

Rediscover Jesus

Part 23: Jesus and the Storm | Luke 8:22-25

Pastor Eric Yee

Personal Introduction

Hi everyone. If you don't know me, my name is Eric and I'm a pastor at HMCC of Jakarta, and it's my privilege to preach the Word of God to us today.

Sermon Series Introduction

We're currently in Part 23 of our sermon series called "Rediscover Jesus," where we're studying the Gospel account of Luke from chapters 4-9, which record Jesus' public ministry in the area of Galilee.

So let's get right into today's sermon: "Jesus and the Storm."

Sermon Introduction

To begin, I want us to look at a few pictures of storms and just imagine that you were there and what you might be feeling.

[*<Show storm1.jpeg>*](#)



As you see the waves crashing high over the shore, what do you feel?

[*<Show storm2.jpeg>*](#)



As you walk through the flooded streets with trees bending at the force of the wind, what do you feel?

[*<Show storm3.jpeg>*](#)



As the storm rips off the roof of your home and leaves you at the mercy of the violent winds and the rains, what do you feel?

<pause>

We've all been through storms. Some are milder, lifting the crashing waves just a few meters beyond normal. Some are more severe, flooding the streets and taking out the electricity. But some are violent, ripping your home apart and threatening your life.

What's most frightening about storms is that they are completely outside of our control. In the more violent storms, nothing can stop them, but they begin to rip through all the things that we thought were intact that brought us safety and comfort.

Even if we can't relate to these kinds of violent storms, we all know what it's like to have storms in our lives—times of hardship, trials, and suffering. Some are milder, some are more severe, and some feel violent as they seem to rip our lives apart. And oftentimes, what's so frightening about these storms in our lives is that they feel completely outside of our control.

So what can we do in the midst of the storms of our lives?

That's what we'll dive deeper into as we look at our passage for today.

The One Thing

Trust that Jesus is Lord over the storms of our lives.

Scripture Introduction

Turn your Bibles to Luke 8:22-25.

Just want to give a bit of context before jumping into today's passage.

So far in Luke chapter 8, Jesus has spoken two complementary parables—the parable of the seed and the parable of the lamp—to emphasize the vital importance of hearing God's Word with faith, perseverance, and good works that evidence and shine the light of the gospel to others (vv. 4-21).

And now we're entering into a new section, where for the remainder of chapter 8, Luke will present three narratives that highlight Jesus' authority over the sea (vv. 22-25), the demonic (vv. 26-39) and disease and death (vv. 40-56). But the primary context for these narratives are *not* the crowds but his close disciples, whom he will later send out on mission on the basis of his authority—or lordship—over all creation (9:1-6; 10:1-24).¹ In other words, in the remainder of chapter 8, Jesus is revealing himself to his close disciples in extraordinary ways, so that they learn *through trials* how to live the Christian life and carry out the Christian mission with persevering faith in who he is as Lord over all.

¹ Grant R. Osborne, *Luke Verse by Verse*, ONTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018).

So that's where we are in today's passage as we begin this new section in Luke chapter 8.

Scripture Reading

So let's read Luke 8:22-25.

²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, ²³ and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. ²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

This is God's Word.

Overview

We'll look at this passage in two parts:

- I. The Storm (vv. 22-23)
- II. The Calm (vv. 24-25)

I. The Storm (vv. 22-23)

Verses 22-23 say this:

²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, ²³ and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.

In the original language, "One day" literally reads "it came to pass on one of these days."² Luke doesn't specify the exact day, but in Mark's Gospel account, he locates this narrative occurring on the evening of the same day when Jesus told the parable of the seed (Mark 4:35).

So after a long day of ministry to the crowds, he got into a boat with his close disciples³ and told them to set sail to the other side of the lake,⁴ which was about 11 to 13 kilometers (or seven to eight miles) across.⁵

And as they set sail, Jesus fell asleep.

² Grant R. Osborne, *Luke Verse by Verse*, ONTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018).

