

MIRACLES | The Miracle of Jesus Calming Storms

Steve Berger May 2, 2021

Pastor Steve and Sarah shared briefly about the new ministry God has placed on their hearts. God has opened doors and created incredible opportunities for Steve and Sarah in Washington, DC, where they want to see Kingdom principles permeate the halls of government. Please pray fervently for them as they step forward in faith and obedience to minister to and serve the people and in the places God has set before them.

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Look for morning devotionals to continue on Facebook Live at 7 AM CT from time to time, too.

Introduction

Today we're going to talk about seven strategies for surviving life's storms—those times in life we all face, when a storm comes out of nowhere and rocks our whole world.

The bad news is that you are *not* exempt from a life storm. The sooner you realize that and settle your faith, the stronger you'll be when the storm does come. And come it will.

The good news is that **Jesus is the Storm Calmer!**

Let's unpack a story that is full of spiritual truth and strategy and that will help us understand and deal with life's 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!"

Seven Strategies for Surviving Life's Storms

1. Understand that There's No Guarantee of Storm-Free Living

Unless God opens your ears and eyes to this truth, every time a storm comes, you will find yourself asking, *Why is this happening to me?*

And that's not the question.

The question is: *Why did you think this wouldn't happen to you?*

The storm described in Mark's Gospel came out of nowhere. Cool air from Mt. Hermon comes down, crosses the Golan Heights, and descends further to meet the warm air of Galilee, which is 680 feet below sea level, and unexpected storms rise in seconds. You could start your journey to the other side of the sea in calm waters, and before you know it, treacherous winds and waves are threatening your life.

**Before anything else, know this:
You are not exempt from life's storms.
Even while obeying.
Even with Jesus in your boat.
Expect the storms.**

Application—We convince ourselves that if we do well, if we're obedient enough, or if we're in right relationship with God, we can avoid the storms of life. But this broken world we live in doesn't afford us that option! We have no guarantees of storm-free living, even if we are doing what's right or if Jesus is in the boat with us. Consider the original apostles, who did well, who were obedient, and who were in the boat with Jesus. They were all persecuted for years before being martyred.

2 Corinthians 11:23–28

Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews 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 journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

- Consider the apostle Paul:
 - in stripes above measure
 - in prisons more frequently
 - in deaths often
 - five times received forty stripes minus one.
 - three times beaten with rods
 - once stoned
 - three times shipwrecked
 - a night and a day in the deep
 - in perils of waters, robbers, countrymen, Gentiles, the city, the wilderness, the sea, false brethren
 - chains in every city
- Paul lived in a storm. His back was a scarred roadmap of storms. And his whole life was devoted to making much of Jesus.

Fact—Some people face storms because we live in a broken world. Others face storms because the Devil hates them and the influence they have on others for Jesus. And still others create their own storms through foolish decisions. Regardless of the cause, the solution is Jesus.

**Our only hope of surviving the storm
is by having Jesus and some great friends in our boat with us.
We mustn't jump ship or throw Him overboard!
The only thing worse than going through a storm
is going through a storm without Jesus and the body of Christ.**

2. You Must Take Him as He Is

Mark 4:36

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.

- In context of the story this means that the disciples took Jesus and no other provisions. They just took Jesus as He was, with no baggage or provisions or stuff.
- **But there's more to it.** The disciples took Jesus **as He was**. As the One who allows storms. As the One who calms storms.

Questions—Are you taking Jesus on your journey to the other side as He is? Or are you taking Him as you think He should be?

Application—Resist the urge to take along a Jesus Who doesn't allow storms, Who always does what you think is right, and Who affords you smooth sailing. That's a fake, American, drive-through, dollar-menu, Styrofoam, Mc-Jesus! That's not the Jesus of the Bible.

**Taking Jesus for Who He is means:
Embracing smooth sailing as well as stormy seas.
Embracing the fellowship of His suffering as well as the power of His resurrection.
Embracing blessing as well as brokenness.
Embracing all of it and all of Him!**

3. Jesus Sleeping Is His Confidence in Himself, not His Lack of Care for You

Personal—I've been through storms in my life where, like the disciples, I've wondered, "God, where are you? Are you sleeping on me? Don't you care that we are perishing?"

