

How to Face the Storms of Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 March 2009

[0 : 00] Glory to God. Luke chapter 8. If you've got your Bibles there. Verse 22. Now it came to pass a certain day and he went into a ship with his disciples and there came down a storm of wind.

This massive whirlwind came down. This storm of wind swept the lake. It came down on the lake and they were filled with water and were in jeopardy.

They were in danger. This was dangerous. This was very risky. And they came to him and awoke him saying, Master, Master, we perish.

Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. That turbulent water, that raging water, he rebuked it.

And they ceased. And there was a calm, a dead calm, came over that lake that was formerly so turbulent, raging waters, suddenly, shh, a dead calm.

[1 : 27] And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this?

For he commanded even the winds and water and they obey him. It's got the sense there that he commands, he marshals the wind and the waves under his orders.

And they recognise his authority and they obey him. It's got that military sense to it here. And there's like accounts of this in Matthew 8 and Mark 4.

We'll touch on those as we cover this one. And in the Matthew 8 account, in verse 24, it calls it a great tempest. A great tempest.

And this word tempest is seismos in the Greek. And you don't have to be Einstein to work out seismos. It's to do with...

[2 : 25] Seismic. Seismic. To do with earthquakes. It was like there was an earthquake. It was like a tsunami. It was a commotion. Strong's calls it a commotion.

If it was the air, it would be a gale of the ground. It would be an earthquake. This was a tremendous tempest. A dramatic calamity. An amazing event.

A great tempest. He calls it Matthew. And then when the Lord Jesus rebuked the elements, it says there was a great calm.

A great calm. And then when all this had happened, the disciples had a great fear. A great fear of God. A great tempest. A great calm.

A great fear. Let's look at this storm together. I know it's a common story that we tell and hear about. Think about how we can learn from the storms of life we might go through.

[3 : 25] Here was this storm. A furious storm. It was furious. It was great. It was powerful. Like a hurricane. And we see, thankfully, we don't get so much of it in Australia. Maybe up north on the Queensland coast or Northern Territory.

We don't see so much of it in South Australia, thankfully. But like a cyclonic conditions. Hurricanes like in America. You see these great whirlwinds. These great forces of storm that come.

And sweep across in a forceful way. Causing chaos and confusion. Rain. Disaster. And we know you often hear in the media of late about the storm that is going across the world.

The way everything's being turned topsy-turvy. And perhaps the storms in our own lives too. The black thunder clouds descend. The furious gusts of wind come and shake us and stir us and swamp our boat.

The floods of rain. The gush of the rain. And everything gets tossed around and upside down.

Maybe the storms in our lives. Storms of sickness.

[4 : 33] Storms of sadness. Of grief. Of uncertainty. Of despair. Of distress. Of depression. Storms can come.

They do come. They will come. We can expect them to come. Storms can come in different ways. Different forms. A loss of a loved one. A loss of a job.

A loss of our health. Perhaps an emotional storm. Of a breakup. Of a relationship. Of a crisis of faith. I'm in the storm.

But Jesus is in the boat. You're in a storm. But don't forget who's with you. Don't forget who's in the boat. He said we're going over to the other side.

Would he lie? He says you're going to get to the other side. He's with you. He's in the boat. And he stills the storm. Sometimes the clouds and the storms can be sent by God's hand.

[5 : 34] His wind shakes us. It's like, as we know, a tree is strengthened by the wind. It's made firmer and grounded by the wind. It gains its strength from that storm.

And it grows through that storm. And we can have that too. Sometimes he's got to disturb us. Shake us. From our apathy. From our weakness. It's been said that there's a common misconception that the only time I have tough times is when I'm disobeying God.

But it's not true. These disciples were doing what the Lord had told them to do. They got in the boat at his orders. They got on the lake at his command.

They were being obedient to him. And Jesus told them to get in. To go and sail into that storm. God has not promised you or me a storm free life.

It's going to happen. It's going to happen. Expect it. This isn't heaven. We're not there yet. But being in the middle of the storm is exactly where God wants you to be sometimes.

[6 : 38] As it was for these disciples. Amazing though. And confusing though it seems that he would do such at times. But as it says in the Lord's Prayer. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We need to trust him. Trust his will. And obey him. And storms can help us find that deeper life as we think for example. As with Job. Job the most just man on all the earth.

And the Lord said unto Satan. Job 1 verse 12. Behold all that he hath is in thy power. Only upon himself put not forth one hand.

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. And bang. Job was in for it. I hope God doesn't say that to Satan about me. Everything that he has is in his power.

He's in Satan's power. That's pretty scary isn't it? If God was to say that of you. Everything that you have is in Satan's power. Thank God that he does hold back Satan's power from afflicting us.