³ Joel B. Green (*The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997]) writes: "Who is present on the boat? Because Luke provides no explicit evidence to the contrary, we might imagine the crew and passenger list to include the twelve and Jesus' women followers, as in vv 1-3; this seems unlikely, however. Although Luke's 'boat' might be used to designate a larger, seafaring ship, it is also used with reference to the smaller fishing vessels found on the Lake. The latter is in mind in 5:2, and we might be hard-pressed to imagine that Jesus, the twelve, Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and 'many' other women (v 3) made their way onto a boat of this capacity. Moreover, Luke does not tend to be very specific in his use of the term 'disciples,' so that sometimes it is a synonym for 'the twelve,' at other times it refers to a larger group of followers, and at still other times to a much larger and less well-defined group. The twelve are probably in view here." In the first century, a Galilean fishing boat would have been 26.5 feet long, 7.5 feet wide, and 4.5 feet high (8.1 x 2.3 x 1.4 m) and would have only been able to hold 15 men ("Galilean Fishing Boat," in *ESV Study Bible* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014], <https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-study-bible/illustration-galilean-fishing-boat/>).

⁴ R. T. France, *Luke*, TTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013], 146-147) writes: "Thus far, Jesus's mission has been confined to the Jewish areas of Galilee, though we have heard of crowds from a wider area coming to hear him (6:17-18). The decision now to cross the lake takes him into Gentile territory on the eastern shore. It is only a brief visit, but it symbolizes the wider extension of the Jewish Messiah's ministry to non-Jewish people, already signaled in 2:31-32; 4:24-27; 7:9.... Galilee was a mainly Jewish area, though with a significant Gentile minority. Most of the settlements on the western shore of the lake, where most of Jesus's ministry was focused, were Jewish (as was Nazareth, where he was brought up). But the eastern shore of the lake lay outside Galilee and was the territory of a group of Hellenistic towns (the Decapolis) with a largely non-Jewish population. The presence in this story [8:26-39] of a large herd of pigs (unclean for Jews) indicates that Jesus and his disciples had landed in a Gentile area."

⁵ Grant R. Osborne, *Luke Verse by Verse*, ONTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2018).

Although Mark tells us that Jesus had a cushion (Mark 4:38), I can't image that this was a comfortable bed. But after faithfully and joyfully doing what God the Father had called him to do that day, Jesus was dead tired and he fell fast asleep on the hard boards of that fishing boat.

<pause>

Perhaps some of us feel exhausted these days. You've had days, weeks, and months of full days, late nights, and early mornings. And you're just tired.

And what you need to know is that your Lord and Savior also knows what it's like to be tired. Jesus is fully God and fully man. Even though he is God Almighty, Christ can sympathize with our weaknesses. On that boat, we see the One who never tires knocked out sleeping (Ps. 121:3-4; Isa. 40:28).⁶

We do not have a God that says to us, "I can't relate with what you're going through." No, we have a God who became *like* us in every way, so that he can *help* us in every way (Heb. 2:17-18).

We do not have a distant God who loves us from afar, but we have a God who comes into the boat with us and who experiences what we experience alongside us.

Just let that sink in for a moment. In Christ, we see the Source of eternal joy weeping (John 11:35), we see the One who rained manna from the sky experiencing hunger pains (Luke 4:2), we see the Creator of water becoming thirsty (John 19:28), and we see the Author of Life dying and rising for sinners like us.⁷

Jesus being fully God and fully man is *not* just a doctrine for us to believe, but this is a wonderful truth for us to take comfort in: "Jesus knows what I'm going through."

If you're a follower of Christ, whenever you're exhausted, whenever you're weeping, whenever you're hungry, whenever you're thirsty, and even when you're on your deathbed, take comfort in knowing that Christ has gone before you, he knows what it's like to experience what you're experiencing, he is with you, and, just as surely as he rose from the grave, he will carry you through.

<pause>

Now going back, as Jesus was asleep, a windstorm suddenly came down on the lake, which was not uncommon.

This was Lake Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), which was also known as the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16). The lake is over 200 meters (700 feet) below sea level and surrounded by mountains, so the warm air rising from the surface of the lake encountering the cool air funneling through the mountains often produced sudden and violent storms.⁸

But this particular windstorm was unusually violent, where the boat began filling with water and, even though they had professional fishermen who spent their lives on this lake, they were still in great danger. Even the experienced fishermen were not capable of handling it.

This is a 17th century painting by Rembrandt that attempts to depict what it might've been like to be on that boat.

<Show The Storm on the Sea of Galilee (Rembrandt).jpeg>

⁶ "The Hypostatic Union," track 2 on Shai Linne, *Lyrical Theology, Pt. 1: Theology*, Demodocus, 2013, mp3, <https://genius.com/Shai-linne-hypostatic-union-lyrics>.

