



John 6:15-21, (Parallel Passages: Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-56)

Storms are a beautiful and powerful things - when you are watching safely from a distance. It is quite another thing when we find ourselves caught in the middle of one! As boy I grew up in the Southwest of the United States known as "Tornado Alley." On more than once time I watched a funnel drop out of a distant cloud and begin to destroy everything in its path.

When rain storms come here in Zambia everyone runs for shelter. To get caught out in the open during a Zambian thunderstorm means there is a good chance you will get struck by lightening.

Everyone finds himself going through storms in life. Someone has said, "You are either just entering a storm, in the storm, or have just come out of a storm," and we know that to be the case!

Storms crash into our lives in various ways: It may be the unexpected death of a loved one. Perhaps it is a sickness or the loss of a job or a broken relationship with a member of your family - husband/wife/child.

In Scripture we are introduced to people who faced days of deep trial. There is a book in the Old Testament that bears the name of a man who knew something about storms that unexpectedly to our life. His name is Job. In a day Job lost his wealth, his children were all killed, and shortly after he lost his health. His wife suggested that he should forget his faith, curse God and die. His friends showed up to tell him that the storm he was facing had to be a result of his sin!

Jesus just fed 5000 people with a little boy's lunch. The disciples had been part of this miracle by distributing the food as it was miraculously multiplied! Wow, what a

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thrilling thing to participate in! For the disciples feeding of the 5000 was a lesson for them: God is in control of His creation and provides for his creatures. Now the as they headed across the Sea of Galilee they ran into a life-threatening storm: The storm was the exam after the lesson.

Often we are like the disciples! We hear about Jesus and we give mental assent to His claims to be God. We acknowledge that Jesus' works prove beyond doubt that He is Who He claims to be - the Son of God - yet we do not apply these realities personally!

Regardless of where you are today - heading into a storm, in as storm or just coming out of a storm, here are five truths that will help you navigate through the storms of life.

I. JESUS SENT THEM OUT INTO THE STORM (15-16, Mt. 14:22)

Jesus knew the storm was coming

The people were planning to come and by force make Jesus King (15). Knowing how great a temptation this would be for His disciples He sent them away across the Sea of Galilee by boat, while He dismissed the multitudes. (Mt. 14:22)

Jesus knows all things, He knew what the people were planning, and He knew the storm was coming (15)! He demonstrated his power as God over Creation by feeding 5000! We cannot doubt that He knew of the coming storm and was completely in control as He sent the disciples into the Sea.

Jesus sent them into the storm!

In obedience the disciples climbed into the boat and headed out onto the Sea of Galilee. Before long they were in the middle of a frightening, life-threatening storm.

It is important to recognize that the disciples were in this storm because they were IN the will of God. They were in this situation because they obeyed Christ!

There are two types of storms mentioned in Scripture:

Storms of Correction - God disciplines us because of disobedience. Jonah is an example of this. God told Jonah to go and preach to the city of Nineveh. Jonah hated the Assyrians, and instead of obeying God, Jonah purchased a ticket to Tarsus - the exact opposite direction (Jonah 1:1-4). Before long Jonah found himself in a storm that ended when the sailors threw Jonah overboard! After three days in the belly of a great fish, Jonah decided to obey God and preach to Nineveh!

Storms of Perfection - There are other storms though... storms that God brings to strengthen our faith and produce spiritual growth in our lives. This is the kind of storms the disciples find themselves in.

Though the disciples were fearful for their life, they were safer IN the storm, IN the will of God, than on shore with the crowd, out of the will of God.

The disciples looked at their circumstances and felt overwhelmed and afraid! Never judge your security on the basis of our circumstances alone! When you find yourself in

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a storm because you have obeyed the Lord, remember that He brought you there and He will care for you in the storm!

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

II. JESUS WAS WATCHING THEM AND PRAYING FOR THEM WHILE THEY WERE IN THE STORM. (15b, Mt. 14:23; Mk. 6:48)

Jesus was watching over them!

Mark 6:48 Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.

Jesus sees and feels the weight of our burdens and knows what you are going through right now!

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:14-16.

Jesus knows our fears, He sees our needs. When the Hebrews had been in cruel bondage in Egypt for over 400 years, God came to Moses and assured him, *“I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.”* (Ex. 3:7)

No matter what storm you are in today, Jesus is involved! He knows, He cares and He is in control of the situation.

