

# Hebrews: Laying Hold of the Hope

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Mark, Mark chapter 4, Mark chapter 4. When I was trying to decide what to do today, oh wait a minute, yes, when I was trying to decide what to do today, I had a song in mind.
- You see the title on the screen, You Are My Refuge? There's a song by that title, Bonnie's going to sing it for us now. I wander through this world in selfishness and pride.
- The storms of life surrounded me, I had no place to hide. Until I heard the news, a refuge strong and sure, was waiting then to welcome me and keep me there secure.
- You are my refuge, I hide in you. You are the hope I'm running to.
- Your words are faithful, your promise true, I hide in you.
- [ 1 : 4 7 ]     Dark clouds may fill the sky, but still I see the sun. God's love shines down upon his child, the overshadowed one.
- No matter what I feel, his promises are true. And I can trust him even when the storms he takes me through.
- You are my refuge, I hide in you. You are the hope I'm running to.
- Your words are faithful, your promise true, I hide in you.
- I hide in you. Thank you.
- [ 2 : 5 9 ]     You are my refuge. As I started to say when I was trying to think, I think about so many people seem to be going through so much right now. And I remember the message I read a few years ago, and God called it to my mind, and I said, that would be a good one for us now.
- One that hopefully reminds us that he is our refuge. That song she just sang, in case you didn't catch all the words, part of it says, dark clouds may fill the sky, but I still see the sun, S-O-N.
- God's love shines down upon his child, the overshadowed one. No matter what I feel, his promises are true. And I can trust him even when the storm he takes me through.
- You are my refuge, I hide in you. You are the hope I'm running to. Your words are faithful, your promise true. I hide in you.
- Do we hide in Christ? Is he our refuge? As we go through different things, as we face the storms of life, is he our refuge? I have lived in places where storms are a big deal.
- [ 4 : 1 6 ]     We lived in Florida back in the early 90s. Angela was born in Fort Lauderdale. And before she was one year old, Hurricane Andrew went through Miami.
- Some of you are old enough to remember Hurricane Andrew. We lived in Fort Lauderdale at the time, 30 miles north. It wasn't as bad in Fort Lauderdale.
- We got off pretty easy. We lost roofing tiles. We had, you know, those terracotta rounded tiles, if you've ever seen those. We had those things and stuff, and some of those blew off and things. But down in Homestead, you know the pictures you saw on the news.
- It was just devastating. And we were watching, as long as the power was on and TV stations were, we were watching a TV station.

A guy by the name of Brian Norcross was giving almost continual updates on things that were happening and things that were taking place. Until the TV station lost its tower and stuff at the top of the building at wind speeds of 164 miles an hour.

[ 5 : 28 ] That's a storm. You're going to get 164 miles an hour. So then we moved back to Maine shortly after that. And then we decided we'd move out and venture out again, and we went to Alabama.

Alabama has tornadoes. Fortunately, where we lived in Alabama, Dothan, I don't remember the last time Dothan had a tornado. They tend to go this way and this way around Dothan.

But going this way around Dothan, you have Dothan, then you have Fort Rucker. Any of you in the military might be familiar with Fort Rucker. It is a little city, basically, where guys go to learn how to fly helicopters.

And then on the other side of Fort Rucker is Enterprise, Alabama. Enterprise had a tornado go through the middle of town. The tornado was devastating.

It went through the high school. Kids were inside, out of the classrooms and stuff, inside the hallways where they were supposed to be. But still, part of the roof came off and eight students died in that tornado.

[ 6 : 43 ] And tornadoes are so specific. It came through the high school, went down the football field, went across the street, took out the house. Like, this is the street. Took out the house right there.

Took out half of this house over here. Didn't even touch this one over here. And as it took out part of the high school and the football field and all that, right across the street on this side, was a multimillion dollar Southern Baptist church.

They had about \$50,000 worth of damage. That was it. No more. Matter of fact, when President Bush came, that's where they set up headquarters, was at that church. It was that little damage that they had.

We went down there a few weeks afterwards, just to, you know, be nosy. And we went down and the thing I tell people, I will never forget about that scene down there.

There was a tree. Every leaf was gone off of it. You've seen guardrails. There was a guardrail that had hit the tree.

[ 7 : 44 ] And you think, okay, it hits the tree and kind of bends around. No. This guardrail was wrapped around the tree. I mean, five or six times.

It's just devastating what they can do. You know, we all face storms in our lives. Sometimes it's not a storm like that.

It's not a hurricane or a tornado. Sometimes it's heart disease. I've been there, had open heart surgery. Sometimes it's cancer. Some here have had cancer. And have faced the prognosis of having that storm in their life.

