

Navigating Life's Storms

Joshua 1:5-9

5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Remembering our God given purpose during life's hardships can help us respond to trials in a God-honoring way as we seek to understand the lessons He wants us to learn through life's darkest moments.

Jesus' disciples experienced several "**mountaintop moments**" in their time with Him. But when a storm arose while they were out on the Sea of Galilee, fear gripped them. Amidst the tempest and with the boat being tossed, Jesus' chosen ones failed to recall the lessons they had learned about the power and purposes of their Master. Even the appearance of Jesus walking on water didn't bring immediate relief (**Matt. 14:24-32**).

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

[29](#) And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

[30](#) But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

[31](#) And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

[32](#) And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

Within ourselves, we lack sufficient resources and abilities to meet life's difficulties. So our God provides what we need.

- When troubles come, we also forget our knowledge of God. We struggle to recall past answers to prayer, specific guidance provided by the Holy Spirit, and lessons learned in previous crises. Only the present seems real. Our minds spin with future implications, and our troubled emotions inhibit our clear thinking.
- Our suffering is never a surprise to the Lord. He knows everything we are going through. More than that, He's orchestrating our circumstances for His glory and our benefit, according to His good will.

Reflecting on His divine purpose in hardship can help us respond to trials in a God-honoring way. Let's take a moment to fix our attention on the Lord and seek to understand four lessons He wants us to learn through life's dark moments:

1. **Cleansing**

- One purpose for hardship is cleansing. Because of our own "flesh" nature and the self-absorbed world we live in, it's easy to develop selfish attitudes, mixed-up priorities, and ungodly habits.
- The pressures that bear down on us from stormy situations are meant to bring these impurities to our attention and direct us to a place of repentance. Our trials are intended to purify and guide us back to godliness, not ruin our lives.

2. **Comfort**

- A second reason we face difficulty is so we'll be compassionate and bring comfort to others. God's work in our lives is not intended solely for us.
- It's designed to reach a world that does not recognize or acknowledge Him. The Lord uses our challenges to equip us for serving others. As we experience suffering, we will learn about God's sufficiency, His comforting presence, and His strength to help us endure.
- Our testimony during times of difficulty will be authentic. Those to whom we minister will recognize we know and understand their pain. What credibility would we have with people in crisis if we never experienced a deep need?
- He's orchestrating our circumstances for His glory and our benefit, according to His good will.

3. **Provision**

- Third, God promises us He'll provide a path through any trial we face.
- The disciples probably wondered how long the storm would last and whether they would make it safely to shore. Most likely, they wished it never happened. But, had they somehow avoided this storm, they would have missed the demonstration of Jesus' power over the sea and wind.
- The frightening situation was transformed into a revelation of the Savior's divine nature. God wants to make His power known through our trials, as well.

4. **Omniscient Presence**

- The most important thing He gives us is an awareness of His presence.
- At first, the disciples believed they were alone in a terrifying storm. When they initially spotted Jesus, their fear increased.
- They thought He was a ghost. But as they recognized Him, their fear changed to relief and hope.
- Similarly, we may not sense God's presence during a crisis. But He has promised to always be with us (**Heb. 13:5-6**).

5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

6 *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

- The assurance that the Lord will never leave provides immediate comfort, an infusion of courage, and a sense of confidence to endure.

No one enjoys suffering. But in the hands of almighty God, trials become tools.

- He uses hardship to shape believers into the people He intends them to be.
- Jesus allowed the disciples to experience the fear and anxiety of being in a boat on a raging sea.
- He permitted them to suffer because He had something far more important to teach them.
- He wanted the disciples to recognize their own helplessness, His sufficiency, and their dependence on Him.

Ask God to reveal His abiding presence in the midst of your troubles.

And remember—He always provides for your spiritual needs to help you both endure and grow stronger in your Christian faith.