

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Sermon Series: Resilient Faith: Standing Strong in the Midst of Suffering
To be used with: Session Six: Victorious Faith
Sermon Title Possibilities:
 Flying the Flag of Joy
 Let There Be Joy!
Scripture: Matthew 8:23-27

Connection To Unit Theme: *Resilient Faith: Standing Strong in the Midst of Suffering* is a six session study from the book of 1 Peter. These theme-based sermon outlines will reinforce the main point of each small group session but with a different Scripture passage. This will allow you as the pastor to expand upon what small groups are discussing without taking all the small group leader's talking points.

Session 6 of *Resilient Faith* is called "Victorious Faith." The Point is "God will strengthen and restore me."

This sermon outline is based on the events of Matthew 8, in which Jesus and His disciples find themselves on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of a terrific storm. Storms will inevitably come our way, too. We, like the disciples can experience a mixture of fear and faith when storms arise. But whether He calms the storm around us, or calms the storm within us, trusting Jesus in the middle of the storm is the only way to enjoy victory.

Introduction:

I love to fly. But the only time I can remember being afraid for my physical safety was on an airplane. While on a flight from Memphis, Tennessee to Dallas, Texas I experienced the worse turbulence I have ever encountered. The flight attendants were not allowed out of their seats to serve snacks, due to the violent shaking of the airplane. Only later I found out that most of the runways at Dallas-Ft. Worth Airport were flooded over and our flight had been detoured to another runway, which was actually closed immediately after we landed. As our plane touched down I could feel it skidding from side to side. Looking out the window I saw grass, buildings, grass, buildings....I realized we were slewing around on the runway and I feared we would crash. Thankfully, our skilled pilot got the aircraft under control and guided us safely to the terminal. Unfortunately, I had to board another plane shortly for the next leg of my journey!

Have you ever been on a flight where it was clear even the flight attendants and crew were nervous? That's when my anxiety goes way up. I think to myself, *these guys have seen it all. And if they are this nervous, things must really be bad!*

In Matthew 8:23-27, we read about a storm that was so bad, even professional fishermen—guys who had grown up around the Sea of Galilee—were panicking. Things were bad. But I want us to focus on Jesus, and not the storm. Focus on Jesus, who used this storm as an opportunity to teach His disciples what it means to have victorious faith.

[Read Matthew 8:23-27]

1. Seismic Storms

The word for storm in verse 24 is ‘*seismos*’. (Actually, the two words used for ‘violent storm’ in the HCSB is ‘*megas seismos*’; mega meaning huge). We get our word ‘seismic’ from this word. A seismic event is an earthquake! What a storm this must have been! Where do you hide from an earthquake? In the same vein, where do you hide from a storm on the sea?

Monumental storms get our attention. Most will remember the storm Jonah endured at sea before being thrown overboard. Many will recall the dramatic storm of Paul and his companions being shipwrecked in Acts 27. Without doubt the most memorable storms are personal. Family storms. Financial storms. Career storms. Spiritual storms. Let me say it again: monumental storms get our attention.

Application: Notice where Jesus is in this story. Notice what He’s doing. Verse 23: “But He was sleeping.” What does this say about Jesus? Is He naïve? Does He not understand the power of this storm the way the disciples do? No, Jesus isn’t being naïve. He is simply showing that His confidence in the Creator of the storm outweighs His fear of the storm itself. What does it take to develop that level of confidence in God? It takes walking with Him every day. It takes studying His Word during times of calm, so that during times of turbulence, we can rely on what He has already revealed about His character.

2. An Accessible Savior

We are quick to judge the disciples here for their panicked reaction. Wasn’t Jesus right there in the boat with them, asleep? If He wasn’t worried, why were they? In fact, we often react with a mixture of fear and faith as the disciples did. The language of faith said, “Lord save us!” They knew Jesus was God and He could perform miracles. But the language of fear said, “We’re going to die!” (verse 25) In the midst of faith, they wondered, “Lord, this might be too big for even you.” Although initially reassured by His presence, they still feared for their lives.

Thankfully, Jesus calmed the storm by His power. The word ‘rebuked’ in verse 26 is from two words that mean to impose power upon. Jesus miraculously imposed His will over nature! Sometimes Jesus chooses to calm the storm around us. It simply dissipates and goes away. We like it like that. Make this go away now! More often Jesus allows it to continue, and calms the storm within us. Instead of calming with His power, He calms us with His presence. Read these Scripture passages slowly and aloud:

“For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.” (Acts 27:23-25 NKJV). Do you believe what God has promised in His Word?

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious

than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:7 NKJV)

3. A Significant Response

In light of such a miraculous deliverance, the disciples made two significant responses. First they marveled at His identity. “What kind of man is this?” (HCSB) “Who is this man?” (KJV). Do we really know Jesus? Going with Him through the midst of storms increases our understanding of who He is to us.

Second, the disciples marveled at His ability. “Even the winds and the sea obey Him.” The forces of nature are at His command! “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Genesis 18:14 NKJV)

Closing:

We, too, will experience seismic storms. We, too, have an accessible Savior. And when He calms our storms (without or within), we should make a significant response. We should respond with gratitude, and with worship. Most of all, we should respond with faith, trusting Him more than ever before. God will strengthen and restore me through storms. “But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10 NKJV)

An audio version of this message can be found online at:

<http://www.michaeldstover.com/blog/2014/1/2/jesus-and-your-storm.html> Just click the link on the page to listen or download.

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