

## Pray More Lenten Retreat - Transcript

### Jesus and the Storms of Life

**Beth Davis**

Hi friends. I'm Beth Davis, and today we're going to be talking about Jesus and the storms of life. But first, let's pray together. *In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. Jesus, we love You, we trust You, we worship You. Would You give us the grace in this moment to hear your voice in a new way, and would You give us grace in the future in the midst of our storms to cry out to You and to hear Your voice. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

A few weeks ago, a dear friend of mine had a baby. My goddaughter, actually. And just last week I was over visiting and holding the baby, when she realized that it was time to pick up her other daughter from preschool. So, trying to be a good, helpful friend, I offered to go pick up her little girl. So, because I don't want to have a car seat in my car, we decided I should take their family van. And as I backed out of the driveway and started down the street, I realized that they didn't have any gas. So I was a little flustered, already running late, popped it in reverse to run in and grab a credit card. And wouldn't you know it, I backed into their neighbor's car. Not my car, no, their neighbor's car. And I wasn't in my car, I was in their family van. So I have now damaged 2 cars, neither of which were mine. Luckily, I got out, and there really wasn't any damage, but I was very flustered. So I went in to talk to my friend and explain what happened, and she said "Don't worry about it. Couldn't get any worse, right?" And I said "Don't say that!"

Sure enough, I got in the van, turned the key, and the battery was dead. Are you serious? So, I ended up putting the car seat in my car, took it to pick up her little girl, and felt like a totally unhelpful friend all the way there.

Now, in the grand scheme of things, that was a bad moment, right. Not even a bad day. I mean, there really wasn't any damage. The most damage was done to my pride, and my peace in the moment. But on the scale of storms, that was like a light drizzle, right. That was like running into the store from your car and not having an umbrella. It's an inconvenience, an annoyance. Ultimately, it dampened my spirits, but there was no real damage done. But what about bigger storms? More intense storms. Hurricanes in our lives. Hurricane seasons even in our life. And I am talking about situational storms, relational storms, but I'm talking too about emotional and mental storms. What is our posture, our response? How do we act as Christians, as believers in Jesus Christ, when we're in the midst of a storm? When we're in the midst of our very own hurricane season?

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Luckily, we can look to the gospels. Jesus and His disciples were no stranger to storms, and so they've given us many, many accounts of their behavior, and of God's power in the midst of storms. And today, we're going to look at 3 of them, starting in the gospel of Mark, chapter 6, at verse 47.

***When evening came, the boat was out on the lake, and He was alone on the land. When He saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, He came towards them early in the morning, walking on the lake. He intended to pass them by.*** Now let's pause for a second, because that verse has always gotten to me. What do you mean He intended to pass them by? He could see His friends straining at the oars, struggling in a storm, and He intended to pass them by? Haven't you felt like that? Like "Lord, don't You see me suffering, and struggling? Are You just intending to pass me by too?" But let's keep reading. Verse 49. ***But when they saw Him walking on the lake, they thought it was a ghost and cried out, for they all saw Him and were terrified. But immediately, He spoke to them and said "Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid." Then He got into the boat with them and the wind ceased.***

So, what can we learn here about how to behave in a storm? We're straining at the oars, right. Let's follow the example of the disciples and cry out to Jesus. They invited Him into the boat. And I know at times when I've been in the midst of my own storms, prayer is the furthest thing from my mind. But a genuine prayer, a prayer that God honors and answers and runs to us in, is where we cry out, and He replies "Take heart. Have courage." He wants us to rise up in storms. He wants to give us that assurance, that He has command over the storms of our lives. In fact, in this gospel, Mark chapter 6, Jesus has just fed 5,000 with only a few loaves and fish. He's already demonstrated that He has power over the elements. So surely, he's thinking, they must know that I have power over the storm. And they still panicked, didn't they? Now, I'm sure you and I, we have the same in common with the disciples. God has come through for us in the past, but in the midst of that storm, sometimes we forget that He can and He will calm the storm, if only we cry out to Him and invite Him in.