Jesus was praying for them!

Matthew 14:23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray.

Not only was Jesus watching over them every moment they were battling through this storm, but He was also praying for them! The same is true for you in your storm! Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven and He is continually beseeching the Father on your behalf!

“Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Romans 8:34.

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.” Heb 7:25.

III. JESUS CAME TO THEM IN THE STORM (19)

Jesus came to them at the point when all human hope was gone!

It was the fourth watch of the night - this was somewhere between 3 am and sunrise. This was the time of night when it is the darkest! The disciples were facing the darkest hour, and Jesus came!

Matthew 14:25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

By this time the disciples had been on the Sea for up to 9 hours. They were completely exhausted! As they strained to row, the wind was against them, blowing them back, again and again.

Matthew 14:24 But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

They had expended all their efforts, but they were getting nowhere!

Mk. 6:48 - "straining at rowing"

Jesus came to them in the midst of their storm.

Have you ever just wished that the storm would end? You cry out in weariness but it just seems the storm will go on and on? God's timing is perfect, He knows what is best and what best will meet our need and fulfill His purposes!

I have often wondered why Jesus walked on the water! Certainly He could have just snapped his fingers and appeared in the boat with them. But instead Jesus walked 3-4 miles on the raging water to get to them. I think Jesus came walking on the water in order to show them that the very thing that they feared was simply a path for Him to come to them.

No matter how dark it becomes, no matter how exhausted you feel, remember this: you will never find yourself in a place where Christ cannot find you and will not come to you!

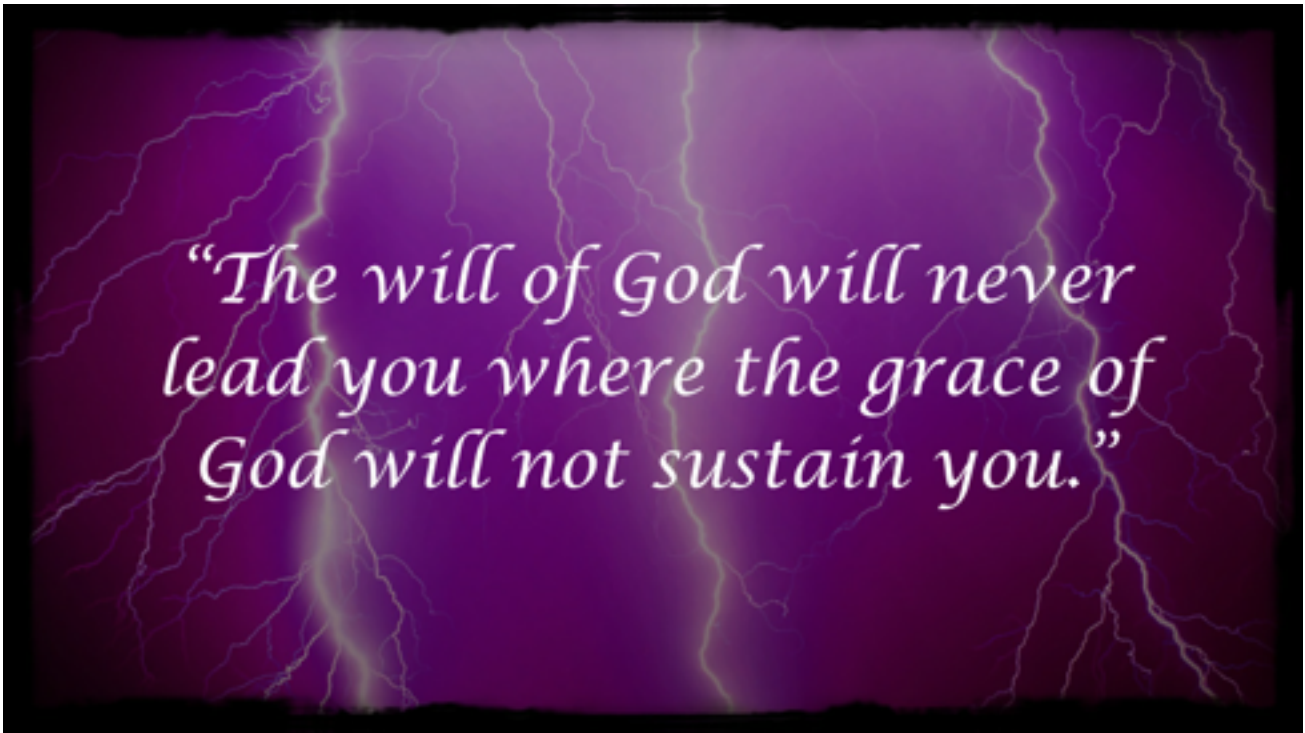
Someone has well said: *"The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God will not sustain you."*

They were so focused on their problem that they did not recognize Jesus when He came.

