

Strength In The Storm

Our world is in the midst of an upheaval unlike anything we've seen in the 21st century. Amid our current social, political, cultural, religious, economic, and mental wellness struggles, people find themselves inept and unequipped to deal with these everyday life situations that confront them, the totality of who they are, and how to survive during this chaos. The church and the people of God are not exempt from the realities of the present-day crisis that the world is facing. So, what are we to do as children of God when we face the same pressing issues of life that the world does? We look to God, the author and finisher of our faith, to provide meaningful and practical solutions to everything that we confront in this present day.

The best way to look at what we're facing now is from within a storm. In the midst of a storm, we are weak and frail in contrast to the power of a storm. Without a miracle, and except the storm passes over, we must learn how to survive the storm. The only way to survive in this storm is to find, access, and possess the mighty power and strength of our Lord. With this in mind, if we are not able to exit the storm, then we must find strength in the storm.

THE CURRENT CRISIS...

Okay, let's be real, these are the issues of our present-day storm:

- Job losses
- Political Upheaval
- Government downsizing, mistrust, and misinformation
- Wars around the world
- US National Immigration Issues
- Racial Injustice
- Financial Instabilities (Corporate, Financial Markets, and Personal)
- Health Disparities (Mental and Physical)
- Conservative Religious Leaders Compromising for Political Gain
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies are being done away with
- Civil Rights being rolled back
- ...and the list goes on and on. What is your crisis _____?

Notes: _____

Our reality is this—the issues listed here are going to be a part of the storms we face for some time to come. Our only hope and confidence is to learn how to find ***Strength In The Storm***. For children of God, there is but one source of strength, and that is the Lord our God.

The scriptures state clearly that the times that we now face are to come, 2 Timothy 3:1, *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come*. Further, the gospel of Matthew also speaks of the unrest in the world as it states in part, “*and ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars:...*” (see Matthew 24:6-9). This is our truth, the bible never promised that we would be able to avoid storms—only that God would be with us in and through them.

The Storm: What is a Storm and its accompanying characteristics?

Technically, in our natural world, a storm is a disturbance of the normal condition of the atmosphere, manifesting itself by winds of unusual force or direction, often accompanied by rain, snow, hail, thunder, and lightning, or flying sand or dust.

Types of storms include: [blizzard](#), [wind](#), [squall](#), [cyclone](#), [tornado](#), [tempest](#), [hurricane](#), and [gale](#).¹

The late Dr. C.A.W. Clark says that “the bible is its own best interpreter.” So, if we look at the bible for a definition of storm in the biblical and spiritual context, here is what the bible has to say about “Storm.” The word storm appears eighteen times in the bible, and in all instances, it is used to define itself. In other words, a storm is defined as a storm. The truth is, in life, all of us need no explanation of what a storm is. Everyone knows what a storm is, and we know when we are in the midst of one. However, most storms have similar characteristics, and some of them are:

- ✓ Strong winds
- ✓ Unpredictability
- ✓ Violence
- ✓ Intensity
- ✓ Various atmospheric conditions (rain, snow, lightning, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.)
- ✓ Can cause serious injury and even death
- ✓ A disturbed state of the natural environment or atmosphere (also spiritual disturbance)
- ✓ Impassability
- ✓ The list of our current crises on page 1
- ✓ ...among others

¹ www.dictionary.com

When caught in the midst of a storm, there are many factors that can cause fear, harm, devastation, uncertainty, and yes, even death. Now that we have an idea of what a storm is and some of its characteristics, let's go into the midst of our storms and find strength from the Lord for coping with them, while in the midst.

Notes: _____

INTO THE STORM...

Entrance into a storm can happen in a number of ways. One way is by the things that we have done, and the consequence is the entrance into a storm. Another way is by things that are beyond your control, like many of the things that are happening around us and in our world today. A third way to enter a storm is by the Lord, and at his appointing. By whatever means you have entered your storm, the best learning precepts for finding strength in a storm are found in how the Lord showed his disciples to deal with a storm, as found in *Mark 4:35-41*. It was here that the Lord sent his disciples on a journey that would culminate with them winding up in a storm.