My favorite line in this gospel is verse 51: ***Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased.*** You see, the wind died down. The storm ceased when Jesus was with them. Can you, the next time you find yourself in an emotional storm, even a situational storm, can you run to Him, invite Him into the moment, and let Him be with you. I find that when I'm with Jesus, in the midst of especially emotional turmoil, that things all around me seem to die down, and things within me too can calm. Sometimes it's the storms within us that need His peace the most.

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So let's look at another storm, another example. Go with me to the gospel of Matthew, chapter 14. Now, this is arguably the most popular, the most commonly thought of storm in all of scripture, and it starts much the same as the storm in Mark chapter 6. So the disciples are in the boat, they see Jesus walking on the water, they cry out to Him, and Jesus says the same thing "Take heart, it is I. Do not be afraid." Maybe we need to commit that to memory, right. Seems like the gospel writers wanted us to remember those words.

But in verse 28, the story changes. *Peter answered Him "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." He said "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to think he cried out "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught him, saying to him "You of little faith. Why did you doubt?"* Now, I love this gospel account. I love to read about the reality that while a storm rages around us, with Christ, we can walk on water. We too can master our surroundings. We too can rise above our situation. But how do we do it? We learn from Peter that the only way to stay afloat in this storm, the only way to walk on water is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

You see, when Peter takes his eyes off of Christ and looks at his surroundings, it says he noticed the strong winds. It's like he forgot for a moment, because he was so fixed on Jesus, he forgot that there was this storm, these waves crashing and raging around him. And when he notices them again, that's when he begins to sink. But I think that the great comfort and consolation of this gospel is that it says "Immediately, Jesus reached out His hand." Which means that Peter wasn't the only one moving. Peter wasn't the only one moving towards Christ. No, Jesus was coming towards him at the same time. He's not standing out in the waves, expecting us to go that whole distance. He meets us in the middle. He meets us where we are. That little bit of courage on the part of Peter meant that he had an encounter with Christ, that he was pulled up and saved. And I think this is a great consolation for us too, that when we make those little steps to have courage, to seek Christ, even if it's a terrified crying out "Lord, save me!" that He'll meet us there.

So let's look at one more gospel. We're going to back up a few chapters in Matthew. There are actually a couple of storms in each of the gospels, but now we're going to look at Matthew chapter 8, starting at verse 24. *A gale arose on the lake so great that the boat was being swarmed by the waves. But He was asleep. And they went and woke Him up saying "Lord, save us. We are perishing." And He said to them "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" And He got up, and*

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*rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a dead calm. They were amazed.*  
They were amazed.

I love to imagine Jesus sleeping in the middle of a storm. First of all, how is that even humanly possible? Is the boat not being rocked and thrown on the wave? Is He not soaking wet? How tired was Jesus, that He could sleep through a storm? But I think, I think there's a hidden gem here in the posture of Jesus. Jesus was able to sleep through a storm because He wasn't afraid of a storm. He knew that He had the power to stop that storm, to calm it. He knew that they weren't in danger, because they were with Him. And so He slept. And I think it sets a model and an invitation to us. I think what Jesus is showing us is that we too can be at rest in the storms of our life, an interior peace, because we know that He's with us. And that no real harm can come to us as long as we're with Him. It reminds me of a beautiful prayer from the Novena of Surrender, it says "Oh Jesus, I surrender myself to You. Take care of everything." And sometimes I pray that, just that last line: "Oh Jesus, take care of everything. I can't get worked up about this. My worry, my fretting, my human attempts to figure it out, they're all for nothing. You can take care of it, so I can be at peace."

This is my hope for my life, and my hope for you too, is that we can come to a place of deep interior rest and peace, no matter the situations that rage on around us. But that He wants to train us up, to encourage us to take heart, to invite Him into those situations, to walk with Him through them on the water, as the storm rages, and ultimately to be at rest. Can I pray for you?

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Precious Lord, You are the master of the seas. You have command over the elements, and over our lives. And we give You now again, God, the reins. We give You now our "Yes". We know that we can't do anything, Lord, without You, and so we place our trust once more in You. No matter what storms may be coming to mind that make us feel so helpless, God, we know that You are able. Oh Jesus, we surrender ourselves to You. Take care of everything. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*