But do we realize Christ is a refuge? We can go there to find peace and safety in the midst of the storm.

Philippians 4, 7 says, A peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Our God will provide peace in the midst of the storm.

[ 8 : 48 ] You're over in Mark chapter 4 this morning. Let's have a word of prayer and then we're going to read some of Mark chapter 4. Let's pray. Father, I pray this morning you help us to stop and to look.

There are a number of people who are going through storms right now. There may be little storms. There may be big storms. There may be devastating storms. But they're going through storms. Lord, I pray that you would be with each one.

Help them. Lord, I pray that you would help them to understand that you are with them. As we talked in Sunday school, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.

According to Hebrews 13, 5. Lord, you will be with us every step of every day, wherever we are, whatever we're going through. Lord, I pray that you would help us to understand the protection that we have because of you being there with us.

Lord, bless this time that we have together. May it be a help. The people who are struggling. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. You know, Mark chapter 4, beginning at verse 35.

[ 10 : 00 ] Verse 35 says, And the same day, when he even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship.

And there were other little ships. Other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind. And the waves beat into the ship.

And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow. And they awakened him and said unto him, Lord, carest thou not that we perish?

And he arose and rebuked the wind. And said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased. And there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful?

How is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the wave obey him?

[ 11 : 00 ] You understand why I sang that song, Master of the Tempest is Raging. It's basically about this passage of scripture. Jesus has his disciples in a place where he can teach them some important lessons.

He has them in a place where there's a storm going on, the wind's blowing, the waves are crashing, you know, the ship is filling up, it's tossing to and fro, it's just, you guys must understand, out there in the lobster boats some days, things kind of get a little rocky out there.

And they're facing all of that. And it got to be a little terrifying for them. And remember, some of these guys are fishermen by trade. They have been out on that Sea of Galilee.

They know what it can do out there. And they're terrified at the moment. Think about that, how bad this storm must have been. And where's Jesus? He's asleep on a pillow in the hinter part of the ship.

At this point, the disciples think that Jesus doesn't even care. Well, humanly speaking, Jesus is asleep. He doesn't even know. But from his godly standpoint, he knew exactly what was going on and what was happening and what needed to be done.

[ 12 : 27 ] And he's going to get up. They're going to wake him up and he's going to get up and he's going to come out and he's going to see what's going on. And he's just going to go, peace. Be still. And everything's going to go back to being calm.

What's the lessons that we learn from this passage of scripture? First of all, this morning, God has a plan in the storm. God has a plan in the storm.

Jesus had a plan in the storm. You know, he has a plan for our lives. So often we forget that. We go through things and we face things. God has a plan that he's trying to accomplish.

The first thing for me, you would think these disciples would have gotten the fact that Jesus is in the boat. There's no way this boat's going down.

This boat's going to be just fine because Jesus is in it. But they didn't look at it that way. They didn't really see Jesus for who he was quite yet. So Jesus is in the boat and he has a plan.

[ 13 : 29 ] And he has plans when the storm will arrive. When the storm will arrive. You know, look at verse 35 and 36.

And the same day, when even was come, he said unto them, Let us pass over to the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him, even as he was in the ship. And they were also with him, other little ships.

Jesus knew exactly the right time to teach them. He's been teaching them parables. He's been teaching them lessons all day long. If you read the first part of this chapter. And now they're going to the other side.

They'd had a multitude there. He'd been explaining things to them. But now it's just, those guys are gone. Just he and his disciples. And he's got some lessons for them to learn.

You know, Jesus knows exactly what we need when we need it. He knows exactly when to teach us certain lessons. He is in control. We tend to forget that.

[ 14 : 29 ] That he's in control. Why could he sleep when they were, because he's in control. He knew exactly what was going on. And he could handle it. Not only does he tell us when, but he tells us where the storm will occur.

Where the storm will occur. And he said, let us pass over to the other side. We're going to go from here to over there across the Sea of Galilee.

You know, sometimes we face troubles. And whether it be family, friends, finances. Our possessions.

Physical health. Whatever. There are things that we go through. And sometimes it seems like, why is this happening now?

Why is it happening here? What does it happen? It doesn't matter when or where it takes place. I want you to remember something. Look at verse 35 again.

[ 15 : 32 ] In the same day when the evening was come, he said unto them, let, what's the next word? Us. Let us. Jesus was going with them.

He was going to be with them in the midst of the storm. They were not facing this by themselves. Jesus was with them every step of the way.

When you're going through trials and troubles, God may be allowing those things to happen in your life. But he is also with you in the midst of those things that are taking place in your life.

