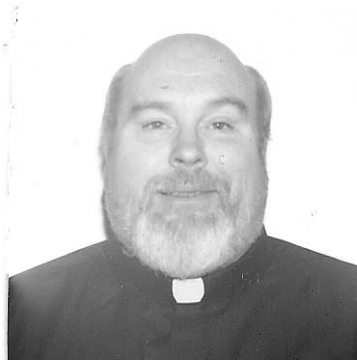


THE STORMS OF LIFE



BY: BISHOP J.W. STANSELL

Copyright © 2003

“And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!” (Matthew 8:23-27)

The literal interpretation of our opening text’s story is rather obvious and clear. To the uninitiated who doesn’t understand the deeper truths of the Bible (Matthew 13:11; Mark 4:11, 33-34; Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7), it would seem that this is merely a teaching on faith. But to those who understand the esoteric mysteries of the Word, it means much more.

In the Bible, principles are often personified. In other words, the person(s) and/or event in an account often stands for something else as well. This is a way to make portrayal and interaction more vivid and forceful. This is true of our opening text. The storm that brought fear to the disciples is symbolic of the various storms we face in life. I want to share four important truths concerning the storms of life with you, and how you can survive them.

I. EVERYONE FACES A STORM AT SOME TIME

All of us must face various storms at different times in our lives. It may be a financial storm, a family storm, a physical storm in the form of some type of sickness, etc.; but we all face storms from time to time. The very fact that Jesus along with His 12 hand-picked disciples are shown in the midst of a terrible storm should be enough to convince everyone that no one is immune to life’s storms. And no matter how spiritual or positive-minded that you may be, you will face

storms in your life too. As gloomy as that may sound, I actually have some good news for you and a message of hope concerning those storms.

II. NO STORM WILL LAST FOREVER

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

Whenever you find yourself in the midst of a terrible storm, and it seems like all hope is gone and your boat is about to sink, just remember that no storm we ever face will last forever. Every storm will eventually pass, including the one that you may be going through right now. So don't give up. The Bible puts it this way: *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”* (1 Corinthians 10:13). Our biggest problem is that we are sometimes so focused on our storms and trials that we often miss the door of escape that God opens for us. So stop looking at the dark clouds and the ferocious waves of your storms and start looking for God's escape hatch. But where should you look for the way out of any storm?

III. GO TO THE RIGHT SOURCE

Whenever you need the right solution to any problem or storm that you may face in life, it is important that you go to the right source for help. Who did the disciples turn to in the midst of their storm? Yes, Jesus, and I want to give you three reasons why you should turn to Him in the midst of your storms too:

1. JESUS TRULY CARES ABOUT YOU

Have you ever felt like no one really cared about you? That is a very lonely and hopeless feeling. But there is someone who truly does care about you, and His name is Jesus; and He invites you to lay all of your problems on Him, *“Casting all your cares upon him; for he careth for you”* (1 Peter 5:7).

2. JESUS UNDERSTANDS WHAT YOU ARE GOING THROUGH

So many times whenever we are going through one of life's storms, it seems like no one around us understands what we are going through. Wouldn't it be of some comfort if someone was there for you who truly did understand? Well my friend, Jesus not only cares about what you are going through, but He also fully understands! How? Because He has already faced what you are facing now: *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”* (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Are you being tempted by the Devil? Jesus understands; He has faced temptation too (Matthew 4:1-11) Are you hungry? Jesus knows what hunger pains feel like too (Matthew 4:2). Maybe you feel the pain of rejection from someone you love. Jesus is no stranger to that pain either (John 1:11). Jesus also knows what it feels like to be betrayed by a friend (Matthew 26:20-25, 47-50); To be abandoned by His friends when He needed them the most (Matthew 26:56; Luke 22:54-61); And Jesus knew the pain of losing a friend to the grave (John 11:14, 34-36). I could give many more examples, but these are sufficient to prove my point. Jesus understands what you are going through, so you don't have to face any storm in life alone!

3. JESUS HAS THE POWER TO CALM YOUR STORM

Not only does Jesus care about you and understand what you are going through, but He also has the power to calm that raging storm in your life, just as He had the power to calm the literal storm in our opening text. In fact, He is the only person who does have the power to calm our storms (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-11).

4. THE KINGDOM IS WITHIN

But where is this caring and understanding Jesus whenever we are facing a storm in life? Where was Jesus when this great storm that we have read of first arose? He was in a lower deck asleep: *“And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he [Jesus] was asleep”* (Matthew 8:24). And that is where you will find Him too, for this represents the kingdom of God that is within each of us: *“For behold, the kingdom of God is within you”* (Luke 17:21). If you are a Christian then you are the temple of God, for the Holy Spirit resides within you (1 Corinthians 3:16; Romans 8:9).

Again, only the mature will fully understand this. Inside of you is the answer to all your problems and the power to deal with them. All power and authority, both in Heaven and on earth were given to Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18). If you have been *“born again”* you share the same authority and power that Jesus has [Read Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:6; Luke 10:19; Mark 16:15-18; John 14:12-14]. Until you learn the truth about who you really are in Christ and about the kingdom power that resides within you, then all of your power and authority is asleep. But once you awaken the Master within you, you then have the power to overcome your storm in life.

IV. SPEAK TO YOUR STORM

Whenever you are unsure about how to handle any situation in life, just turn to the four Gospels and see what Jesus would do. Jesus is our perfect example to follow. *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps”* (1 Peter 2:21). *“He that*

saith he abideth in him [Christ] ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). So what did Jesus do when faced with a great storm? He spoke to His storm and commanded it to cease! *“Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him”* (Matthew 8:26, 27).

So what should we do when we are faced with one of life’s storms? We should do exactly what Jesus did and speak to our storm. The Bible clearly teaches that our words have great power: *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”* (Proverbs 18:21). As a disciple of Christ we have the power to move ANY mountain of trouble [storm] in our life by using faith-filled words to command our problems out of the way: *“And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them”* (Mark 11:22-24). So follow after the example of Christ and rebuke your storm, commanding it to leave. God has given you the power to remove all the storms and mountains from your life that you will ever face!

BISHOP J.W. STANSELL MINISTRIES
PO BOX 1146
PICKENS, SOUTH CAROLINA 29671-1146 USA