⁷ "The Hypostatic Union," track 2 on Shai Linne, *Lyrical Theology, Pt. 1: Theology*, Demodocus, 2013, mp3, <https://genius.com/Shai-linne-hypostatic-union-lyrics>.

⁸ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).



Imagine being on that boat in the midst of that violent storm. Feel the torrential rains and the strong winds blowing at 160 kilometers (100 miles) per hour. See the wall-like waves as high as ten meters (thirty feet) crashing upon your boat. You're frantically trying to bail out the water even as the boat is getting swamped with more water than before as the waves continue to pound on the boat like hundreds of wrecking balls. You want to vomit as the wind and the waves are violently hurling you in every direction. You see the mast bending further and further, and you're afraid that it's going to snap like a broken bone.⁹ You're still in the boat, but you already feel like you're drowning in every way.

And as you see the professional fishermen overwhelmed in panic, you begin to lose all hope. You feel like you're about to die.

<pause>

You may not know *exactly* what it's like to experience this kind of storm, but I'm sure most of us know what it's like to feel overwhelmed, swamped, tossed around, nauseous, dread, hopeless, anxious, fearful, and panicked.

Perhaps it's a never-ending to-do list at work. Perhaps it's a shocking diagnosis at the hospital. Perhaps it's a heart-wrenching situation in your marriage or family. Perhaps it's an enormous debt, a loss of a family member, a toxic work environment, a relational conflict, or something else.

Like those disciples in the violent storm, we feel captive to what's happening to us. We feel like our lives are outside of our control, and no matter how hard we're working, we can't get enough water out of the boat. We're sinking fast and we feel like there's nothing we can do about it.

So what do we do in the storms of our lives that are outside our control? What did the frantic disciples do? That's what we'll look at next.

<pause>

So first, the storm; and second...

II. The Calm (vv. 24-25)

Verse 24 says this:

²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.

So when the disciples felt helpless in the midst of the storm, they turned to *Jesus*.

They cried out to him in their desperation, and Jesus awoke.

⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke*, rev. ed., PTW (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013).

What's crazy to me is that amidst this violent storm, Jesus was still sleeping! How tired he must have been!

But it's interesting to note *what* got Jesus up. Even though Jesus' disciples were fearing for their lives amidst this intense storm, Jesus didn't seem to be bothered by the storm at all; he was sound asleep. But at the sound of his disciples crying out to him, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" that's what awoke Jesus at once and brought him to their immediate aid.

<pause>

If you're a disciple of Jesus, you should take great comfort in knowing that Jesus hears you when you cry out to him. He is not bothered by the storm, but the *moment* one of his disciples cries out to him, Jesus immediately responds with his full attention.

Every morning, my first prayer even before I get out of bed is simply, "God, help me!" I don't feel like I have much energy to get out of bed, but I need to get up and start the day. And throughout the day, when I feel overwhelmed or stuck, I utter the same prayer, "God, help me!" And time and time again, he hears me and comes to my aid. That doesn't mean that all my problems disappear, though I don't doubt that he could do that. Rather, he provides me the strength and insight to do what I know I could never do on my own.

- He gives me strength when I'm weary.
- He gives me patience when I'm frustrated.
- He gives me faith when I'm doubting.
- He gives me wisdom when I'm clueless.
- He gives me encouragement when I'm downcast.
- He gives me peace when I'm fearful.

If we know that the sovereign Lord over all creation hears and responds to us when we cry out to him, shouldn't we cry out to him a lot more?

Perhaps you feel like your problem is too small to pray for. I hate to admit it, but I used to think like that. I used to judge people who would pray for a parking spot because I didn't think such a thing was worthy to be prayed for. But you know what? I unashamedly pray for open parking spots now, and you know what? I seem to find open parking spots a lot more now.

One narrative in Scripture that helped me understand how God cares for even the smallest aspects of our lives is in 2 Kings 6, where a man's axe head fell into the Jordan River while he was cutting down a tree, and he cried out, "Oh no! It was borrowed!" And then Elisha, one of God's prophets, performed a *miracle* to make the *iron* axe head *float* so that the man could get it back.

God performed a *miracle* for a man who cried out to him about losing something that was borrowed. When I first read that, it completely changed my paradigm of what I can cry out to God for. He cares for even the smallest anxiety in my life. In fact, he invites us to cast *all* our anxieties on him (1 Pet. 5:7).

