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Inviting all to **COME** to Christ, **GROW** in faith, and **GO** change the world

John 6:15-17 – “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. ¹⁶ And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea, ¹⁷ And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.”

Note: Next Sunday evening we will be going over to the lake and doing baptisms. Baptism is not essential to your salvation, but is a testimony of your decision to follow Christ. If you haven't been baptized, I would encourage you to be prayerful about that and let us know if you would like to be baptized.

GOSPEL OF JOHN - The Walk

Part Twenty-one

I think I wouldn't get much pushback from the crowd today when I say it's been a difficult time the past 21 months with the Coronavirus and the way of the world today. It's been difficult physically, emotionally, relationally and spiritually too. Then sprinkle life storms in the middle of all of that and it can be a dark time; we can't see what God is doing in our life and feel like we don't have our bearings. It can be a time of fear. The issue isn't *will* I go through a life storm, it's *when* will I go through a life storm? One thing has gotten me through my storms is Jesus. Not a friendship, a church, the money I have in the bank ... it is only Jesus. He is the only One who can help in our life storms.

John 6:15-17 (above) - This is the story of the disciples, who find themselves in a storm. Jesus has just fed 5,000+ people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. This story falls right on the heels of that miracle ... and the group says, “We've got to make this guy King!” Jesus says, ‘Not now, you're trying to make me King for the wrong reasons.’ They only followed Jesus because He fed them.

Matthew 14:22 - “*And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.*”

Life storms facilitate learning.

They are about to go into a storm. They are headed to Capernaum; is isn't an arbitrary decision that they made, Jesus told them to go. It was Jesus Who put them in the boat and told them to sail to Capernaum. I'm certain that Jesus, the Son of God, knew the storm was coming but He still sends them on the journey. Why? Life storms facilitate learning. We grow when we go through storms.

Why does God allow storms? We try to be faithful yet we have difficulty. It's not because God doesn't love you ... it's because He **does** love you! Look at the Cross ... a perfectly innocent man on the Cross, beaten, stripped, and dying for something He didn't do. God was doing His greatest work on the Cross. Understand this:

There is purpose in the pain!

I don't like pain any more than you do. But there's purpose in our pain, our trials. God has something He wants to do in your life through what you're going through.

Did you notice where Jesus is while they're in the storm? He's on the mountain, praying. Jesus is in heaven right now, interceding for us.

Mark 6:48 - *"And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them."*

The disciples are pulling as hard as they can, and rowing, trying to get to the other side to safety. Jesus saw them toiling and rowing. He knows what you're going through, too. That should bring great comfort to you. When you're going through something difficult, he can sympathize and empathize ... He understands! He hasn't forsaken you.

John 6:17 - *"And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them."*

Have you ever been in total darkness? In a cave, in a mine, something like that? It's a spooky thing! It can be scary and disorienting. Our teen camp in South Missouri was just a few weeks ago. We talked about battling our giants, fears we face. One of the things we did is we had a dark room. It was voluntary ... we put blindfolds on the kids and there were 4 different things they had to do. It was interesting to observe these confident teens! When we're in that storm, it's dark, it's suffocating. We can't see the stumblingblocks we're about to fall over.

Verse 17 - It was dark because Jesus wasn't there. They're on a journey but the source of Light wasn't with them.

Jesus Gives Me Light When My World Grows Dark

Jesus brings Light into the darkest situations.

John 8:12 - *"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*

Jesus says, 'I am the Light of the world.' **He that followeth me** is a very important part ... if we want access to the Light, we have to follow Him. When Jesus went back to heaven, He left us His Word. His Word is Light.

Psalms 119:105 - *"NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."*

God's Word that Jesus left for us is a Light when we're going through our storm. Follow the principles of His Word. Allow it to speak to you. He also replaced Himself with the Spirit of God. It can enhance the Light.

Ephesians 1:17-18 – *“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: ¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”*

This is a prayer that Paul is praying for the Ephesians. He says I want you to have that Spirit that can enlighten your eyes to the Word of God. It helps us to navigate when things grow dark in our life storm.

A few years ago when we were at camp, outside there, you can see stars that you can't see here. One year Bill Olliver, who is a State Trooper, brought his night goggles with him. We held them up to the sky and you could see a whole 'nother strata of light out there! We may be in our life storm and it may seem dark, but God's Holy Spirit shows the Light.

