

## **“Where Is God When I Am Hurting?”**

*The Rev. S. Shane Nanney ~ August 13, 2023*

*Romans 10:5-15, Matthew 14:22-23*

Charlie Brown builds a beautiful sandcastle, works on it for hours. Finally, he stands back, looks at it. It's wonderful. Just as he is admiring it, a storm comes up and blows over his sandcastle. Now, he is standing there saying to himself, "I know there's a lesson in this, but I'm not sure what it is."

Every one of us has our sandcastles blown away. Occasionally, we back up and say, "Why am I being hit with this storm of life?" Now, sometimes these storms are caused by us and other times by other people. Sometimes they are just part of living. They come from different sources, but they do have a purpose in our life.

Storms of life reveal the following things about us:

1. The nature of my faith.
2. The strength of my commitment
3. The level of my maturity
4. The healthiness of my attitude
5. And the measure of my teachability

Perhaps it is the last one that I want to dwell on today. What do we learn and receive from the storms of life? Now, the setting of the story today is Matthew 14. It's the story of the disciples being out on the water and Jesus comes to them in the middle of the storm.

The first thing I would like to share with you is that everyone has storms. In fact, for many of you this morning, the clouds have already gathered. Many of you, perhaps, are in the worst storm of your life, but what I want you to realize is everyone has them. In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 5, "He makes the sun rise on both the good and bad people and He sends rain

for the one who do right and for the ones who do wrong.” So, you can see storms, problems, difficulties, trials, come to all of us.

Now, some storms come because we are out of God’s will. But some storms come because we are in God’s will. Just because you’re encountering a storm in your life, does not mean necessarily that you’re out of the will of God or willfully disobeying him. Just look at the gospel lesson today!

Jesus is the one who put the disciples in a boat. He is the one that told them to cross over the middle of the lake. They’re right in the middle of God’s will but they’re having the storm of their life.

I am saying that it is possible for you to obey God, walking in all the light that you possibly could, be right in the center of God’s will and yet at the same time encounter a terrific storm.

I share that with you because I know a lot of wonderful people who really do love God, who really do obey, and yet because of life’s uncertainties and the sin of the earth, life gives them a tough blow. When we have that difficult time, we must have our feet on the ground and understand that storms happen to all people.

Now let’s ask the question: What does Jesus do for us in the storm?

### **He Prays for Us**

In verses 22 & 23, we find that while the disciples were out in the lake during the storm, our Lord was praying. He prays for us.

In Hebrews 4:14 it says, “We have a great high priest who has come into heaven and He is Jesus, the son of God.” Jesus understands every weakness of ours because he was tempted in every way that we are, but He did not sin.

The Hebrew writer said that Jesus intercedes for us in our time of need. In other words, as we are here on earth encountering storms in our life, our Lord is at the right hand of God, interceding, praying for us and he ministers to us in the very nick of time.

Jesus is praying for you. He's interceding for you. He cares for you. He's taking your needs to the Father and he knows all about your needs because He's been there. He's walked where we've walked. He's felt what we've felt. He's seen what we've seen. He's heard what we've heard. And He goes to the Father, and he says, "Listen, that's one of my siblings and I died for them." He prays for us during the storm.

### **He Comes to Us**

During the storms of life, He is not an aloof God, but He enters our storm. Look at verse 25, "A little while before morning, Jesus came walking on the water toward his disciples."

Do you know what Malachi says about God? That God sits as a refiner and purifies the silver. Malachi says that God is like a silversmith. I heard a story where a silversmith described his job. He said, "I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, for if the time necessary for refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be injured." And in that interview, he said, "I never take my eye off the silver in the furnace. I don't want to take it out too early because if I do, it won't be purified. But if it is too late, it will be injured." When is the right moment? He said, "I know the silver is pure when I can see my reflection in it."

Maybe this doesn't happen to you, but I always think I'm in the worst part of the storm. As soon as the storm comes, I'm saying, "OK, God bail me out. Here I am. Find me. Rescue me." But sometimes he doesn't rescue me. Sometimes he doesn't seem to come at all. But I have the assurance that He is the great silversmith and while I'm in the furnace, He focuses on me and watches me. His job is to purify me. So, He waits and watches until the right moment and then He comes. He is never too early and never too late. Just in time.

### **He Ministers to Us**

He ministers to us through the storms. Look what happens in verse 26 and 27, "When they saw him, they thought he was a ghost. They were

terrified and started screaming. At once Jesus said to them, "I am Jesus. Don't be afraid."

He ministers to us despite our misunderstandings. They didn't know what was happening. They looked out and thought He was a ghost. They were scared to death. Now, they're even more scared. They don't have a grasp of the situation, and Jesus walked in and says, "Don't Worry!"

You know, I run into Christians all the time who somehow think that they should understand everything. Do you know, nowhere in the Bible does it tell you, as a believer, that you should understand everything.

Now, He says that there will be a time when we're with him, and we will see things clearly. But you're not going to understand everything. I don't have all the answers. I don't even like pastors that seem to have all the answers. I don't like Christians that pretend to know everything and offer a little slogan or cliché that makes them sound more holy than others. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that you're going to understand everything.

Now, Paul says "For we know all things work together." Paul said we know it. Why do we know it? Because we know that God's on the throne and God is sovereign. We know that it's going to be ok because of God. But Paul doesn't say you understand everything. We're not going to figure it all out. You see, our security isn't **what** we know but **Who** we know. So, we're in the middle of the storm. We say "I don't understand it. I'm not even sure it's fair. I don't like it. But I know who is sovereign over the storm.

Well in verse 32 it says, "And when Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind died down and the men in the boat worshiped Jesus and they said, 'you really are the son of God.'" When we are in the midst of our storms, our attention is always brought back to God. We can curse or we can worship God. Our problems are God's problems, because he loves us. If we trust in God, God will see us through these storms of life in the nick

of time with a greater love for him. When you are swamped by your storm, trust in God. Amen.