Whether it's needing to find an open parking spot, worrying about losing something that was borrowed, feeling overwhelmed by a situation at work, fearing for my life, or anything else, I can cry out to my Lord and Savior and know with full confidence that he *hears* me and that he will *respond* to me.

<pause>

So when the disciples cried out to Jesus, he immediately awoke, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves,¹⁰ they ceased, and there was a calm. It all happens so fast; it's almost anticlimactic.

¹⁰ R. T. France, *Luke*, TTC [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013], 147) writes: "The graphically personal term "rebuke" (*epitimaō*), which is used also of Jesus's commands to demons (4:35, 41; 9:42), has led some to suggest that the storm is viewed as demonic. But the same verb is used of a fever (4:39). It is the narrator's vivid way of portraying Jesus's authority over inanimate forces." Walter L. Liefeld ("Luke," in *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, EBC 8 [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984], 911-912) also notes: "Ἐπετίμησεν (*epetimēsen*, "rebuked") suggests to some interpreters that there is a demonic presence behind the storm (cf. comments on 4:39) On the other hand, the word may simply reflect the tendency of Semitic and other peoples to personify natural

Imagine being one of the disciples in the boat. You felt like you were drowning, and you were preparing to die at this relentless storm that was completely outside of your control. And all of sudden, Jesus speaks, and everything stops—the rains stop, the winds stop, the waves stop, the screams stop. Silence. Calm.

And into that silence, Jesus speaks again.

Verse 25 says this:

²⁵ He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?”

After Jesus rebukes the wind and the waves, he then gives a subtle rebuke to his disciples, asking them “Where is your faith?”

The great irony here is that what bothered the disciples was the *storm*, but what bothered Jesus was his disciples’ *lack of faith*.¹¹

To be clear, Jesus is *not* rebuking his disciples for their fear. It’s totally understandable that they would be fearful in a life-threatening situation.¹² The issue for Jesus was *not* that they were fearful, but the issue was that their fear had *engulfed* their faith. Their fear of the *storm* had swallowed up their faith in *Jesus*. In that moment, they didn’t really trust that Jesus being in the boat with them made much a difference; they still thought they were all going to die.

And that’s what bothered Jesus. The disciples had listened to his preaching and teaching; they believed that he had authority to forgive sins; they had seen him cast out demons and heal the sick, leprous, paralyzed, and deformed; and they had even witnessed him raise the dead right before their eyes. But in this time of testing, it seemed like everything they had heard and seen from Jesus was thrown out the window.

<pause>

The reality is that storms and trials are the *norm* for this life, and we should *not* be surprised by them. Since man first sinned against God, sin has corrupted everything about God’s good creation.

It’s *not* just that we’re sinners who sin against God and one another, but the *effects* of sin permeate everything in this broken world.

- Why do we struggle with loneliness when we have a God and a spiritual family that loves us?
- Why do we struggle with having children as married couples?
- Why do we struggle with mental health issues, physical illnesses, and one day physical death?

Why are storms and trials the norm for this life? Because we *sinned* against God and we feel its *effects* in *everything* in this broken world now.

Jesus told us honestly, “In the world you will have tribulation.” But he did *not* leave us without hope, for he also said, “But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 6:33).

Because Christ has overcome the world, if we are united to him through faith, then we *also* will overcome the world.

Jesus experienced the full weight of our sin upon himself on the cross, dying in our place for the punishment of sin that we deserved, but he did *not* stay dead. Three days later, he resurrected from the

forces. In the LXX the word ἐπιτιμᾶω (*epitimaō*, “to blame, reprove”) often expresses the “creative or destructive” work of God (TDNT, 2:624). It would be natural for the disciples to say that these forces “obey” (ὑπακούω *hypakouō*, lit., “hearken to”) him (v. 25).”

¹¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke*, rev. ed., PTW (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013).

¹² J. Ligon Duncan III, “The Winds and Waves Still Know,” December 6, 2009, <https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/the-winds-and-waves-still-know>.

grave, so that all who repent of their sins and believe in him as Lord and Savior can be forgiven their sins, counted righteous in God's sight, and have hope that we too will one day be resurrected as Jesus ushers in the new heavens and new earth, where there will be no more sin and its effects—no more storms and trials—but we will enjoy God and one another forever in a renewed, restored creation.