[7 : 39] And causing us disaster. But at times. Sometimes God does allow that to happen. And we need to just trust him. I know it was interesting last night.

With the children we had this record of the things that we should do about God. To know him. To love him. And then one of the kids picked up that we haven't got trust him on them. To trust him is the critical thing isn't it?

The ultimate thing. To have faith in him. To trust him. And so just with Job. Just when things couldn't possibly get any worse. They got worse. That God allowed Satan to touch his body. As we know he was afflicted in physical fashion too. And think of the storm. What does the storm do? It braces us. It stirs us. It steadies us.

That we can find what really counts when we're in a storm. What really we can hang on to. And we draw closer to him when the storm comes. As we see for example another storm in the Bible.

[8 : 37] In Jonah's account. In Jonah chapter 1 verse 4 we see. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea. And there was a mighty tempest in the sea.

So that the ship was like to be broken. This tempest of Jonah's day was just about breaking up the vessel that they were in. And of course we know it was Jonah's disobedience in that occasion.

But it could be that God is sending the wind. As a tempest that he sent in Jonah 1 verse 4. God sent the wind. The dark clouds. The gathering storm. In Jonah's case.

God sent it. What can we find when we're going through a storm? Perhaps you're going through a storm even right now. This very moment. You're feeling like you're being driven and torn and tossed about like in a storm.

As in a vessel in a storm. Think about from this account the things we can learn about God and what he does when there's a storm. Firstly. In the storm his presence is there.

[9 : 40] That's what really helps. His presence. Our Lord is present. This is a reason for hope. As we know the psalmist said he's a very present help in time of trouble.

There are not times when Jesus is with you some of the time and they're not with you. He said I'm with you always. Always. Through the good and the bad and the indifferent.

He had said they were going to go to the other side. Would he have said this if they were going to perish? No. We can trust him. We can trust him. We can trust his word. Who's in charge here? When we're in a storm. Maybe you're facing some challenges. There's some uncertainties for the future. Job wise. Health wise. Family wise. Who's going to be there? Jesus is going to be there. He's going to be there. He's already there. In the future. And he's going to be the same yesterday, today and forever. And who's in charge? He's in charge. [10:38] He's the one who's in charge. In Mark's account. It says the ship was filling to the brim. Can you picture it? This was desperate. This was jeopardy.

This was danger. This was calamity. The very ship was filling to the brim. It was desperate. It was dangerous. But the master was in the boat. The master was there. And he knew when they got into the boat what was going to happen. And we as Christians, we can expect storms. He says in John 16.33 that in the world you're going to have tribulations. Troubles, burdens, calamities, afflictions, pressures. He said, be of good cheer or have courage. I have overcome the world.

I've conquered the world, he says. I've overcome it. And we're with him. Now, a ship was in a serious storm and in grave danger. It's a fictional story, I understand.

[11:37] But the story is told of the passengers. They were alarmed. It looked dangerous. The stormy conditions. It looked like the ship was in great peril. And one of the passengers went up to the deck where the pilot was.

And the pilot was there at his post of duty at the wheel. But seeing the man was greatly frightened, he gave him a reassuring smile. And returning to the other passengers, the man said, I've seen the face of the pilot.

And he smiled. And he said, all is well. And as God's children, we can look at the face of our pilot. Can't we? Look at the face of Jesus. And you can know that all is well.

It doesn't matter what the circumstances are telling you. Look at the face of Jesus when the trouble happens. Look at his face. Another Bible account of a storm is in Acts 27.

Where Paul was there. It was a time of storm, of danger. Acts 27. And verse 18. Paul was there as they were shipping into judgment as a prisoner.

[12:39] And verse 18. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship. And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But then verse 22.

Paul strengthened the people. He said, Now I exhort you to be of good cheer. He says, Be encouraged. Cheer up. For there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul. Thou must be brought before Caesar, and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer. For I believe, God, that it shall be even as he told me. And it's interesting. What did they do when the storm came?

[13:40] Tossing everything out. All the tackling, all the bits and pieces that didn't really matter. They threw it out of the ship, didn't they? And that can happen in a stormy time. Maybe God helps us to let go.

To let go of the things that really don't count. The things that really don't matter. When the storm comes, we realise what really counts. What really matters. It's not so much those things that we count so precious, and the material things, or the whatever distractions of life that we put our energies into sometimes.

That what really matters, what really counts at the end of the day, is Christ. That's what counts. And our salvation, our love for the Lord, that's what matters.

And when the storm comes, it's going to shake things up. There's going to be debris and wreckage. There's going to be things that maybe we're going to lose things that we're going to be saddened by.

But the Master is with you. He's with you. And perhaps storms will bring times of pain, of regret, of sad memories. But like the poor and the sailors, let's let go.

