

Lifelines

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Topic: *Finding God in life's storms.*

God at Work in Life's Storms

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Very few people enjoy storms entering into their lives. Why? Aside from the hardships and damage they bring, storms represent things that are beyond our control. We like to live in an ordered world that we can control, and bend to our will and desires. But storms don't fit that category.

Storms also remind us of how dependent we are upon God. Only God can intervene and change the course of storms. Some people are comforted by the reality that nothing that comes into our lives can defeat God. Others are threatened by the thought that there is a God that they might have to capitulate to, in order to survive the storm.

On the other hand, for many people, God has nothing to do with why they don't like storms. They just have their self-oriented life, self-oriented objectives and self-oriented plans.

Regardless of whether you like, or dislike storms, they are a part of each person's life. There are many types of storms. Physically there are rainstorms, windstorms, firestorms, snowstorms, thunderstorms, sleet-storms, ice-storms, as well as hurricanes and tornados.

Psychologically there are guilt storms, grief storms, anger storms, betrayal storms, discouragement storms, and hope-crushing storms. There are also happy storms which flood us with joy at the birth of a child, or awesome and life-changing effects of love and marriage. So the things which unsettle our settled situations can be for empowering or rehabilitating, good or evil, freeing or confining, predictable or unpredictable, normal or abnormal.

Most of us also experience spiritual storms. These are storms which can deter our freely serving God, or free us to more fully serve God. Many things that are symptoms of our physical or psychological storms, come to bear upon our spiritual relationship with God, and/or with other people. In the gospels, there are numerous accounts of storms impacting the training of the disciples to grow in their faith and become leaders in God's Kingdom.

One incident in Mark 4:35-41 reveals a wind storm on the Sea of Galilee as the physical manifestation of Satan's spiritual storms hurled upon Jesus and the disciples in the boat. Jesus needed to go across the sea to a Gentile area to share the good news of the arrival of God's Kingdom to the Gentiles (a people group called the Gerasenes), as well as demonstrate the transforming power of Jesus as He frees a demon-possessed man from being controlled by approximately a thousand demons (the demon said his name was "Legion, for we are many." See Mark 5:1-20, Legion is in 5:9.)

So Jesus is going across the sea to deliver a man from demon possession, and to turn that man into a missionary to his own people, telling them about the arrival of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Satan, aware of Jesus' trip to set a captive free, hurls a storm on the sea to try to stop them from proceeding. The storm hits, the disciples panic, and they wake Jesus

up so He can save them from the physical storm. Jesus awoke, told the storm to “Be muzzled!” and the sea was suddenly calm (Mk. 4:39).

Spiritual storms cause us to turn to Jesus for help. In that sense, they are a hidden blessing, a good storm. When Jesus steps in, and saves us from impending doom, our lives change. We suddenly love Jesus, who stepped in to rescue us, and then gives us an even bigger blessing. We now know that we have a God who loves us, a God who sees us in our life’s predicaments, listens when we call out for His presence, and then gives us new purpose and new courage.

Without storms, there is no rain, no growth, no life, and no future. So rather than running from the storm, why not call out for Jesus to come and intervene? Join Jesus on where He is leading your life to go, and in how He is seeking to use your abilities in His Kingdom. Then the storm becomes a blessing instead of a curse.

What storm is threatening your life today? How can God use that storm to get you in the right place and the right state of mind, for God to use you as an instrument of bringing others to know Jesus? Is it a Good storm, or a God storm, or both?

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