

Called into a Raging Storm

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Many times, the Lord Jesus brings us into storms. Sometimes we can see them coming. But often they come in the night seasons, when we least expect them.

This booklet highlights two particular storms that God used to expand the capacities of men who were willing to follow Him. They learned that their own efforts were disruptive at best.

But through their weakness, these men became personally acquainted with the Savior, whose name reveals His nature: compassion, longsuffering, lovingkindness, and truth.

Chapter One
LAUNCH OUT

“And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

“But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

“And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

“And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

“But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

“And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me to come unto thee on the water.

“And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

“But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

“And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

“And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased” (Matthew 14:22-32).

It was the fourth watch of the night (between four and five o'clock in the morning), when Jesus went to the disciples, walking on the sea. But when they saw Him, they were troubled.

There was a storm. It was a serious storm. And Jesus bid Peter to come into the midst of it.

The wind was boisterous. The waves were very high. It was dark. And Jesus said, “Come.”

Dear friends, everyone who walks with God will be asked to come into a storm. Everyone. When we think of so many loved ones in our church family who are going through raging storms of cancer, serious injury, and broken homes, we can begin to get the picture of what a storm is like.

Now Is the Time to Obey

The waves were raging. The wind was fierce. The storm was devastating. And Jesus said, “Come *now*.”

“But can’t you wait, Jesus, until the sun is shining, and the storm stops?”

“No.”

“But is that reasonable, Jesus? Why would You tell me to come when by sight there is no possibility of walking on that water? It would be one thing if I could walk on the water when it is calm, but to try to walk on it when it’s like this? Let’s be practical!”

Every effective servant, sooner or later, will be told to come into the storm. Really, it doesn’t matter what your age is. For one, it is twenty-six. For somebody else, it’s forty-one. Jesus said to each one of them, “Come.”

Here is the great principle:

When Jesus says, “Come,” everything will be all right. Everything will be okay as long as He is the One who says, “Come.”

Obey, No Matter What the Circumstances

For Peter to step out of the boat and go toward Jesus was a risk for the natural man—a risk of faith.

Circumstances must not determine our obedience. Jesus Christ said to Peter, "I want you to come. The circumstances are bad, but do you trust My word 'Come'? Come unto Me. I know it's still dark; the sun has not yet risen. The storm is raging. But do you know what? I am walking in the raging storm Myself. And as long as I am walking with you in the raging storm, then please trust Me and come."

There is no storm so great that Jesus will not help us to walk on the water. That means He may invite us to walk on circumstances that are disastrous. Therefore, our obedience must be based upon the Word of God. Every pastor who preaches the Gospel has stood in the pulpit and acted just as if everything is okay while he was going through a storm. We put up our chin. We may even be a little firm on that specific day because we are trying to keep from breaking down and weeping. But Jesus has called us and said "Come." Therefore, our obedience is based upon the Word of God and never upon circumstances.

Circumstances must never change our obedience. Jesus led us into the storm. He led Peter into a storm. God's eyes run to and fro upon the earth "to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chroni-

cles 16:9), and we can do *anything* God tells us to do (Philippians 1:6).

Chapter Two
REACH OUT

Christians are called to change the world, but many can't even get to church on time. We have been called to be godly examples to men and women throughout the world, but many do not study the Word to show themselves approved (2 Timothy 2:15).

Recently a pastor came for advice on how to deal with problems with his staff. He said, "The people are going against me."

Every Christian is called to take up the Cross. Why? What the flesh resists and what Satan hates is the Cross, because it is the place of personal victory for the believer.

Do you know that it is possible to preach "You must be born again" and not preach the Cross? That way, the message could be evangelical and still be popular. A church could have good contemporary music and yet never bring up discipleship or teach people to go out and be

witnesses of the Gospel.

The Importance of Touch

It is so important that a pastor shakes the hands of those in his congregation. Shaking hands, to me, is a way to say, "I can't spend time with you all, but this handshake is to communicate that I really love you, and I appreciate your friendship. And, by the way, I need this handshake as much as you do." God is always very personal with us, loving us and addressing areas of personal need.

Jesus let Mary kiss His feet and His forehead (Luke 7:45). When Paul left Ephesus, men and women kissed his neck over and over again (Acts 20:37). That was an expression common to the culture at that time.

Gary Smalley, a Christian counselor and author, wrote a book on the importance of touch. In it he said that a touch is an expression in a moment in time of how we feel toward certain others all the time. So, when you only have a minute, you may just touch people, perhaps with a simple handshake. But, he said, it means everything because you are going beyond your heart.

Christ: Our Provision in the Midst

It would be difficult to be in deep waters and have to row the boat all the time. We would get so tired. How much better it is to have a boat with a motor! We have Jesus Christ as our power source; He moves the boat. And all we have to do, basically, is to switch our faith in our own ability into faith in Him.

Many have been in a place where they have asked God why He allowed certain painful situations in their lives. They would say, "Why are they hurting me? I have never done anything to them, as far as I know. Why is this happening?"

And Jesus would say, "I want you to be like Me. And you can be like Me if, in this storm, you will come to Me, yoke up with Me, learn of Me, and get to know Me." We can hear that still, small voice say "Come," as He calls us, inaudibly, by name.