[14:48] Just let go of some things. And not hang on, not hang on to those things, but hang on to what counts. Because really, the storm is going to come to an end. Mark Twain was with a friend, and it was raining that day, and the friend asked him, do you think it will stop?

Twain said, it always does. It always does. Sooner or later, the storm is going to stop. Amen? If you're in a storm, it's going to stop.

It's going to come to an end. There's a brighter day. The clouds will part, and the sun will shine again. This too shall pass. And this too shall pass. Our hope is in God. Our trust is in Him.

Because His presence is with us. He'll see it through. So His presence is there in the storm.

Secondly, His peace is there. Here they are in the midst of a storm. The disciples, they're hanging off for dear life, as it's thrown about, as they're just about, start, they're glug, glug, glug, as the ship starts to fill to the brim.

You know, there's no lifeboat there. The waves are breaking over the boat. It's filling up. There's such turmoil and despair, panic and disaster all around. And what does Jesus do?

[16:02] He speaks peace. He speaks peace. Mark 4, 39. And He arose, and reputed the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still.

And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. It's like Psalm 107, 29. He maketh the storm a calm, so the waves thereof are still. His peace can come to you in the storm, even while it's happening.

His peace is there, His rest is His care. Be still, He says. Be still. And know that I am God.

He will calm those storms. You don't have to worry if your boat is rocking, if Jesus is in your boats.

He is there. I just want to encourage you.

If you can just take heart. I know there's folk facing challenges, operations, or testing times of employment, of health, of concerns. He is there with you.

[17:03] He will say, Peace. Peace be still. As Isaiah 26 says, that we can, they will keep Him in perfect peace. Perfect peace.

His mind is stayed on thee, because He trusted in thee. Isn't that great? God can keep your mind at perfect peace. And as the storms come, we can have absolute confidence in Him, and assurance in His word.

We're going to get to the other side. He's told us that's where we're going. And He'll speak, Peace be still. We can have that shelter of His wings, and come in that trust and security.

Sometimes the storm might be within us as well. There's a story told of a ship that was caught in a raging storm. And at the height of the storm, it was a military vessel, a naval vessel, and the cannon broke free from its mooring.

And as the ship was going back and forth, lurching back and forth, this cannon, you know, a cannon like a loose cannon, you know, it was on the deck, smashing into the sides of the ship, causing danger, and sliding back and forth.

[18:12] And the crew were concerned until they had fastened it again. And it's like that, I suppose, that sometimes it can be within.

The storm can be within us too. And we need to ask God to bring us peace within, in those storms of life. Maybe those storms might provoke a lack of faith, a lack of trust.

I suppose the word fear is the opposite of faith, isn't it? Now, this is what the disciples displayed, that they had this fear. And to people trapped, in unbelief, and caged, He wants to speak peace.

To people who are torn and wounded by life's torments at times, He wants to come and speak peace. To people shaken and shell-shocked by emotions and concerns that they're going through, He wants to come and speak peace.

When we hear His voice, when we cry out, when disaster strikes, when disaster strikes, it can seem like God is so far away that God disappears. But really, He's right there still.

[19:19] He's right there. All the time, in the storm of our circumstances, the Lord Jesus was there. And when we face Him, in the storm, realize His presence, realize His peace, and thirdly, His protection.

His protection. It was dangerous for these guys out there. In the middle of the lake, it was a big lake. It was massive. And they were right in the middle of it, it was a deep lake. There wasn't any...

If they were going to go down in those waves, it was over. And in Matthew's account, the ship, it says it was covered by these waves. It was these gigantic waves. It was covering it.

It's the sense of it there. There was great danger there. And perhaps, you will face times of danger.

When you are in a time of danger, it's great to have a safe place to go.

It's like, as we've heard of late, of the Victorian bushfires. Now, there's people trying to market bunkers now. You know, places that they can buy these bunkers. And the government's trying to

set up some rules and regulations to make these bunkers measure up to certain specifications so that they're safe and everything.

[20 : 26] You've got to get in a bunker in a bushfire. You want to make sure it's going to keep you safe, don't you? I want to tell you there's a bunker for you. There's a shelter for you. When the storm is coming, there is a shelter, and it's certified.

It's mixed as specifications, amen? And it's built by the maker of heaven and earth. And it will stand up to every power of the enemy, and you can take shelter in that shelter, in that bunker.

Brother and sister, it's good to have a bunker. I know in the World War I and II, World War II particularly, they had bunkers, didn't they? Air raid shelters.

When they heard that sound, eeeer, eeeer, better find that bunker quick, because then we've got to take some shelter, amen? And when the danger comes, there is a protection for you.

There is one who will protect you. There's safety. In Psalm 56, What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

[21 : 24] Psalm 56, verse 3, that's another short memory verse you can try to commit to memory. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. It's simple, isn't it?

