.**
 - the disciples did what Jesus told them to do, and He was with them — got wrong result
 - we think if we do right, all works right, not in this broken world!
 - all original apostles persecuted for years before being martyred.
 - **2 Corinthians 11:23-28**
...in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often, five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in perils of waters, robbers, my own

countrymen, Gentiles, the city, the wilderness, the sea, false brethren...

- storms follow Paul, chains in every city he went.

FACT — Some people face storms because we're in a broken world, others face storms because the Devil hates them and the influence they have on others for Jesus. Beware!

Bottom line — our only hope of riding the storm out and getting to the other side — is by having Jesus in our boat with us. We mustn't jump ship, or throw Him overboard! There is something worse than a storm — it's going through a storm without Jesus! Don't do it.

Will You Take Him as He Is?

- in biblical context — took no other provisions, just took Jesus as He was, no other baggage.

I see more here — are you taking Jesus on your journey to the other side as He is — OR how you think He should be?

- are you taking Him as the One who *allows storms* — **OR** the One who *doesn't allow storms*, who always does what *you think is right*, and *affords you smooth sailing* = **Fake American Drive-through Jesus — who doesn't exist!**

FACT — taking Jesus for who He is means you're embracing smooth sailing and stormy seas. Means you are embracing the fellowship of His suffering as well as the power of His resurrection. Means you're embracing blessing and brokenness — ALL of it, ALL of HIM!

It Can Appear Jesus Doesn't Care About Us in Our Storms.

- He's sleeping- "don't you care that we are perishing?"

Unsettling but true — when it seems that God is sleeping in your situation, it is only because He is supremely confident that He can handle all your situation at any time He wants — He isn't worried as your waves get bigger.

Question — *Would you rather have Jesus sleeping — OR terrified, ringing His hands in the back of the boat screaming, "Oh My Me" in the midst of your storm.*

FACT — God's apparent sleeping isn't a lack of care, it's a demonstration of His utter confidence in Himself to handle your storm in totality as He sees fit.

The Storm Doesn't Awaken Jesus — Our Cries Do!

- the disciple's cries weren't for help, they were in protest to His apparent indifference toward their perishing condition.

FACT — Jesus prefers to hear faith from us, “why are you so fearful, where is your faith,” but I take great comfort in knowing that my protests awaken Him too.

Storms Don't Last Forever.

- Jesus will arise and rebuke.
- Jesus will say, Peace be still.
- Jesus will produce the calm we long for.

FACT — either in this life we live now, maybe in the life to come, storms will stop, peace will be full, calm will be restored. Storms will not define you, destroy you, or be your destiny. Settle it!

A Revelation of His Power Will Increase.

- “Who is this, even the wind and the waves obey Him?”

Observation — we knew sickness and disease obeyed Him, we knew devils and demons obeyed Him, we knew insufficiency and lack obeyed him... but the wind and the waves too?!?!?

Friends — certain revelations of God's power are reserved for those who have gone through storms.

Consider this...

- Job lost it all — health, children, wealth, everything — all while knowing, to some degree that God was good and powerful. Listen to how Job describes his experience AFTER suffering incredible loss...
- **Job 42:5-6**
I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.
- “I heard of You before my suffering; in my suffering I got to the point of blame and bitterness; **but now I see you** — I see Who You are, see what you allow, see what You do. I'm sorry, I repent of my blindness and bitterness.”

Again — certain revelations of God's power are reserved for those who have gone through storms.

The Other Little Boats Benefit When Your Storm Stops.

- Remember — the little boats were along, too — the storm stopped for them also.
- People need to know that someone else has made it across

***FACT — people watch how we deal with our storms,
riding our storm out, helps them ride theirs out too.
What a privilege, rightly riding my storm out benefits others.***

Close —

Friends, the greatest questions for the follower of Jesus **aren't**, *why storms happen, or will storms happen...*

The greatest questions for the follower of Jesus are,

Will you take Jesus as He is?

Will you ride your storm out with Him and get to the other side?

Will you help others get there too?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do we think that if we are following Jesus, and living right, all will be well?
2. Are you taking Jesus *as He is* on your journey? Stormy seas as well as smooth sailing?
3. Our storms don't awaken Jesus, our cries do — cries of faith *or* cries of protest.
Which kind of cries do you make in your storms?
4. How do you settle within yourself, that storms don't last forever, one way or another?
5. Have you gained revelations of God through storms you have gone through?
6. "Even the winds and waves obey him." What is your "even"?
7. Are you aware of those watching you as you go through your storms? How does that impact your journey?

Before the Throne

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

6:30 Sanctuary