Not only that, he plans who? Who the storm will impact. Verse 36 says, and when they were sent away the multitude, he took him even as he wasn't.

He sent the multitudes away. He had been teaching the multitudes all day long and he's been from parables and things. But now it's time to send them away. They were not ready to learn the lessons that the disciples were.

[ 16 : 33 ] The disciples had been walking with him. They'd been watching him. They'd been listening to him. And they were ready to learn some new things from him. They were ready to learn some things about faith and about trust.

And so Jesus sends the multitude away and takes these disciples with him. These are their most devoted. Their most faithful. These are the ones who have been with him since the beginning.

And they've been following him. And he's going to teach them that when a storm hits, he has a plan. When a storm hits, he's still in control.

When a storm hits, he is right there in the middle of it with you. You know, somebody has said that when Jesus is all you have, you find that Jesus is all you need.

Those disciples are about to learn that. When Jesus is all you have, that's all you need. You just need to walk with him and trust him. He's right there in the boat with you. Second thing I want you to understand this morning is the fact that Jesus is present in the storm.

[ 17 : 39 ] Get that fact down. Jesus is present in the storm. He's with you no matter how severe the storm is. Look at verse 37. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

The disciples find themselves in the midst of the storm. And as I said, some of these guys are trained fishermen. They have been on the boat. They have made their living off those boats.

They knew exactly how to handle themselves in a storm. And they're scared to death. They don't know what to do in this storm.

It's an intense storm. They're facing some things that they have never faced before. We do that, don't we? There are times when we face things that we have never faced before.

When I had heart surgery, that was the first time I'd ever done that. Don't ever hope to do it again. Some of you have gone through cancer. Anybody going, ah, I've had cancer.

[ 18 : 45 ] I just can't wait until the next time. No. We go through intense things that we don't want to ever face again. And here's this intense storm. And sometimes God will put us in those, allow us to go through those things.

Hoping that we will learn from those things. He has lessons to teach us. And sometimes we won't learn them without the storm in our life to help teach us.

He's present no matter how intense. I changed that to intense. Probably should have left it as scary. Because we talked about severe. How scary the storm should be.

Verse 8. He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow. And they awake him and said unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

Which, you know, you think about it. The storm's taking place. The Bible tells us already. The storm's taking place. The water's coming in the ship. The ship is getting full and stuff. How long did it take them to go to Jesus?

[ 19 : 54 ] They probably had the sails down so the ship wouldn't be just driven with the wind wherever it was going. They're bailing things because the ship's full. They're bailing.

Finally somebody said, oh yeah, Jesus. We had to go wake him up. Where is he anyway? Oh, he's asleep back.

He's asleep back there. Go wake him up. Tell him what's going on. Carest thou not that we perish? I had a thing up on a signboard out there a few weeks ago.

Prayer. First response. Last. Not last resort. And I think the disciples here, let's go get Jesus. That was the last resort.

They had tried everything else and couldn't do anything. We better go get Jesus. They had tried on their own account to take care of everything they possibly could. They finally reached a point of frustration where there's nothing else they could think of to do.

[ 20 : 56 ] We have a tendency to do that. We get in situations and we start drowning. And it's like, oh yeah, Jesus. I should pray about this. We need to make sure we have him first and foremost in our mind.

It says he was in the hinder part of the ship there in verse 38. See, the storm came up. Things are happening. They're happening quickly. They're having to pitch this, you know, get the water out.

And Jesus isn't in their line of vision. They forgot about him. He's in the hinder part of the ship. You know, they couldn't see him.

He was there all the time, but they couldn't see him. And so they forgot to go and talk to him and get his help. So often we do. We get so wrapped up in the things that are taking place in our life that we don't see Jesus.

We say, how can Jesus be in your life if I'm going through all this? He's right there. Are we willing to go to him? And ask for his help. He has a plan in the storm.

[ 22 : 02 ] He is present in the storm. And in verse 39, he performs in the storm. It says in verse 39, he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, peace, be still.

And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. You think about this. This is probably one of the most amazing miracles that Jesus did. Of all the different miracles, he has all of nature under his control.

All he had to do was get up and speak to it. Three words. You know, those of you with me on Wednesday nights, we've been talking about Elijah.

And we were amazed by the fact that Elijah prayed a 63-word prayer. And fire came down from heaven and consumed that altar. Jesus gets up and he says three words.

Peace. Be still. That's it. Didn't wave his arms around. Didn't jump up and down. Didn't have explosions taking off.