That is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that is the everlasting hope that we have if we are followers of Christ.

But we are *not* there yet, and Jesus tells us very honestly, "In the world you will have tribulation." In other words, "you should expect storms and trials to be the norm for this life."

But for some reason, we're tempted to live with a baseline expectation *not* of storms and trials, but of comfort, convenience, and control. We *expect* to be satisfied in this world, and so when the storms come and we begin to suffer, we think something *strange* is happening to us (1 Pet. 4:12). Because we did not *expect* the storms in this life, we get frustrated and disappointed when God would allow us to suffer through them.

As long as we think that storms and suffering are *abnormal* in this life, we'll be tempted to see them as signs of God's *absence* and lack of care for us.

But the complete *opposite* is true. Christ came into the world to enter *into* our suffering—to be *present* with us through them, to *free* us from them, and to give us *hope* of glory in the life to come without the presence of sin and suffering any longer.

Unfortunately, Jesus' disciples were taken by surprise by the storm and they made the faulty conclusion that Jesus didn't care that they were perishing. This becomes clear in Mark's Gospel account of this narrative, where they didn't just say "we are perishing," but they said to Jesus, "Do you *not care* that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38).

What a terrible, hurtful conclusion for Jesus' disciples to make about him. In fact, the exact *opposite* was true. The very fact that Jesus was in the boat with them *showed* that he was *not* absent and that he cared for them. And little did they know that Jesus would ultimately go to the cross as their substitute, so that their lives would not only be delivered from this *temporal* storm, but their lives would be delivered from *eternal* punishment for their sins.

Whenever you're suffering through the storms of life, don't ever be surprised, for Jesus told us that storms would come. And don't ever believe the lie that Jesus is absent and doesn't care for you. No, Jesus is right there in the boat with you and he absolutely cares for you. In fact, even *before* the storms come, he's *already* in the boat with you. Jesus is Immanuel—God with us (Matt. 1:23).

That's the only way that we'll be able to endure the storms of life. We need to trust that Jesus is Lord over the storms of our lives, and he's right there in the boat with us.

<pause>

Now the key question that *Jesus* has for *us* is, "Where is your faith?" But the key question that *we* have for *Jesus* is, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

In the Old Testament, *nobody* has control over the winds and water like this except *God*.¹³ God separates the waters at creation (Gen. 1:6-10; Ps. 104:5-9). God splits the Red Sea (Exod. 14:26-29; Ps. 106:9) and the Jordan River (Josh. 3:7-17). God sends great storms upon the seas (Jonah 1:4) and he stills the roaring of the seas (Ps. 65:7; 89:9; Jonah 1:15). Specifically, Psalm 107 probably came to mind for Jesus' disciples.

Psalm 107:25-30 = For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the

¹³ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.

Jesus had done what only *God* could do throughout the Old Testament. Jesus doesn't even pray; he *directly* rebukes the wind and the waves—and everything stops. *Nobody* had that kind of authority over the winds and the waves in the Old Testament except *God*.

[²⁵ He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"]

So as the disciples begin to ponder this question of "Who then is this?" they begin to realize that Jesus is no *mere* man, but they don't have a category for who he is. He's *obviously* a man, but he's doing things that only *God* can do. It'll become clearer to them later on, especially after Jesus' death and resurrection, but for now, they can't quite answer that question yet.

All they can do is fear and marvel. These two responses of fear and wonder were common descriptions of how people responded to both Jesus *and* God throughout Luke's Gospel account (1:65; 2:9, 18, 33, 47; 4:36; 5:26; 7:16; 8:37).

The disciples' fear of the *storm* has dissipated but now they are filled with a greater fear of *Jesus*. But this is a different *kind* of fear. It is the kind of "fear of the LORD" that is "the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10; cf. Prov. 1:7). They are beginning to gain insight into the knowledge of the Holy One sitting beside them in the boat.

In fact, you could say that this was the *whole point* of the storm. The *climax* of this narrative is *not* the stilling of the storm, but the *response* of the disciples afterwards and the "Who then is this?" question that they pose. The whole narrative *culminates* at their response and their question because that was the *whole point* of the storm.

The storm was *not* a meaningless trial, but the purpose of it was to show them their inability, to drive them to Jesus, and to reveal more about who Jesus is to them.

