

Peter, A Storm & Stepping Out on Faith
Lesson 04 of the Series: "Storm Stories"

1. After Jesus sent his disciples away in a boat one evening they were caught in a fierce windstorm.

"Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves." Matthew 14:22-24 (NLT)

Life Application: Sometimes we will face storms while we are doing God's will.

"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NLT)

Life Application: God can use storms to strengthen our endurance.

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing." James 1:2-4 (NLT)

2. Jesus came out to them walking on the water.

"About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!" But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!" Matthew 14:25-27 (NLT)

Life Application: God is with us/watching over us in the midst of storms.

"Jesus saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water." Mark 6:48 (NLT)

"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time." Psalm 34:18-19 (NLT)

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Psalm 23:4 (KJV)

3. Peter asked Jesus to let him walk on water, too.

Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." "Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?" Matthew 14:28-31 (NLT)

Life Application: Faith is never strengthened without struggle or risk.

"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world." 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NLT)

Note: When Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and focused on his circumstances he began to sink.

"Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God." Colossians 3:1-3 (NLT)

Note: Peter did two things right.

- He got out of the boat!
- When he began to sink he called out to Jesus. "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer..." 1 Peter 3:12 (NIV)

4. When Jesus got into the boat the storm stopped.

When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. Then the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they exclaimed. Matthew 14:32-33 (NLT)

Life Application: Jesus is stronger than any storms we face.

“O LORD God of Heaven’s Armies! Where is there anyone as mighty as you, O LORD? You are entirely faithful. You rule the oceans. You subdue their storm-tossed waves... You scattered your enemies with your mighty arm. The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours—you created it all.” Psalm 89:8-11 (NLT)

Life Application: If we are following God’s will the safest place may be in the middle of a storm.

“After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, ‘Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.’ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.” John 6:14-15 (NIV)

Then the devil took (Jesus) up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. “I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please. I will give it all to you if you will worship me.” Jesus replied, “The Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.’” Luke 4:5-8 (NLT)

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Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 14:22-33. Looking back at your notes from this week's lesson on this passage was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you? If you had been in the boat that night would you have gotten out of the boat? Why? Why not? Why did Peter do it?
2. Describe a time in your life when you stepped out on faith. What was the circumstance? Why did you take the risk? What happened? What did you learn from the experience? Is God calling you to step out in faith right now? If so, how? ...where?
3. How did Paul, James and Peter view storms and trials?
 - Romans 5:3-4
 - James 1:2-4
 - 1 Peter 1:6-7

If it is true that God grows and matures us through storms, why do we often believe that we must be out of God's will or that God has forgotten us when we go through difficulties and trials?

4. Discuss the following lyrics to the hymn "Turn your eyes upon Jesus" written by Helen Lemmel in 1922.

"O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free! Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace."

Though we may not walk across water like Peter, we will go through difficult, faith-testing circumstances. Are you sinking into despair or are you looking to Jesus for help? Spend some time praying for each other regarding trials and difficult circumstances.

5. What do the following passages reveal to us about God watching over us / being with us?
 - Psalm 23:4
 - Psalm 34:18-19
 - Matthew 28:20
 - Romans 8:34

Is Jesus really watching over us and interceding for us? If so, why are we often worried and afraid?

6. Discuss the following quotations:

"Trials should not surprise us, or cause us to doubt God's faithfulness. Rather, we should actually be glad for them. God sends trials to strengthen our trust in him so that our faith will not fail. Our trials keep us trusting; they burn away our self confidence and drive us to our Savior." Edmund Clowney

"The bottom of the soul may be in repose, even while we are in many outward troubles; just as the bottom of the sea is calm, while the surface is strongly agitated." John Wesley

"The trials of a true minister are not few... Let no man who looks for ease of mind and seeks the quietude of life enter the ministry; if he does so he will flee from it in disgust." Charles Spurgeon

Resources:

When God Doesn't Make Sense, by James Dobson. ©2012, Tyndale House Publishers

Where Is God When It Hurts? by Phillip Yancey. ©2002, Zondervan

If You Want To Walk On Water, You've Got To Get Out Of The Boat, by John Ortberg. ©2001, Harper Collins