

April Showers Bring May Flowers

Scripture: Matthew 14:22-33

surviving the storms of life. How do we deal with the everyday storms that make life stressful, tiring, and hard work. An examination of perspective.

Matthew 14:22-33

Surviving the Storms of Life. We can talk about basic survival skills like avoiding storms, remembering that God is in the storms with you, and casting out spiritual anchors to prevent shipwreck. I want to start talking with you about specific types of storms in escalating severity and how we can survive and even thrive in the midst of them. Let's start with a look at spring showers. I call them spring showers because these are the storms that aren't so threatening in life. These are not the Thunder Storms with torrential rain and lightening - thunder crashing and the potential for hail and dangerous winds. These are the common storms that blow into life - make things hard - stress us out - and generally make a nuisance of themselves. These are the everyday storms that seem to make life a struggle no matter what we do. Let's look at a spring storm in the scripture and what we can learn about surviving in the midst of them.

Matthew 14:22-33.

1) Don't blow things out of proportion (v.24-26) - Every storm is not life threatening. The first thing I want you to understand is that even Spring Showers are storms but there

is nothing life threatening here. In fact the first time we hear about their fear is when they see Jesus walking on the water. The storm is real, the boat they are rowing is being battered by the wind and waves. The disciples have been rowing for a long time. It was daylight when they began their journey it is now between 3 and 6AM. They have been rowing most of the night and have only crossed to the middle of the Sea of Galilee - the wind is against them - they are tired - they are sore from rowing - but experienced fisherman they have been here before. We need to gain perspective in life. Have you ever known someone who just sees every day as a crisis? Every day living seems to put some people into crisis mode. Folks every day is not a crisis. Remember we are in Christ not Crisis

Every hardship does not have to cause despair. There is a sense of the dramatic in all of us that seems to want to make every hill a mountain and every puddle an ocean. There is a flair for the dramatic that wants everyone to see how strong we are or how hard we have it.

Begin to put storms in perspective. Dealing with a bad report card or a run in with the boss does not have to carry the same emotional weight as dealing with cancer or a potential broken marriage. Some storms we face are tough they're tiring, they're stressful - but they don't require crisis management. I have asked many couples who are squabbling over some issue - how important is this really? I know it seems like a big deal but is the world really going to stop turning if the dishes don't get done? Refuse the inclination to blow every problem into a national

emergency in your home and in your life. Sometimes we just have to keep rowing till we get to our destination. We might arrive tired and wet but we're going to arrive without the help of the coast guard.

2) Don't give in to fear (v.30-31) Peter gives into his fear and falls. Fear causes paralysis and fear makes bad decisions. Peter looked around saw the wind and the waves and forgot about Jesus who was standing right in front of him. Fear causes us to do crazy things. Sometimes we strike out at the people who are trying to help us. Here is a truth for you Hospital beds and empty checkbooks make bad decisions. If bad decisions got you to the hospital bed or empty checkbook then you need to make radical changes. If you have made sound decisions sometimes you just have to ride out the wind and the waves till you get to your destination. Sometimes you need to stay the course even when the wind is blowing against you. What I am saying is that you need to make principled decisions about life that are made in the quiet of the spirit not in the fear of the moment.

3) Find the Presence of God (v.31) Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of Him." In the midst of everyday trials and storms - Jesus is there. Don't get lost in the drudgery of the storm. Don't lose hope that the sun will shine again. Don't Give Up Reach Up. Find in the midst of the storm when your faith is wavering and you're up to your neck in it all - that Jesus is there. His promise is that He will be with us even to the end of the age. His call to us is "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give

you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS."

In Spring Showers there is a call (29) Jesus says to Peter "Come". Step out on the water Peter get out of the boat. You want to walk on water "Come on." Jesus looks at Peter in the midst of the storm and calls him to a moment of:

Faith - Peter do you believe? Peter am I big enough? Peter what is your faith made of?

Trust - Peter if you step out I'll take care of you. I've got you Peter if you'll just trust me.

In every storm there is a call for us to have faith to believe in Christ. To know that He loves us and cares for us. A call to trust that He has our back and won't let us flounder. In the midst of spring showers - Peter found the strength to get out of the boat - the faith to walk on water - and when he failed he found the strong arms of Jesus to lift him out of his crisis. If you want to survive the day to day showers of life - don't make the storms bigger than they are - don't give in to fear but walk in the strength of the arms of Christ.