<pause>

Now for us, we need to know that there is no such thing as a *meaningless* storm in our lives, but it always comes at the hand of our *sovereign* Lord and with his *good* purposes. When we look at the cross of Jesus Christ, we see that even in the most tragic and evil of circumstances, "what the enemy means for evil, God means it for good" (cf. Gen. 50:20). We may *not* understand all his purposes in the storms that he sends our way, but at the very least, we can know that he is showing our inability, he is driving us to Jesus, and he is revealing more about who Jesus is to us. And even more, God's Word says this in...

James 1:2-4 = Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

For all true disciples of Jesus, trials do not *pull* us *away* from Jesus but they *push* us *closer* to him; trials do not *weaken* our faith but they *strengthen* it; trials do not leave us *lacking* but they ensure that we lack *nothing* as we cling to Christ.

Tim Keller, author of *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, writes this:

It is an exaggeration to say that no one finds God unless suffering comes into their lives—but it is not a big one. When pain and suffering come upon us, we finally see not only that we are not in control of our lives but that we never were.

Over the years, I also came to realize that adversity did not merely lead people to believe in God's existence. It pulled those who already believed into a deeper experience of God's reality, love,

and grace. One of the main ways we move from abstract knowledge about God to a personal encounter with him as a living reality is through the furnace of affliction.¹⁴

For Jesus' disciples, there lay ahead of them *many more* trials than just this storm on the lake. But Jesus was teaching them in word and deed that if they can trust him in this *storm*, then they can trust him in *any* situation that they ever find themselves in.

And the same is true for us as disciples of Jesus Christ. Whatever storm you're facing right now, look back at all the *previous* storms of your life and *remember* Jesus' past faithfulness and trustworthiness proven over and over again.

Do *not* be like the shallow heart without roots that initially responds enthusiastically to God's Word but falls away in time of testing, but cry out to God to help you to live out of the good heart that he provides us by his Spirit to hear his Word, believe it, hold fast to it, and bear fruit in accordance with it (Luke 8:4-15; Ezek. 36:26).

Don't believe the lie that Jesus is uncaring and absent in the midst of your storms, but *trust* that Jesus awakes to your aid when you cry out to him and that the Lord of all creation is with you in the boat.

<pause>

Now perhaps you feel like you're *not* in a storm right now, but to be honest, you kind of wish you were in one. You feel bored in the still waters; you feel like your life is mundane and perpetually stuck in a rut, not really going anywhere. If that's you, listen to what God's Word says in...

1 Timothy 2:2-4 (NLT) = Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.

Here, we're called to pray for those in authority, *so that* we can live peaceful and quiet lives, *so that* under those conditions, the gospel would maximally advance *so that* more people would be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

So if you feel like there's not much going on in your life right now, praise God! On some level, we pray for such conditions *so that* we can advance the gospel.

There was a period of my life in university when everything seemed to be going well—no apparent storms and trials. And when I shared this with a mentor, he said to me something like, "That's great to hear. Use this time to soak in as much Scripture as you can and to share the gospel with those you can. Enjoy this season and milk it, but just get ready to fight again because seasons like this are more the *exception* than the *norm*."

In essence, he was counseling me *not to waste* this season of my life that was peaceful and quiet. And I took his wise counsel and that's what I did. I soaked up God's Word and I shared the gospel with many around me, and even had the privilege to lead some to Christ. But then the storms came again and he was right. The storms and trials have been the norm of life, and that season of peace and quiet was the exception that I'm glad I didn't waste.

So if you're living a peaceful and quiet life right now, don't waste it but *maximize* it to advance the gospel in your own life and in the lives of those around you. Soak in as much Scripture as you can and share the gospel with those you can. Know that such seasons are *not* the norm, and rather than *passively* waiting for storms to come, *maximize* this season that you're in right now for God's purposes.

[²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"]

¹⁴ Timothy Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2013), 5.

Now perhaps you're here today and you *know* you're in a storm, but it's *not* a quick storm that comes and goes, but you feel like you're in a never-ending, chronic storm. You desperately want this storm to be rebuked and calmed immediately, but it's been years now and you're losing hope. You want to trust in God's timing, but you don't know how much longer you can endure.

For you, I want you to know that you're *not* alone in feeling that way.

Many of the laments in the Psalms ask God over and over again, "How long, O Lord?" (e.g., Ps. 13:1-2).