Not only did God leave his Word and His Spirit, but He's also given us our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ephesians 5:8 – *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”*

Paul says, sometime before in your life you were in darkness, but now, because you're in Christ, you are Light in the Lord. Our responsibility is to walk as children of Light. I have no light of my own ... any Light I have is because of Jesus Christ. We are to come alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ and help them see they're in the darkness so they can find their way on their journey. This is the responsibility of the body of Christ. It's why the church is here, to be the physical hands and feet of Christ, to reflect His Light.

Matthew 5:14 - *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”*

John 6:18 - *“And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.”*

Not only is it dark, then the wind kicks up and the waves start to rise and we can conclude that their boat starts to get tossed about in the waves of this windstorm. It wasn't uncommon on the sea of Galilee ... storms came up. How many have ever been on a boat that's white-capping? Ever tried to walk on a boat that's white-capping? The most basic things become difficult when you're in that storm. When you get off the boat and onto dry land, you've got sea legs! When we're in the life storm and the wind kicks up, it starts to make us feel unstable. The opposition is there.

Jesus is our Rock!

Jesus Gives Me Stability When My World Gets Rocked

Jesus Christ is our Rock! He is the thing that gives us stability. Look at **Matthew Chapter 7**. This is the end of the sermon on the mount ...

Matthew 7:24-27 – *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”*

The difference is between hearing and doing.

Jesus is our Rock! He is the Rock of our salvation, the stability of our life. In this story, Jesus illustrates for us how this works in our life. It has to do with us hearing **and doing** the Word of God. He mentions two people, one is wise and one is foolish. The only difference between the 2 of them is what they do with what they heard. The outcomes are drastically different. One stands and one falls. The same is true in our life. When we go through storms, the issue comes from what am I doing with what I have read from the Word of God. The issue is not just hearing, it's hearing and doing.

We know a lot about the Bible here at Grace; we can quote Scripture, we're good at Bible trivia. But we're not as good as we should be at Bible "ivia". We need to put it into practice. When we do that, there's stability in our life; our house will be founded on a Rock, not sand. When we start doing it on our own, we get in trouble. When we leave God's Word, our life will start to fall apart. Hear it and do it, especially when you're in the storm. Oftentimes when I find myself in a storm, I tend to cover up, to withdraw. But when I'm in the storm, I've got to keep my ears open to what God is saying to me and put it to use in the midst of my storm and before you know it, I find myself on solid ground again.

John 6:19-20 - *“So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.”*

Think about that ... Jesus walking on the sea!

Jesus Gives Me Courage When My World is Filled With Fear

The #1 characteristic of life storms is **fear**. We fear the unknown, failure, pain, man, and sometimes we even fear Jesus and what He's going to ask us to do. Most people live life filled with fear. That's been revealed over the last several months. When we're in a storm, we will fear things and be stressed. Do you know what's at the core of stress? Fear. We can be afraid in the life storms. In another passage about storms, they thought Jesus was a ghost. Their fear changes into awe as a result of what happened.

There's another "storm" story where the disciples are in a storm and Jesus is asleep in the back. They wake Him up and He rebukes the wind and the rain and it becomes calm. The disciples' response is, 'What manner of man is this that even the wind and waves obey Him?'



Jesus is walking on water. If you'd like, I will drive you over to the lake and see how you do that. Jesus walked on water! He commanded the wind and waves and they stood still! He can handle your problem ... He's got it! He can help you through whatever you're experiencing. He commands everything, He's in control of it all! It's when that fear grips your heart ... **when you're afraid, that's not from God.**

2Timothy 1:7 - *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."*

When I start to feel fear creeping up in my life and I'm afraid, that is not God, that's my flesh. God has given me power and love and a sound mind, not a stressed mind. Fear results from me having a "small God" and what I perceive to be "big circumstances" I'm facing. When my God is big, my circumstances get smaller, and I'm not afraid.

Psalms 56:3-4 - *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. ⁴ In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."*

It's a matter of trust, isn't it? Who am I trusting? Self? Somebody else? Or God. If I trust God, I don't have to be afraid. This is the key ...

