SERIES: The Storms Of Life

April Showers Bring May Flowers

Matthew 14:22-33
• A couple of weeks ago we began this series on Surviving the Storms of Life.
• We talked about basic survival skills like:
  o Avoiding storms
  o Remembering that God is in the storms with you
  o And casting out spiritual anchors to prevent shipwreck.

• This week I want to start talking with you about specific types of storms in escalating severity and how we can survive and even thrive in the midst of them.

• The Bible tells us of three kinds of storms.
• 1. RAIN STORMS...
  o Frequent, little, short duration, falling water drops, shower,
• 2. FLOOD STORMS...
  o Flood in the Bible can represent Divine Judgment.
  o Floods are not as often as rains.
  o The storm of the flood can show in proper building, one should not build in the spiritual flood plains.
  o The storm of floods can come from making poor choices and building in unsound areas.
• 3. WIND STORMS...
  o Gales, tornadoes, hurricanes, not as often, you can prepare some a head of the wind storm, but when the wind storm is raging, you have to find safety until the storm passes.
  o After the storm passes you survey the damage, and repair or rebuild if necessary.
  o Often cloud burst and hail storms accompany Wind storms.

• I ponder, sometimes God calms the storms, sometimes He calms the individual.
  o Be encouraged in your difficult situations.
  o Your attitude and your view can make a difference.
• Let’s start with a look at spring showers.
• I call them spring showers because these are the storms that aren’t so threatening in life.
• These are not the Thunder Storms with torrential rain and lightening - thunder crashing and the potential for hail and dangerous winds.
• These are the common storms that blow into life - make things hard - stress us out - and generally make a nuisance of themselves.
• These are the everyday storms that seem to make life a struggle no matter what we do.

• Let’s look at a spring storm in the scripture and what we can learn about surviving in the midst of them.

Matthew 14:22-33
22 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.
23 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.
24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.
25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.
26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

I.  Don’t blow things out of proportion (v.24-26)

• Every storm is not life threatening.
• The first thing I want you to understand is that even Spring Showers are storms but there is nothing life threatening here.

• In fact the first time we hear about their fear is when they see Jesus walking on the water.
• The storm is real, the boat they are rowing is being battered by the wind and waves.
• The disciples have been rowing for a long time.
• It was daylight when they began their journey it is now between 3 and 6AM.

• They have been rowing most of the night and have only crossed to the middle of the Sea of Galilee...
  o The wind is against them...
  o They are tired...
  o They are sore from rowing...
  o But experienced fisherman they have been here before.

• We need to gain perspective in life.
• Have you ever known someone who just sees every day as a crisis?
• Every day living seems to put some people into crisis mode.

• Folks every day is not a crisis.
• Every hardship does not have to cause despair.
• There is a sense of the dramatic in all of us that seems to want to make every hill a mountain and every puddle an ocean.
• There is a flair for the dramatic that wants everyone to see how strong we are or how hard we have it.

• Begin to put storms in perspective.
• Dealing with a bad report card or a run in with the boss does not have to carry the same emotional weight as dealing with cancer or a potential broken marriage.
• Some storms we face are tough they’re tiring, they’re stressful - but they don’t require crisis management.

• I have asked many couples who are squabbling over some issue - how important is this really?
• I know it seems like a big deal but is the world really going to stop turning if the dishes don’t get done?
• Refuse the inclination to blow every problem into a national emergency in your home and in your life.
• Sometimes we just have to keep rowing till we get to our destination.
• We might arrive tired and wet but we're going to arrive without the help of the coast guard.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.
31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

II. Don’t give in to fear (v.30-31)

• Peter gives into his fear and falls.
• Fear causes paralysis and fear makes bad decisions.
• Peter looked around saw the wind and the waves and forgot about Jesus who was standing right in front of him.
• Fear causes us to do crazy things.
• Sometimes we strike out at the people who are trying to help us.
• Here is a truth for you – Hospital beds and empty checkbooks make bad decisions.
• If bad decisions got you to the hospital bed or empty checkbook then you need to make radical changes.
• If you have made sound decisions sometimes you just have to ride out the wind and the waves till you get to your destination.
• Sometimes you need to stay the course even when the wind is blowing against you.
• What I am saying is that you need to make principled decisions about life that are made in the quiet of the spirit not in the fear of the moment.

• EYES OF FEAR OR EYES OF FAITH?
  • Eyes of Fear see with comparison. Eyes of Faith see with compassion.
  • Eyes of Fear see mistakes. Eyes of Faith see perfection.
  • Eyes of Fear see death. Eyes of Faith see life.
  • Eyes of Fear see Satan. Eyes of Faith see God.
  • Eyes of Fear see with hate. Eyes of Faith see with love.
  • Eyes of Fear see with despair. Eyes of Faith see with hope.
  • Eyes of Fear see control. Eyes of Faith see protection.
Eyes of Fear see failure. Eyes of Faith see success.
Eyes of Fear see lack. Eyes of Faith see abundance.
Eyes of Fear see challenges. Eyes of Faith see victories.
Eyes of Fear see with judgment. Eyes of Faith see with mercy.
Eyes of Fear see circumstance. Eyes of Faith see opportunities.
Eyes of Fear see with rejection. Eyes of Faith see with acceptance.
Eyes of Fear see with resentment. Eyes of Faith see with forgiveness.
Eyes of Fear see troubles. Eyes of Faith see testimonies.
Eyes of Fear see with apathy. Eyes of Faith see with change.
Eyes of Fear see with anger. Eyes of Faith see with peace.
Eyes of Fear see with complaint. Eyes of Faith see with prayer.
Eyes of Fear see differences. Eyes of Faith see variety.
Eyes of Fear see threats. Eyes of Faith see promises.
Eyes of Fear see the end. Eyes of Faith see the beginning.
Eyes of Fear see victims. Eyes of Faith see martyrs.
Eyes of Fear see division, Eyes of Faith see multiplication.
Eyes of Fear see man, Eyes of Faith see Jesus!

