



Introduction:

Have you ever encountered a really bad personal storm? You may be going through one right now. In the gospels, there are a couple of accounts of the disciples and Christ facing really bad storms. Have you noticed that life can bring you different types of storms? It is important to understand that whether you are a believer or unbeliever, storms are a part of life. No one is exempt. No one's life is problem free. If it should happen that you are able to avoid most of the storms that people face, it is a fact of life that everyone will enter the storm of "death" (Hebrews 9:27). The accounts in Matthew 8:24 and Luke 8:23 state that the ship Christ and the disciples were in was "*filled with water*" and that it was "*covered with waves.*" Obviously, that was a serious storm. Today, you may feel like you are bailing water or you may feel like you're going under due to the crashing waves surrounding you. From the text, the story of Christ and the disciples provides us with three principles on how to handle the storms of this life.

The Focus:

- **How should a believer handle the storms of life?**
 - **Before the storm: Make sure Jesus is in the boat.**
 - **During the storm: Drop the bucket and go to the Master.**
 - **After the storm: Grow because of the storm.**

In the story, the disciples didn't understand it at first, but their survival was completely due to the fact that Jesus was with them in the boat. Is Jesus with you in your boat? The most important question one must ask is "Is Jesus Christ in your heart and life?" Have you humbled yourself before God and accepted what Christ did for you on the cross by paying for your sins with His life? Do you trust that Christ has redeemed you, do you believe that He offers eternal life and forgiveness of your sins? If you are saved, we need to get this message out to those who are lost and without Christ. We have to help them understand that problems are part of this life, but that God and Christ, who desire to have a relationship with them, can give them grace, comfort, and peace through each storm (2 Corinthians 1:1-6; 12:9; Philippians 4:6-7). Because of the curse of sin, there entered into God's creation three forms of corruption, which are revealed in Genesis chapter 3 – corruption of the human spirit (vs. 7), the human body (vs. 16), and of nature (vs. 16-17). No one, believers or non-believers, is immune from the storms of life (Romans 8:22-23). As well, it is important for every believer to remember that although we may not be experiencing a storm at the moment, it is during times of peace, before the storm, that we must continue to root our life deep into the soil of Christ. Then, when the storms do come, we can be as a tree that is firmly anchored and steadfast, able to endure the troubles and problems of this life through the power of Christ (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). How you have built up your faith during the times of peace will dictate the calmness of your heart in the midst of each storm.

The most important thing to resolve before the storm is to make sure Christ is in your boat, but during the storm, you must drop your bucket and go to the Master. If you are saved, the Bible declares that Christ is in you (Colossians 1:27). If He is in you, He is in your boat and will be there for you in every situation and in every storm. From the text, it seems that while in the storm the disciples neglected to go to Christ first, but rather they were trying, possibly, to remove the water from the boat. It says that the boat was *"filled with water."* Finally, after all their toiling, someone must have remembered that Christ was sleeping (vs. 23). Somebody had the great idea of saying, "Let's go get Jesus." Here they were, working hard and getting nowhere, and Jesus was sound asleep. They were worrying, but He had total peace. As the disciples ultimately chose to go to Christ, we must immediately choose Christ. The way of faith is to realize that Christ is the only answer to our storms. He wants us to learn that, and while we may be able to row ourselves out (and maybe they could have) it is much better if we turn to Christ first. God wants a people who trust Him, no matter what. A people who walk by faith, not by sight. We must totally depend on Christ and in His strength and power (Ephesians 6:10).

And lastly, when the storms are over and the seas have settled, we must reflect on the storm and grow from the experience of the storm. After the storm, Jesus asked them a simple and direct question. The question was *"Where is your faith?"* (vs. 25a) He desired for them to reflect on the situation and examine their hearts and faith. When storms come, how do you handle them? Do you try to work through them on your own strength? Do you turn to Christ in fear as a last resort rather than the first resource? The storms of life provide a wonderful test to see exactly where we are in our walk with Christ. Are we fearful or trusting? Do we pray or worry? Are we growing, or are we stagnant? Where is our faith – is it little or strong? As we examine our hearts, it is an opportunity for us to grow spiritually and to see areas that we really need to mature in. Storms have a way of bringing to the surface what is truly in the heart. The disciples knew Christ, but having gone through the storm with Christ they grew deeper in their understanding and relationship with Christ. The same was true of the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). He, through his storm, learned where his strength came from. Don't allow the aftermath of the storm to bring you down, rather allow the storms to show you where your faith is and where you are in your life as a follower of Christ. After the storm, reflect on how it helped you understand God and His Word more.

Response to the Sermon:

Maybe you have never really faced a storm in your life, but more than likely you have faced several. The thing to note is that storms are a part of this life, but Christ revealed to Paul that there is hope (Romans 8:18). Another important thing to remember is that God is not orchestrating these events, situations, or circumstances; they are merely a by-product of sin (Genesis 3:7, 16-17; Romans 5:12). How are you handling the storms of life? Do you try to correct or right everything yourself? Do you run to others? Where should you go when you face the trials and storms of life (Philippians 4:6-7)? Remember to seek Christ first in everything.

Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:

For humanity, this life on earth is rather bleak and depressing. And Paul informs us that Satan has charted a course for those that live in this world. All that is foreseeably offered in this life by the world appears to be love and peace, but in reality it is spiritual bondage, which leads to fear (Romans 8:15). That's why most things in this life are anti-God and anti-Christ, because God offers true love and peace through one's acceptance of the crosswork of Christ, by believing in the gospel (John 3:16; Romans 5:1-5). The gospel liberates anyone who will believe, and trusting Christ's payment for sin allows you to be free from sin (Galatians 5:1).

What does Paul call this time period in which we live (Romans 8:18)? Why is this important to know as a believer, and how can we use this as we engage with others?

What is the hope that all believers have in Christ (Romans 8:18)? How are we to use this as a believer (2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)?

Being in Christ, what have we been given to help and assist us while we live here on earth (Romans 8:15-16, 26-28)? As well, what can we know, as believers in Christ, that provides us peace in the midst of any storm (Romans 8:28)?

Application Questions:

The account recorded in Luke 8:22-25 states that it was Christ's idea to get in the boat and go to the other side (vs. 22). He entered, and the disciples followed (Matthew 8:23). If Christ is going to do something, don't you think that those He asks to follow Him will be brought to the intended destination? As well, it is interesting to think of this as a picture of the Christian life. Paul informs us about what to expect as a true follower of Christ (Philippians 1:29). We have to remember, life is full of storms. Another point to think about is that the disciples, in going through the storm, didn't fully trust in Christ, therefore fear set in (Matthew 8:26). Are you trusting and relying on Christ's strength or your strength (Philippians 4:13)?

What should we do when a situation occurs that could bring fear, chaos, and confusion (Philippians 4:6-7)?

What should be our attitude when faced with physical things or situations with external pressure (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)?

How should we approach God in our everyday life, in times of peace and in times of trials (Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 8:26-27; Luke 8:25)?

What has every believer been given to provide security as we live on this sin-cursed earth (2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15)?

Prayer:

- Pray to see and focus on the good in every situation and how you can grow in your relationship with and understanding of God (Romans 8:28).
- Pray that you would embrace your weakness in order for the power of Christ to be manifested in your life (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- Communicate to God your requests and needs with thanksgiving to have the peace of God keep your heart and mind stable through Christ (Philippians 4:6-7).
- Pray that you would have eyes to see and a heart of compassion for those that are struggling and hurting, comforting them with the same love you have been comforted with by God (2 Corinthians 1:1-6).