John 6:21 - *"Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."*

The disciples willingly received Him - this is the key - this is how we experience the things we've been talking about when we're in a storm. **We've got to willingly let Him come in.** That's true at salvation, too. You're not a Christian because you grew up in church. You become a Christian by willingly receiving Jesus as your Saviour ... you've got to let Him in. It also applies to submission. We have to receive Him into our lifeboat and let Him be Captain. The disciples were toiling and rowing. They had been in storms on that water before ... here comes a 33-year-old Carpenter Who was telling them how to row their boat and they had to willingly submit. When we're saved, sometimes we are still trying to row our own boat and are resistant to let Him be Captain. Let Him be Captain! He knows how life works better than you do! Let it go! Let Him into your boat ... willingly receive Him.

Matthew 14:33 - *"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."*

Notice two things that happened as a result of them willingly receiving Him into the boat:

- 1) Their worship increased. When we're going through a life storm and we allow Him into our boat, we begin to worship Him at a different level. Not only that ...
- 2) Their fear changes into awe. They not only begin to worship Him with increased intensity, they begin to worship Him with a sense of awe.

Submit to Jesus, let Him run the show and worship Him like you've never worshipped before. He is real! **Here's the truth we don't like to hear ... you never would've gotten there without the storm.** You still would've been on autopilot. But the storm came that Jesus sent you into, and now you come out and it's different. Look at the miracle ... **Verse 21** ... immediately the ship was at the land, in Capernaum. The moment they let Him into the boat, they were at Capernaum. "Capernaum" means "place of consolation". When you let Jesus in your boat, you're at the destination, that place of comfort. Stop rowing yourself and let Him in and He'll take you where you need to be. Willingly receive Him.

When you willingly receive Christ, you are immediately at your destination. If you are saved, you are at your destination. We experience peace and comfort. He gives us the stability and courage that we need. Only Jesus can do that.

Maybe you're in a storm right now and rowing like crazy. Jesus has what you need! He has the Light you need, He has the stability you need, He has the courage you need because you're afraid. All you've got to do is willingly receive Him into the boat and learn the lesson He has for you. I'm not saying that the moment you receive Jesus into your boat all of your problems will go away, but I am saying He will give you what you need for your problems. Even if your boat goes down, Jesus is still your Rock and the source of your strength. If He gets more glory out of sinking my boat, then that's His prerogative.

If you don't have the certainty of salvation in your life, I want to invite you to willingly receive Jesus as your Saviour. There is no magic formula or no magic words, but if you want certainty of eternal life, you must be saved. Jesus lived a sinless life. He was the perfect fulfillment of God's law. The only way to heaven is through perfection. Have you accepted Jesus' gift of eternal life? If you've never trusted Christ as your Saviour, [Click here for information on how to spend eternity in heaven.](#) Jesus has the ability to breathe life into your dead soul by believing Jesus as Your Saviour, by confessing, repenting and calling upon His name to save you.

Believers, we're all in the same boat. We are all going through a storm, but individually we have our own storms. Maybe you're rowing like crazy, trying to do the right things but not making any progress ... there's purpose in your pain. God Loves you and understands what you're going through and He wants to bring you to that place of consolation. All you've got to do is willingly receive Him into your boat and let Him be Lord. Surrender control. That doesn't mean your problems will immediately vanish, but there's peace that passes understanding; there is peace and Light from His Word and from His Spirit, but you've got to let Him into the boat.

† *Father, our hearts are tired of rowing. We understand that it is You that gives us Light and stability and the courage we need to face whatever we're going through. We pray, as we willingly receive You into our life, that You would be glorified and we would be more in awe of You; that we would worship You in a larger way. Thank You for the truth of Your Word. Without it, we would be lost.*

I want to lift up our country and this world. We are in a storm right now and we pray that even in the midst of this storm we would see Your purpose and that You would use it to grow us and draw us back to You. We pray all of these things in the name of our Saviour, Amen. †

♪ ♪ [The Lifeboat](#) ♪ ♪

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The preceding notes were taken from a sermon by Brad Nelson, Pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Lee's Summit, Missouri. The notes are in no way endorsed by Pastor Nelson, but are shared for the benefit of furthering God's kingdom. Feel free to share with anyone you are led by the Spirit to do so. Any errors or discrepancies contained in this document, although not intended, are those of the transcriber.