They were not looking for Him, but they should have been! The disciples could only see their circumstances: the raging waves, the howling wind, the water swamping the boat.

They were not waiting for Him by faith. They had forgotten that He had sent them *"to the other side"* (Mt. 14:22).

So when Jesus came to them, they did not recognize Him! *"Fear and faith cannot live in the same heart, for fear always blinds the eyes to the presence of the Lord."*



IV. JESUS PURPOSE FOR THEM TO GO THROUGH THIS STORM WAS SO THEY WOULD GROW (28-31)

He wanted them to recognize what they had been seeing and knew about Him and apply it to their own lives!

He was testing their faith

When Jesus identified Himself, Peter cried out, "if it is really you, command me to come to you on the water!" Jesus said, "Come!" Peter's request was a demonstration of his affection for Jesus resting on his confident faith in Him. (Mt. 14:28)

Peter took a step of faith when he responded to Christ's command, and stepped out of the boat (Mt. 14:29)! I can almost hear the other disciples! Peter stop! I mean we all believe in Jesus, but don't go overboard with this thing! Be reasonable man! You can't walk on water, no one can.

Peter responded in faith and stepped out of the boat - and walked to Jesus! The majority of disciples however clung to the boat! You see they are like so many of us! The boat meant security for them! **BUT JESUS WAS NOT IN THE BOAT!!**

Many times sea are like the eleven, clinging to the boat of:

- human reasoning - we trust in our own logic and human wisdom.
- human effort - we think if we just try harder.
- human comfort - we chose what appears to be the safer and more comfortable route.
- human achievement
- human ingenuity

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Whatever you are trusting in today - apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, this account is challenging us to take the step of obedient faith - get out of the boat!

You are better off out in the storm with Jesus, than “safe” in the boat without Him!

Peter walked with Jesus on top of his circumstances - by faith! (Mt. 14:29)

Faith is not believing in spite of evidence, but believing in spite of consequences!”

- I Jn. 5:4 - Victory that overcomes - our faith
- II Co. 5:7 - We walk by faith not by sight
- Heb 11:6 - Without faith it is impossible to please Him.
- Eph 1:22, 2:6 - In Christ, God has put all thing under our feet! We live above the circumstances!

Peter took his eyes off the Lord and began to look at his circumstances - the water, the driving rain the howling wind, the waves - and he began to sink (Mt. 14:30,31).

Without hesitation Peter cried out to Jesus - his prayer was short and to the point, “Lord save me!”

His prayer was immediately answered! Jesus reached down and pulled him up out of the waves and together they walked to the boat to join the other disciples.

Peter’s prayer is one that God always hears and answers! Perhaps today you realize that you are in the dark waters of sin, that your own human efforts have only pushed you further into the problem! All hope of you saving yourself is gone! Cry out like Peter, “Lord, save me!” God always answers that desperate plea! (Mt. 14:31)

He was revealing Himself as the object of their faith. (Mt. 14:33)

The result of Jesus coming into the boat and calming the storm was that the disciples fell down and worshipped Him.

*“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
Philippians 2:9-11.*

IV. JESUS BROUGHT THEM THROUGH THE STORM (Jn. 6:21, Mt. 14: 32-33)

Matthew 14:32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

When Jesus entered into the boat the storm ceased! There was peace and a strange calm when Jesus entered the boat.

The peace that each of us need today begins with being justified by faith! To be justified by faith means that God declares righteous all those who believe in Jesus (Ro. 5:1-2).