Point of Instruction: What is one to think or do when you have been instructed by the Lord to make your way to the other side, not knowing that he is sending us into the midst of a storm (Mark 4:35). The storms of life are meant to test our faith, and for the Lord to prove himself strong to give us the victory. Consider your storm in the context of all the storms in the bible...and that is, not one time was there ever a loss of life to those whom the Lord was with in the storm.

- As long as you are in the Lord's Ship (commonly referred to by hymn writers as the "Old Ship of Zion") there is safety and refuge. So it was with Noah, he and his family were in the ship. So it was with Paul and the other prisoners in *Acts 27:40-44*. The disciples were in the ship. All who are outside of the "Ark of Safety" are in mortal danger. The following texts witness to the Lord as a refuge in the midst of a storm:

Psalms 107:28-31, 28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. 29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. 30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. 31 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Isa 25:4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Nahum 1:3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

Mark chapter 5 opens with a praise report, “*And they came over unto the other side...*” The praise is that they came over in spite of stormy weather.

Point of Instruction: When you come out of a storm, the first order of business should be praise! No matter how bad or intense the storm WAS, you came through. Victory is achieved by coming through the storm, and it doesn’t matter what happened while you were in the storm. In life, we will encounter storms. The question is if we will be a *SURVIVOR*. We will experience many storms. After Job had been hit with a storm of life, consider his response in *Job 1:21*. Job’s praise was proactive and not reactive in the sense that he didn’t wait until God had brought him through and restored all that he had, but he blessed God in advance.

Notes:

STORMS PROVIDE US (EQUIP) WITH TESTIMONIES

Point of Instruction: Consider what you can and will learn about the Lord in the midst of a storm and as he brings deliverance. Awesome testimonies are birthed from some of life’s fiercest storms. The disciples commented in *Mark 4:41*, “*And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*” They had never seen such an awesome display of the Lord’s power and might as they had seen on this occasion. These were experienced fishermen who, by knowledge of their profession, could wield their sails and anchors to manage their vessels in the midst of turbulent waters, but the storm that they were in was of a kind that they had never seen before. Therefore, their wisdom and experience failed them, making it even more incredible that, by mere words, Jesus was able to command the storm to obey him. There is not a storm in our lives that ***a word from the Lord*** will not cause to come to rest and be at peace. Here are some other things that we learn while in the storm, which add to our testimonies...

- *We learn more about God (His Character) in the storms of life, and we serve an able God.*
- *We shouldn't be quick to judge others.* We may not know what they've been through. The disciples were ostracized, criticized, and ultimately killed for giving their all to the Master, but what people didn't fully realize or know was all that they had been through with Jesus, and all that he had done for them. When you have come through a storm, or several, then what people say about you is irrelevant because of the victory you have won. We would all do well to remember the victories God has given us – the storms He brought us through.
- *Always follow the Lord's Instructions, even if they appear to lead into a storm.* In Mark 4:35, Jesus gave instructions to the disciples, "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, **Let us** pass over unto the other side." This is an indication that Jesus would be with them in the midst of the storm, and will be with us also. In spite of the storms they encountered, they made it. When Jesus says you'll make it, you will. When the disciples set out in obedience, the storm came. Storms come to obedient people, as well as to disobedient people (ie. Jonah).
- *Storm Conditions change.* (Mark 4:37 "And there arose a great storm of wind,..." This indicates that when they began their journey to the other side, conditions were conducive to fair sailing. However, conditions changed out on the sea for the disciples, and our conditions will change too! But we should always remember, the Lord is with us.

They did in the "last place" what they should have done in the "first place", and that would be to get the Lord involved in dealing with our storms. He's available, he knows about our storm, he is oftentimes in the midst of them with us when we start out in them. Other times, he will send us ahead and meet us in the midst of the storm, walking upon the water.

When we do not at first get the Lord involved by calling upon him, we, like them, prolong our storms. The victory is in surviving the storm, not just being in one. In our next lesson to find strength in the storm, we will look at the "Struggle In the Storm", experiencing the struggle and strain of battling the storm is what builds strength to fight through the storm.

Other Reference Scriptures:

Matthew 8:18, 23-28; Luke 8:22-26; Job 1; Genesis 6-8