The apostle Paul *also* knew what it was like to have a chronic thorn in his flesh; he pleaded with God three times that he would take it away, but it remained with him. Instead, God told him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," and Paul's *whole* perspective of his chronic thorn began to change. He said, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.... For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Like Jacob, Paul realized that he was better off with a *lifelong limp* from God if it would draw him closer to him.

<pause>

But what does all this practically look like? How do you go from *panicking* in a *storm* to experiencing *peace* in *Christ* in the midst of it? For most of us, it won't be an on-and-off switch, though I don't doubt that God could do that.

For myself, I experienced what felt like a terrible storm in 2015. That was the year that I got married and the year that we helped start HMCC of Jakarta, and for the first time in my life, as a new husband and a new pastor, I felt like I was failing at everything.

As newlyweds, Tina and I would regularly stay up til 1 AM talking through issues together, where there would be many tears shed trying to understand and best love one another, and then we'd wake up at 5 AM the next day.

I was a newly commissioned pastor in 2014, just beginning seminary, and I had no idea what I was doing, but I was quickly thrust into basically pastoring a whole church. I felt like I stood in the shadow of the founding pastor and it was a standard that I could never hit. I wasn't as experienced, I didn't have as much capacity, and I didn't have the same skillsets. I would physically feel nauseous whenever I had to lead meetings or preach sermons. I just felt like I wasn't good enough, and I was extra sensitive to comments that people would make, which *objectively* had *no* negative connotation, but I just kept hearing and taking them personally as "you suck."

Each morning, I had no motivation to get out of bed. I just wanted to crawl up in a ball and not face the world. At times, I couldn't even get myself to read God's Word, so I would just play the Psalms on audio—one psalm after another—until maybe 10-15 psalms played and God's Word had encouraged me enough to just get out of bed and to do simple things.

To feel like I was failing in my marriage and in my work, I've never had such a depressing time in my life. Growing up, I generally had the mentality that if I worked hard enough, I could do anything. In high school, I did well in academics, wrestling, and violin. And throughout university, I continued to do well in the things I put my mind to. But now, no matter how hard I worked, I felt like I was drowning. No matter how much water I got out of the boat, there was always another ten-meter (thirty-foot) wave crashing on me. This was probably the first time in my life that I actually had the passing thought of taking my own life.

But as painful as this time was for me, this was a time that I grew more intimate in my relationship with God. My prayers were the most raw they had ever been; they were often me just crying and screaming at the top of my lungs to God in my head. I would tell him how I felt and I would pray through the gospel that I believed and held fast to.

But at times, that was so painful to do too because I knew that I wasn't responding according to the gospel that I believe. Rather than the gospel being a source of comfort and peace, I would be using the gospel to

kick myself even more: “I *know* that the gospel says that I’m *not* good enough and that’s *why* I need a Savior, so *why* do I keep trying to find my identity and worth in being good enough?” And I would get more frustrated with myself.

But I continued to just get on my knees day-in and day-out to cry out to him, proclaiming the gospel to myself even as I prayed. “God, forgive me for constantly going back to finding my identity and worth in my performance when you have *already* secured my identity and worth in your perfect work for me on the cross. God, I confess that I am a sinner—I’m *not* good enough and I will *never* be good enough—but I praise you for living the perfect life that I could *not* live and dying the death that I deserved for my sins, so that now, as I repent and believe in you, I *know* that I am forever secure in Christ. Give me the grace that I need to live out my secure identity in Christ rather than trying to prove or earn my identity from my own performance.”

I would gain a sense of peace for a moment, but then as soon as I got up from my knees, another ten-meter (thirty-foot) wave would crash on me again and I would be flooded with feelings of inadequacy and overwhelm all over again. And then I’d be back on my knees praying the same things.

I did this for years. And eventually, I don’t know how and I don’t know when, but I began to *internalize* my secure identity in Christ more and more, and the cruel master of my performance began to have less and less of a grip on me. I *still* struggle with the same things, so in a sense, the storm has never lifted. But by God’s grace, I have a stronger confidence that Jesus is with me in the storm and that I don’t need to fear. Of course, I *still* feel fear and overwhelm at times, but they no longer engulf my faith. Rather, my faith in Christ progressively *tames* my fear and overwhelm.