No man would ever be broken if Jesus did not ask him to come into the storm. The tears I shed so easily are not because I am an emotional person. But I have found that the thing that breaks a godly man or woman is when Jesus calls us into a storm.

Addressing the Enemy

During another time in a boat on the sea, the disciples pleaded with Jesus, who was with them, to wake up, saying, “Lord, save us: we perish” (see Matthew 8:23-26). The storm was raging, but the Lord was sleeping through it all.

According to Mark 4:39, the demons caused the storm. The Lord calmed the wind and the waves by addressing the demons. One Bible scholar said that when Jesus used the words “Peace, be still” a better translation is, “Hush, be muzzled!” speaking to the demons, who were blowing the wind with their atmospheric power, which generated the storm.

We have been called to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). No matter what the circumstances appear to be, remember Who called you. “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Chapter Three

STEP OUT

The demons caused the storm. And Jesus said, "Peter."

And Peter said, "If that is You, Lord, would You bid me to come?"

And Jesus said "Come."

And Peter walked in the storm caused by the demons, with its raging wind and the waves.

Just think of it. The demons were trying to destroy Peter and the others because they were Jesus' disciples. In the first storm, He was with them on the boat. But in the second storm, Jesus sent them out alone while He went up into a mountain to pray (Matthew 14:22-23). Jesus had been praying all night, and in the fourth watch He came walking on the raging seas in a storm that the demons caused.

I would like to have seen the invisible kingdoms, with the demons and God's angels looking on, when Peter actually walked on the water.

The demons probably said, “Oh no! We are defeated again.”

That Sinking Feeling

So, the wind was raging, and the waves were terrible. And once Peter took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink. He must have said very quickly, “Save me.” Of course, Jesus did—and that was a miracle.

Then Jesus said to Peter, “O you of little faith. Why did you doubt?” (see Matthew 14:31).

The wind caused him to feel the storm, and the water caused him to see it, so though he stepped out by faith, he began to walk by feelings and by sight. But give him credit—he did come!

To receive blessings from God is more than survival. It’s revival. God pours out more blessings than we can contain.

Rather than just getting by in a maintenance program, we are in a process of progress in God’s revival program.

We face pain, and Jesus did too. Sometimes we face shame because of what the devil does in our lives. But thank God, we always end up reigning. We reign through pain, and we reign through shame (Micah 7:7-8).

And remember, to experience shame doesn't necessarily mean you are guilty of something. It may be what the world projects at us and what Satan uses to try to intimidate us (Revelation 12:10).

I have always wondered what the disciples were doing when they saw Peter walk on the water. Remember, they were a jealous group. I'll bet that John said, "I wish that were me. Now Peter is going to be Jesus' favorite, because he went when Jesus said Come."

Let's Go to the Other Side

Before both of those storms, Jesus told the disciples that they were going over to the other side (Mark 4:35; Matthew 14:22).

Some of you were with us when we toured Israel and saw the Sea of Galilee. It was very calm at the time.

But imagine that you were in the boat, crossing the Sea of Galilee, and a raging storm came up. This is humorous to me, because there was Jesus Christ—the Creator—sleeping on board.

It is not normal for people to fall asleep when they are within an inch or two of perishing. Can you imagine being in a storm like that and you just sleep through it? Their little boat

was being battered, yet the Lord was sleeping.

But just imagine the disciples furiously bailing the water out of the boat. They couldn't keep up with it. Several of them were fishermen and well-acquainted with the sea. But there they were, putting the pails in, then bailing and bailing. "We're losing ground! Lord, we can't keep up with the water we're taking on. The storm is horrible." And Jesus was still sleeping. "Don't You care that we're perishing?!" Finally, He woke up.

I wonder if the Lord will show us this in heaven, because some of those scenes were so beautiful.

In the midst of the water rushing into the boat, in the midst of waves that almost caused the boat to turn over, the Lord Jesus stood up and spoke: "Be muzzled!" In other words, "Demons, stop causing this storm." Just like that, the storm ceased. Then, just as He did so often, He addressed the disciples' faith.

Every time in the Gospels when Jesus addressed faith, He was saying, "I am involved in this. Trust Me. Believe Me. I will not let you sink. I will not."

"But this storm is more than a human can stand."

“I will not let you sink.”

“Well, why the storm?”

“It is a trial to develop your faith. And as you go on in the future, you will remember that this storm almost took your life, and I came through. So you can trust Me in the next storm, can’t you?”

The end of this account is one of my favorite verses in all the Bible: “And they came over unto the other side of the sea....” (Mark 5:1).

They reached the other side, and so will we.

CONCLUSION

Every believer will be called into raging storms, no matter what their age or position. But remember this. If Jesus says “Come,” believe me, you will be okay. You will reach the other side. You will be rescued, because of the Word of God.

Dear heavenly Father, we are so glad that You not only show us the way: You are the way. We desire to be beacons, candles in darkness to people who are going through storms today.

Keep filling us with your Holy Spirit as we purpose to take on more and more of the water of Your Word—to be filled with waves of love in unbounded seas of forgiveness and oceans of grace. Amen!