

THE STORM WITHIN

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“Where is your faith?”

Luke 8:25

Learning to live happily ever after requires learning to live by faith. Please read Hebrews 11:1 and write out faith’s definition here: _____

_____.

Faith is being sure of what we hope for even when circumstances tell us all hope is gone. The eyes of faith are certain that a happily ever after ending is on its way, even if our situation appears to be raging out of control. Faith translates into courage based on the trust that God is in control no matter what storm seems to be brewing.

Read Mark 4:35-41 for the story of a faith building storm and its outcome.

After a day filled with teachings and revelations, Jesus invites His followers to join Him *over on the other side*. In this scene, “the other side” refers to a geographic location. Is there a situation of different sorts that you’d like to get on *the other side* of right now? _____

If you’re following Christ, like the disciples were in this story, His Spirit will be with you on the other side, regardless of what other details await you there. What can you expect alongside *the Spirit of the Lord*, according to 2Corinthians 3:17? _____

Freedom! Freedom from fear, freedom from worry, freedom from sin. At this point in your life, what do you desire to be freed from? _____

Let’s get in the boat with Jesus and set sail towards *Freedom*. What might we need to leave behind, according to Mark 4:36? _____

There are times when we just need to leave the crowd behind and get alone with God. Are you making that kind of One-on-one a priority in your schedule? yes/no Filling up on the Word of God daily prepares us for the storms ahead. If you’re not already, plan to set aside some time of rest with God each day. What part of your day can you devote to Him? _____

On another note, there may be other things that need to be left behind before you can make the trip to the other side of your circumstances. Read Galatians 5:19-21. What might you need to turn from? _____

What happened on the disciples' trip, and what was Jesus' response according to Mark 4:37-38? _____

Without warning, a furious storm descends - putting Christ's followers in serious danger - and He's asleep! This raises concern, especially when seen in the light of Psalm 121. Focus specifically on verses 3-4 of Psalm 121. What is it that God will *not* do? _____

If God doesn't slumber or sleep, why do you think Jesus might be asleep during this storm? _____

Though it's true that while on earth Jesus experienced the same human characteristics as us (including exhaustion), His choice to sleep at this time suggests another trait, as well. Before discovering it, please read Mark 4:38 and note the disciples' question here: _____

No matter where you are on your journey, Jesus cares, and no matter how overwhelming the waves might be, He does not want you to drown. Write out 1Peter 5:7 here: _____

Which anxieties do you want to lay at Jesus' feet today? _____

Take a moment now to turn your concerns into a prayer, knowing that God is listening (see Proverbs 15:29). Write your prayer in the following space:

You can trust God in the midst of your storms. How does Lamentations 3:22 support that promise? _____

Jesus knew that His Father's love and compassion would never fail, and He demonstrated His absolute trust in God by sleeping through the storm, knowing He would not be consumed. Let's not confuse His faith for apathy.

Jesus was at peace while those around Him were in a panic. His choice to sleep gave witness to the theology of resting in God. How does our response to stressful situations impact others? _____

God expects His followers to be so confident of His care that they experience a peace that surpasses all understanding, regardless of their situation or surroundings (see Philippians 4:7). Not that we would simply go to sleep in response to hard times, but that the way we handle a crisis would reveal our faith and in so doing point others to Christ.

How do you tend to react in times of trouble? _____

How might things be different if you knew without a doubt that God was in control of your circumstances? _____

Read Isaiah 46:4 and record God's promises here: _____

Christ will carry you through your storms, just as He sustained the disciples through theirs. What did Jesus do and say when they woke Him according to Mark 4:39? _____

Here Jesus shows His dominion over all creation. How did the wind and waves respond to His command? _____

God gives us commands, as well. Read the command He gave in Joshua 1:9. How do those words comfort and encourage you? _____

When we choose to trust and obey God we will find our calm within the storm, even before the details die down. Part of true obedience involves calming the storm *within*, meaning setting aside our worries and doubts so we may move forward in faith-filled courage though our five senses may tell us we should be melting in fear.

How do God's words in Psalms 46:10 echo those spoken in Mark 4:39? _____

The wind and waves knew Jesus as God; Sovereign and Exalted. When that truth becomes a reality in our lives we, too, will be able to *be still* in God's presence – knowing Him personally and allowing Him to quiet our hearts.

In the aftermath of the storm, Jesus asks His disciples some pointed questions. What were His words in Mark 4:40? _____

This same story is told in the book of Luke. What words made up Jesus' question in Luke 8:25? _____

Where is *your* faith? Is it in your finances, your strengths and abilities, your title? Hear Jesus ask you the same questions He asked His original followers, and answer honestly here: _____

If the disciples' faith rested in their boat or their skills as sailors, they'd have sunk. It was Christ alone that rescued them from certain peril, and that miraculous rescue would become a reminder of His power in the future.

How could this miracle settle the matter of Christ's deity for the disciples? Would they have come to the same conclusion if they had been able to save themselves?

Storms swell, but one touch from Jesus and they can be stilled to a whisper. By such miracles, Jesus seeks to establish and increase our faith in His power; guiding us to our desired haven of a *happily ever after* with Him (see Psalm 107:29-30).

When we see a raging storm, God sees an opportunity to show Himself strong before our very eyes. Who is He, according to Isaiah 25:4? _____

Amongst other things, God is our Shelter from the Storm, the Source of our faith, and our "happily ever after" Guarantee. Let Him carry you through whatever turbulence lies ahead. There's a miracle waiting for you on the other side. When it's all said and done, you won't have to ask, "Who is this?" You'll know that you know that *He is God*.