And to be honest, even though I would never wish to go through such an intense storm again, I just don’t know how God would have humbled me and brought me into a deeper relationship with him if he had *not* put me in that storm. And so, in the bigger picture, I am so thankful that he loves me enough to draw me near and shape me through storms. Otherwise, how proud and self-sufficient I would be, and how terrible that would be for myself, my family, our church, and all those around me. God, in his grace, *broke* me early in my marriage and pastoral ministry, so that I would know him more intimately and be a sharper instrument in his hands.

<pause>

To close, I want us to know that it’s *not* just me and Jesus in the boat, but Jesus revealed himself to *all* his disciples in the boat.

Even though our storms may be different, we’re in the *same* boat (so to speak), and Jesus graciously provides us one another to *remind* us of *our* inability and of who *he* is, and to go to him together in the midst of our storms.

Even if we cannot relate 100% to what another brother or sister is going through, we have the same *source* of hope that we can point them to. Sometimes, we do that by just being present, listening to them, and praying with them—going to Jesus together. Sometimes, our presence and prayers are the ways that others will experience Jesus’ presence.

The Christian life, with all its storms, was *never* meant to be lived *alone*. We all have tendencies to *not* trust that Jesus is Lord over the storms of our lives, especially as we *feel* the wind and the waves tossing us to and fro, and so we *need* our brothers and sisters around us to remind us of *who* Jesus is and that he’s *also with us* in the boat.

So as a church, let’s *not* act as if we’re all on *separate* boats in our own *private* storms, but let’s remind each other that no matter what storms may come, we’re in the *same* boat with *Jesus* together and he’s going to carry us through it, for even the winds and waves obey him. He is Lord over all creation and he is God with us.

<pause>

Now let’s get into the...

Life Application

1. What storms have you faced in the past? Remember and praise Jesus for his past faithfulness.

This is the pattern that we see all throughout the Psalms. As the psalmists are overwhelmed with fear, confusion, and frustration amidst their current trials, they *remember* God's past faithfulness to them and to his people, they *praise* him for his unchanging character, and they choose to *trust* him again.

So start with remembrance and praise for Jesus' past faithfulness in your life. If you don't know where to start, go back to the cross where your Savior died in your place for your sins, and hopefully that begins to jog your memory of everything else he has done for you as well.

2. What storms are you facing right now? Cry out to Jesus and proclaim the gospel to yourself.

The worst thing you can do in the midst of the storm is to give Jesus the *silent* treatment. Again, the Psalms show the psalmists say some very raw and difficult things to God (e.g., Ps. 88), but he *invites* us to do so because he *hears* us. Remember, at the *moment* Jesus hears the cries of his disciples, he *awakes* to their aid. So *cry out* to him, knowing that he *hears*, that he's *Lord*, and that's he's *right there* with you in the boat.

And *proclaim* the gospel to yourself. Declare that God is your Creator and that you are made in his image. Declare that you have sinned against him and are deserving of his wrath. Declare that he loves you still and sent Jesus Christ to do what we were completely powerless to do on our behalf—to live, die, and resurrect—so that this sinful, broken world with all its sufferings and storms would one day be renewed and restored. And again, repent of your sins and believe in him as your Lord and Savior, and find your identity and worth secure in who he is and what he has done for you. And proclaim those great gospel truths to yourself over and over and over again.

And over the course of our lives, by his grace, we will find that our fears and overwhelm no longer *engulf* our faith, but our faith in Christ is *taming* our fears and overwhelm more and more.

3. What storms are those around you facing? Draw near to them to listen, pray, and point them to Jesus.

When you're suffering, it's easy to only feel your *own* pain and be blinded to everything else. We get tunnel vision and think that we're the *only* ones going through such pain. But that's just *not* true.

When I think about the members in our church, I am overwhelmed by the storms and trials that they're facing right now in their lives. I wish I could do more for them, but I humbly accept that I am *not* the Christ. There is only *one* Jesus Christ. I know him and love him, and I desperately want others to know and love him too and see that he is all they *need* even as they find that he is all they *have*. So I try to listen, pray, and point them to Jesus as best as I can.

As a spiritual family, let's look not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2:4), and let's look *around* the boat and draw *near* to our fellow brothers and sisters who are also facing storms in their lives—and let's listen, pray, and point them to *Jesus*, for he is *Lord* over all.

The One Thing

Trust that Jesus is Lord over the storms of our lives.

Conclusion

If you're able, can we all stand as we respond to God's Word together?