[ 23 : 08 ] Peace. Be still. That's it. And the sea calmed. That's one of the most amazing miracles there is. You know, stop and think about how big Jesus is.

Think about how powerful he is. Think about all the things he can do. And he says three little words. Peace be still. At the sound of his voice, it says the wind ceased.

That's power. You ever wish you could do that with your kids? Peace. Be still. Doesn't quite work that way. But Jesus does.

He possesses that same power today. And the effect of that was exactly what Jesus wanted. Notice verse 41.

They feared exceedingly and said one to another, What manner of man is this? That even the wind and the wave obey him.

[ 24 : 11 ] What manner of man is this? He is not just a man. He is God himself. What manner of man is this?

You think about these disciples. They've been with him. What have they seen? They've seen the blind made to see. They've seen the deaf made to hear. They've seen the lame walk.

They've seen lepers cleansed. They've seen demons cast out. They've seen him raise people from the dead. What manner of man is this?

They've seen all those things. And I was like, okay, you can do those things. That's pretty cool. Yeah, all right. But now their life was in danger. Now it expected them personally. And they're like, whoa. What happens when Jesus affects our life personally?

Maybe that's why he sometimes allows us to go through the storms. It's because, you know what? You need to learn who I am. You need to see what I can do. This isn't the first miracle they've witnessed.

[ 25 : 17 ] But it's one they're never going to forget. In the midst of their troubles, they forgot who was with them. Sounds familiar. Sounds like us.

So often we forget who is with us in the storms. He is always there. If he can calm a storm by saying three words, peace, be still.

Can he save your lost loved ones? Can he bring wayward children back? Can he free people from addictions?

Can he repair a marriage? Can he restore families? Can he bring peace to the most hard-hearted person you know? He can do it all.

But we spend very little time on that prayer thing. Prayer becomes the last resort, not the first response. We need to make sure we spend time with him every day.

[ 26 : 28 ] And in verse 39, it says that there was a great calm. Some storms take place in our life, and they rage for a long time. They go on and on and on.

Family situations. Work situations. They may go on and on for a while. What if we stopped right off at the beginning and started praying about it and asked Jesus to intervene, asked Jesus to work?

You know, he has a way of taking care of things for us. Richard Fuller, who was a pastor back in the 1800s, he had a friend who was an old seaman.

And he said, the old seaman said, In fierce storms, we must put the ship in a certain position and keep her there. Fuller, the pastor, went on to say, This, Christian, is what you must do.

You must put your soul in one position and keep it there. You must stay upon the Lord and come what may, wind, waves, thunder, lightning, whatever.

[ 27 : 36 ] You must hold fast your confidence in God's faithfulness and his everlasting love. Do you ever feel overwhelmed by things? Keep your focus on him.

Keep your focus on what he can do and has done. Fix your mind on the Lord. I didn't take time to put him up on the thing because I just thought of him as we're going over this last night, I think.

But Psalm, I'm going to give you three Psalms if you want to write them down. Psalm 57.7, Psalm 108.1, and Psalm 112.7.

Psalm 57.7, Psalm 108.1, Psalm 112.7. They all have one thing in common. They talk about, my heart is fixed.

My heart is fixed, O Lord, my heart is fixed. I will sing and praise because my heart is fixed. And it says, the other verses say other things.

[ 28 : 43 ] When you fix your heart on God and keep it there, it takes care of so many different things. I actually have written a course about that one of these days. Bonnie, I'm going to teach it to you.

About the fact that my heart is fixed on God. Ask him for his help. Trust him to give you peace. He used a storm to increase the disciples' faith.

They marveled at his power. He has a way of getting our attention. When things come, do you fix your heart on him? Trust him no matter what's taking place.

One day, sinners are going to face God's wrath. What if they had fixed their sight on Jesus and kept it there?

What if we told them about fixing their sight on Jesus and keeping it there? Jesus has a place of safety. You are my refuge.

[ 29 : 52 ] That safe harbor. That we understand about that here. Safe harbors and things. Jesus is safe harbor. Jesus is a safe harbor that we can go to.

We can take our refuge in him. Repent. Trust him. Turn to him. Be born again. And when we do that, it doesn't matter what the greatest storm is that comes into your life.

Jesus has a plan. It doesn't matter what things start happening in your life. Jesus is present. It doesn't matter how severe that thing may be.

Jesus performs. He is my refuge in the storm. I know there are people here facing different things.

There are people here facing all kinds of, whether it be family, sickness, whatever. He is our refuge in the midst of a storm. When we're going through those storms, can we pray and say, it is well with my soul?

[ 31 : 07 ] 478. Can you hear a book?