Such a simple thing. When you're afraid, trust him. Where is Jesus? Where is he? There he is, snoring away. As you can imagine it, without being a reverend.

But the Lord Jesus, where was he? In the back of the boat. He says, one account says he was on a cushion. I've heard it explained, it was the steersman's cushion. He was in the helm of the boat, sleeping on the steersman's cushion.

The one who was steering the boat. He was at the helm. He was at the controls. Isn't that great to know, when the storm comes, who's at the controls? Who's at the controls of your life?

I trust it's Christ. He's at that control of your life. When you think about that, that Jesus Christ is at the controls of your life, it makes it all, that's a relief.

[22 : 32] He's still here, he's still on the boat. I'm with him. The circumstances may not be great, but Jesus is here with me. And there was a story about, there's a military officer and his wife, and they were on board another storm, another raging ocean storm.

Here they were on this boat, and he saw a frantic look in her eyes. She was fearful. It was scary. And he tried to allay her fears.

He tried to calm her and assure her, look, it's going to be okay. She grasped his sleeve and cried, how can you be so calm? How can you be so calm?

It's dangerous. It's terrible. And he stepped back a few feet. He was a soldier with a sword, and he drew his sword, and he pointed at her heart, and he said, are you afraid of this?

Without hesitation, she answered, of course not. Why not, he inquired, because it's in your hand, and you love me too much to hurt me.

[23 : 37] And to this he replied, I know the one who holds the winds and the waters in the hollow of his hand, and he will surely care for us. He holds the waters and the winds.

He cares for you. And the Lord is in control. He's in the control of all the circumstances of our lives. He has authority over the winds.

It says, the sense there is that he marshals them under his authority, and they obey in his authority. The Lord Jesus is not only merciful, but he's powerful.

He can rebuke those winds and waves. He's merciful. He's full of grace and compassion. And here's the master helmsman steering us back on course.

Maybe he's going to take you through some stormy times, some stormy waters, some choppy seas. But you're going to emerge from a storm. You're going to emerge stronger in your faith, bolder, firmer, more grounded, more faithful in your faith.

[24 : 42] The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Psalm 9, verse 9. Psalm 62, verse 7. In God is my salvation, and my glory, the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God.

There is a place of refuge in him. Have faith that Jesus is in your boat. I pray, this is a message speaking, really, to all today. Whose boat are you in?

Is Jesus in your boat? Are you saved? Are you saved? I trust that Christ is in your boat, in a sense that Christ is in your life.

That he is the one steering, and guiding, controlling, leading. And whatever happens, whatever besides that, you can trust him.

You can trust his presence is with you. You can trust his protection. You can trust that he is there, leading each step of the way.

[25 : 51] What's rocking your boat today? Maybe the storm's happening right now. Maybe you feel like your ship is sinking, and there's storms, there's financial difficulties, painful memories, health problems.

Maybe it's a secret storm on the inside. You know, you look all calm and unruffled on the outside, but there's all kinds of stress and concern. Is Jesus in your boat?

If so, trust him. Trust him. It doesn't matter what the circumstances of life are throwing at you. No matter how big the way, the Lord Jesus can rebuke it, and calm that storm, whether it's within or without.

And the disciples, in the end, they were more afraid of Jesus than the storm. Says the great fear came on them, when they saw the master's control, when they saw this one, at his command, the seas still, and the winds hushed, this one.

And they were fearful of him. They began to realize, who he was. Who he is. And when they cried out, he acted.

[27 : 08] Perhaps we don't cry out enough to you. As we talked about earlier, of prayer. If only we could see, prayer, the wonder of it, the amazing glory of prayer.

Prayer. That we could pray. Maybe the disciples, wouldn't have had such a choppy time, if they called out to him sooner. If they called out, he might have acted sooner. And we have not, because we ask not.

What you need to do, is ask him. Call out to him. Cry out to God. Even if you were at your wits end, in the midst of a storm, you can give up, or you can do what the disciples did, and cry out to the master.

And pray as long as it takes, to get an answer. Cry out. Surrender to his lordship, as they did. Put your faith in him.

Let God guide. If you ask for God's guidance, he'll give it to you. I know there's verses that speak of that. If you want wisdom, ask of God. Ask of him. To guide your journey.

[28 : 13] To show the path to take. And no matter how severe your storm is, take heart today. Jesus is with you. That's what matters. That's what counts.

Throw out all the stuff, all the tackling, all the trappings. That Jesus is with you. That your faith can be strengthened today. That's what matters today.

And he'll help you handle whatever happens, whatever lies ahead. He's there already. He'll help you. He'll help you.

He'll help you. He'll help you. He'll help you. He'll help you. He'll help you. He'll help you. He'll help you. He'll help you.