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

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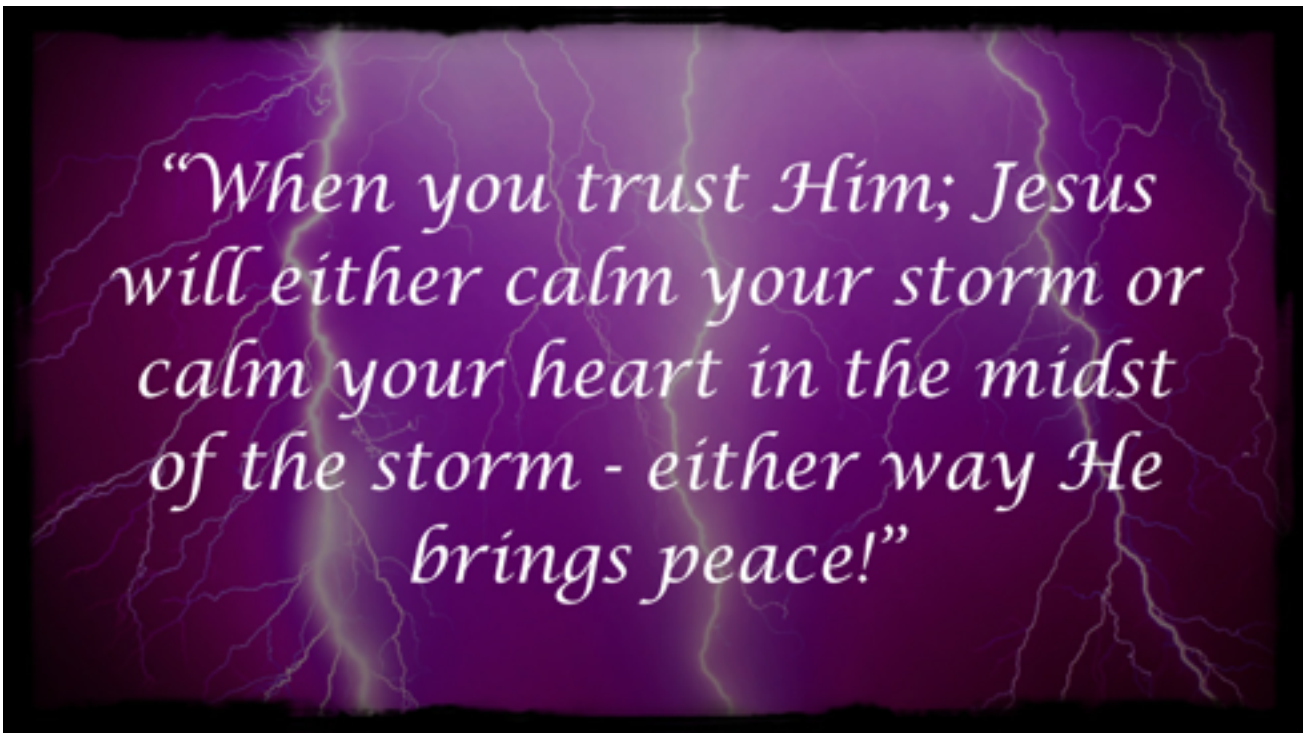
We can have peace even in the midst of the storm because we know God and we understand His purposes for the storm in our life.

Romans 5:3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

As we pass through the storm the Spirit of God pours out the love of God into our hearts & He pours it out abundantly!

Romans 5:5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

When Jesus entered the boat they were immediately at their destination (Jn. 6:21). When Jesus came in, they arrived with no further effort of their own. Their own efforts had merely got them further and further into the storm. Where they were powerless He was powerful.



So what can we take away from this today?

Do you find yourself in a storm this morning? Have you abandoned all hope of being rescued? Have you taken your eyes off Christ and put them on your circumstances? Are you desperately trying to get through your storm by some effort of your own? **LOOK TO JESUS IN FAITH!**

Remember:

- Jesus sent you out into this storm.
- Jesus is watching over you and praying for you in this storm.
- Jesus will come to you in the storm.
- Jesus wants you to grow as a result of this storm.

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- Jesus will bring you safely through this storm.

Christian Is there some area of your life where you are refusing to take a step of obedient faith? Have you heard His command, yet refuse to get out of the boat? Obey Him today!

Friend, are you are drowning in the dark waters of sin? Will you, like Peter cry out to Jesus, “*Lord, Save Me*”? If you will call to Him He will reach down and lift you up, cleanse you of your sin and carry you safely through this life and into heaven.

For more information, or counseling for the storm you are passing through email us or in Kitwe ring 0976153466.