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

III. Find the Presence of God (v.31)

- Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of Him.
- In the midst of everyday trials and storms - Jesus is there.

- In our world there are many things that will disguise itself as the helping hand of Jesus.
- We must look through the mess (the storm, the winds, the waves) and find the REAL JESUS.
  - There's the Republican Jesus—who is against tax increases and activist judges, for family values and owning firearms.
  - There's Democrat Jesus—who is against Wall Street and
Wal-Mart, for reducing our carbon footprint and printing money.

- **There’s Therapist Jesus**—who helps us cope with life’s problems, heals our past, tells us how valuable we are and not to be so hard on ourselves.

- **There’s Starbucks Jesus**—who drinks fair trade coffee, loves spiritual conversations, drives a hybrid, and goes to film festivals.

- **There’s Open-minded Jesus**—who loves everyone all the time no matter what (except for people who are not as open-minded as you).

- **There’s Touchdown Jesus**—who helps athletes fun faster and jump higher than non-Christians and determines the outcomes of Super Bowls.

- **There’s Martyr Jesus**—a good man who died a cruel death so we can feel sorry for him.

- **There’s Gentle Jesus**—who was meek and mild, with high cheek bones, flowing hair, and walks around barefoot, wearing a sash (while looking very German).

- **There’s Hippie Jesus**—who teaches everyone to give peace a chance, imagines a world without religion, and helps us remember that, "all you need is love."

- **There’s Yuppie Jesus**—who encourages us to reach our full potential, reach for the stars, and buy a boat.

- **There’s Spirituality Jesus**—who hates religion, churches, pastors, priests, and doctrine, and would rather have people out in nature, finding "the god within" while listening to ambiguously spiritual music.

- **There’s Platitude Jesus**—good for Christmas specials, greeting cards, and bad sermons, inspiring people to believe in themselves.

- **There's Revolutionary Jesus**—who teaches us to rebel against the status quo, stick it to the man, and blame things on "the system."

- **There’s Guru Jesus**—a wise, inspirational teacher who believes in you and helps you find your center.

- **There’s Boyfriend Jesus**—who wraps his arms around us as we sing about his intoxicating love in our secret place.

- **There’s Good Example Jesus**—who shows you how to help
people, change the planet, and become a better you.

- And then there's **Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.**
  - Not just another prophet.
  - Not just another Rabbi.
  - Not just another wonder-worker.
  - He was the one they had been waiting for:
    - The Son of David and Abraham's chosen seed;
    - The one to deliver us from captivity;
    - The goal of the Mosaic law;
    - Yahweh in the flesh;
    - The one to establish God's reign and rule;
    - The one to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, freedom to the prisoners and proclaim Good News to the poor;
    - The Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.
  - This Jesus was the Creator come to earth and the beginning of a New Creation.
  - He embodied the covenant, fulfilled the commandments, and reversed the curse.
  - This Jesus is the Christ that God spoke of to the Serpent;
  - The Christ prefigured to Noah in the flood;
  - The Christ promised to Abraham;
  - The Christ prophesied through Balaam before the Moabites;
  - The Christ guaranteed to Moses before he died;
  - The Christ promised to David when he was king;
  - The Christ revealed to Isaiah as a Suffering Servant;
  - The Christ predicted through the Prophets and prepared for through John the Baptist.

  - This Christ is not a reflection of the current mood or the projection of our own desires.
  - He is our Lord and God.
  - He is the Savior of the world, and substitute for our sins...
  - He is more loving, more holy, and more wonderfully
fear than we ever thought possible.

- Peter had enough sense to call out to the Master of all storms.
- As Peter refocused, he saw Jesus...
  - Jesus was not passively standing there.
  - Jesus was reaching out his hand --- hope was there all along.
  - Peter had to learn to grab a hold of his emotions and control them.

- Peter saw the extended hand and accepted deliverance.

- Don’t get lost in the drudgery of the storm.
- Don't loose hope that the sun will shine again.

- Don’t Give Up Reach Up.
- Find in the midst of the storm when your faith is wavering and you’re up to your neck in it all - that Jesus is there.
- His promise is that He will be with us even to the end of the age.

- His call to us is “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.”

- Now Jesus has his hand extended toward you.

**CLOSING**

- In Spring Showers there is a call (29) Jesus says to Peter "Come”.

- Step out on the water.
- Peter get out of the boat.

- You want to walk on water “Come on.”
- Jesus looks at Peter in the midst of the storm and calls him to a moment of:
  - Faith
    - Peter do you believe?
    - Peter am I big enough?
• Peter what is your faith made of?

• Trust
  o Peter if you step out I’ll take care of you.
  o I’ve got you Peter if you’ll just trust me.

• In every storm there is a call for us to have faith to believe in Christ.
• To know that He loves us and cares for us.
• A call to trust that He has our back and won’t let us flounder.

• In the midst of spring showers - Peter found the strength to get out of the boat - the faith to walk on water - and when he failed he found the strong arms of Jesus to lift him out of his crisis.

• If you want to survive the day to day showers of life - don’t make the storms bigger than they are.
• Don’t give in to fear but walk in the strength of the arms of Christ.

• If God brings you to it --- then God will help you through it.
  o God knows when to lighten you load or to strenghten your back.
  o Trust God to calm the storm, or trust Him to calm you in the storm!