Get this in your head and heart: When it seems that God is sleeping in your storm, it is only because He is supremely confident that He can handle your storm at any time He wants. He isn't worried about your waves getting bigger because the waves answer to Him. He isn't in the back of the boat wringing His hands in worry and terror along with you. And thank God for that!

**Jesus is calm in the storm because
He is the Alpha and the Omega.
He is the Almighty.
He can speak peace at any time
and the storms will cease.**

4. Cries Awaken Him More than the Storm Does

Recall that Jesus was sleeping through a violent storm, which Mark describes as beating into the boat and filling it up. **It wasn't the sound and fury of the storm that woke Jesus; it was the cries of His disciples.**

Mark 4:38–40

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?**"

- The disciple's cries weren't beautiful, theological, prayerful cries for help—they were cries of protest to His apparent indifference to their perishing condition.
- Jesus prefers to hear faith from us, but there is great comfort in knowing that protests awaken Him too.

Application—Jesus understands the gut cry as well as the beautiful prayer of proper theology. Genuine groans, cries, tears, and broken silences offered to Him move the heart of our Savior.

5. Know that the Storm Shall Pass!

Either in this life or the life to come,
Jesus will arise and rebuke.
Jesus will say, "Peace, be still!"
Jesus will produce the calm we long for.
And He already knows when this will happen.

**Whatever storm you are going through
will not define you,
destroy you,
or be your destiny,
unless you let it.
Don't let it!**

6. Wait for an Increase of His Power to Be Revealed to You

Mark 4:41

And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

- The disciples seem to be saying, "We know sickness and disease obey Him. We know devils and demons obey Him. We know insufficiency and lack obey Him. But the wind and the waves obey Him too?!"
- The storm revealed further depths of God's power to them.

Application—Know that certain revelations of God's power are reserved for those who have gone through storms. Know that when the storm is over, you are going to know Him better because you will have seen His power. And the way to see His power is to go through a storm.

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."

- Job lost everything—his health, children, wealth, friends, everything.
- Yet look at how Job described his experience after suffering incredible loss: "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."
- All the while he was suffering, he knew, to some degree, that God is good and powerful. He said, in effect, "I heard of You before my suffering, and in my suffering I got to the point of blame and bitterness. But now I see you, Who You are, what you allow, and what You do. I see the truth of your goodness and power. I'm sorry. I repent of my blindness and bitterness."

**Certain revelations of God's power
are reserved for those who have gone through storms.**

7. Help Other People in their Storms!

Mark 4:35–36

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.

- Notice that it wasn't just the boat the disciples and Jesus were in that was caught in the storm. There were other little boats with them.

- When the storm stopped for the boat the disciples and Jesus were in, it stopped for the other little boats too.

Application—People watch how we deal with our storms, and the way in which we ride out our storm—with Jesus—helps them ride out theirs too. What a privilege! Rightly riding out your storm benefits others. Live your life so that the other little boats watching are encouraged and have hope that they too can survive the storms.

Conclusion

Recall that Jesus told us to take heed *how* we hear, not just what we hear (Luke 8:18).

Please take heed how you hear this: Storms are coming. This is not a lack of faith or a negative confession. It's scriptural truth. The time to prepare for a storm is not when the waves are crashing into the boat. **The time to prepare for a storm is when there isn't a cloud in the sky.**

Friends, the question for the follower of Jesus isn't, *Why do storms happen?*

The question is, *When the storm happens, will you take Jesus as He is to ride out your storm with Him and help others do the same?*

Settle in your heart now Who Jesus is.

Survive your storm.

Know Him better.

Help others.

Discussion Questions

1. Which is easier: to ask why a storm has happened to you, or to believe that storms will come without fail to us all? Why?
2. Discuss what it means to take Jesus as He is. How did the disciples do this throughout the Gospel accounts? How do you do this?
3. Discuss: It wasn't the sound and fury of the storm that woke Jesus; it was the cries of His disciples. Do you find comfort knowing that our Savior hears and understands incoherent gut cries as well as prayers full of beautiful theology?
4. Have you ever received a revelation of God's power through a storm? Discuss how the disciples and Job experienced such revelations. Can you think of other Biblical examples of God's power being revealed to those who endured storms with Him?
5. What is the significance of the other little boats in the story? How does knowing that your good witness through storms helps others give you hope and courage to endure?

NOTES