


Standing in the Storms of Life

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 Audio Transcripts of Sunday Sermons

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Place of Surrender – Artwork by [Colleen Archibald](#)

Standing in the Storms of Life (2 sermons)

[Standing in the Storms of Life \(1 of 2\)](#) You don't always see the connection between your actions and the current storm. Sometimes there's a bit of time that takes place before finally you start to reap the consequences of your actions and your inner storm, whether it be in your marriage, in your family, in your finances, in your personal life, in your work life and actually it's the result of neglect or the result of poor choices. You're going to have to not just pray about it and blame the devil on it. You've actually got to own and take full responsibility, you only have power over the storm if you own responsibility. The second kind of storm then is a God-directed storm, that kind of storm is to bring you to surrender. There's just some natural storms that come in life. There can be some storms which are just straight out demonic.

[Standing in the Storms of Life \(2 of 2\)](#) Jesus shows His dominion over nature, total authority over the law of gravity when He's walking on water. When He got into the boat immediately the wind just stopped. The third thing that happened was immediately the boat was on the other side, transported! Sometimes when we read the gospels we just read them almost with eyes blinded to the reality of the supernatural. Go preach the gospel, and signs will follow those who believe

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I want to share with you on: standing in the storms of life. How many know that storms come on us once in a while, a bit unexpected aye? Every one of us faces storms of some kind. Storms, sometimes we see them coming on the horizon, sometimes you don't see them, they just blow up, and they just come. I want to just talk about some storms, a particular storm that Jesus' disciples faced, and the Holy Spirit, in the word of God, separated out from everything that Jesus did, just some things that we need to hear about. So there's so many things, if you wrote them all down it would fill the books of the world, so the ones we see here that are written have really got something for us, so let's have a look.

On the same day when evening had come, Jesus said - Mark 4:35 - let's cross over to the other side. And when they left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was; no time to change, no time to get packed, hop in the boat and leave. And other little boats were also with Him, and a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat - it was already getting filled with water. But He was in the stern of the boat, asleep on a pillow. Isn't that wonderful aye? That's Jesus - and they awoke Him, and said to Him: teacher, don't You care we're about to die? We're perishing! And He arose, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea: peace, be still! The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Then He said to them: why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? And they were even more fearful. They feared exceedingly, and said: who can this be, even the wind and the sea obey Him!

So you notice this is a story of a storm, and how to handle a storm. Every one of us faces storms in life. This particular storm was a dramatic storm. Notice what Jesus says at the beginning. He says: let's cross over to the other side. In other words, He had an assignment for them. Jesus had in mind a territory to be reached. Jesus had a vision of a whole region of people He wanted to reach with the gospel; so when He said: let's cross over, what He's really saying is: I don't want to just stay preaching to those who've already heard the word of God. I want to go out to where people haven't heard the word of God. There's a whole territory out there, that I want to go to; and He said: let us cross over to the other side. So this is a tremendous picture for us, of God speaking about the need for us to break out of limitations, break out of comfort zones, to bring the gospel to people who never heard Him. People need to hear about Jesus Christ. The only way they're going to hear is if we bring the good news to them.

So notice the mandate they have, is to leave the comfort zone, and go out to where people haven't heard the gospel; and so they had to leave the crowd behind. It's great to be gathering and meeting like this. We have a great time, we enjoy the presence of God, but there are people around you every day that have never heard about the kingdom of God, they've never heard about a saviour who loves them. They're wrestling with storms in their life, unable to know what to do, and we've got something that can help them. It won't matter what stage you are at in your journey in your Christian life, you have something to help someone who doesn't know Christ - even if it's a simple act of kindness opens the door, but you have to cross over. You've got to cross over the great gap between: being with my friends; and being where people are who don't know Jesus. You've actually got to initiate it. Notice that Jesus said: you leave where you are, and go to where they are. It's always like that.

Often we think: well, we'd love to invite people to come; and it's great to have events to gather people too. They're great to do that, but really the bottom line is, God wants us to go where people are in need. I just so appreciated Thomas this morning, just his willingness to go to desperate people in need. I mean that's a - to have a young man stepping out like that to do something like that, he's never put any demand on anyone. He's worked sacrificially to do this. This is a thing that's inspiring, and it's a great example, but the bottom line is: he's going where people are; and we go out those doors to where people are, but you've got to intentionally leave the comfort zone.

Notice: they left the multitudes, left the crowd, left the place of comfort, to go to where people are in need. You actually have to engage them; and in the engaging with unsaved people, there will be a dash of kingdoms. We have to just understand the reality of that, and in this particular passage, and the next one that follows, there are two clashes that take place. In other words, Jesus has given the disciples an assignment, but always with the assignments of God, there will come a spiritual conflict. It is inevitable. If you are walking into what God has for you, you will face a clash between: the kingdom you represent; and the kingdom of darkness. It will not yield its captives readily. It's something we have to bear. A lot of Christians aren't aware, that around the issue of reaching souls, there is a spiritual conflict; and it requires we overcome some of the things that arise against us. I want to help you

understand some things that arise against us, some storms that arise against us, and what to do. But always it costs you something, always it costs you something.

Let's have a look at the story there, and it says: a great wind-storm arose. That word 'great' is 'mega'. It's a MEGA storm. Don't know if you've ever been out in a boat in a mega storm? It's horrendous! The word storm there, indicates there were great furious thunderclouds; there were driving blasts and gusts; and then there's this torrential rain. That's what it describes. When you read it: oh well there it is, yeah, a great windstorm. No, no, no. They were in a life-threatening thing. This thing rose up out of nowhere, and threatens to sink the boat before they've even got there; and so the storm came up. Now I want you to understand there's a whole number of storms that we can face in life. I want to identify for you four different kinds of storms. When you face a storm, usually what happens is: it affects your thought life; it affects your emotions; it affects your decisions. You feel like your life is a little bit out of control, because you're in the middle of a storm. How many understand what that's like?

There's all kinds of storms. You can have a financial storm, and suddenly there's this dramatic pressure; things look black and cloudy, the rain is on you. You look like the boat is sinking. That's a financial storm. You can have a storm in your marriage, it looks exactly like that in your marriage. It can be black and cloudy, and the winds are beating, and you're feeling very distressed, and thinking: I'm sinking very quickly. There can be storms in the family, especially if you have teenagers. You can have dramatic storms arise, suddenly overnight. Out of nowhere they just suddenly turn up, and there's a crisis call, and then you have to leave home and go down to the police station; or leave home and pick someone up from some place; or you leave home and you've got to sort out some crisis. Anyone who's had teenagers knows, there's a whole number of storms come during that period of life. How many understand what I'm talking about here? There we are, everyone! That's right. Be nice if you knew what to do in those storms wouldn't it? [Laughs]

Okay, so those are a couple of storms, different kinds of storms. When a storm comes, you're in turmoil. Now there's four different kinds of storms - there may be others, these are four that I'm aware of, four that I've had. I've gone through every one of these storms, so I know a little bit about storms. The first storm is the storm of your own making; the storm of your own making. In other words, you brought it on yourself. Now that is a storm, let me just give you a simple example. If you spend more than you have coming in, a financial storm is about to arise. It's only a matter of how long, then it arises, then you complain: ooh, the devil's attacking me, my finances are down, God's not coming through. Listen, you goofed up! It's just as simple as that. You just goofed up, and mismanaged; and now you're reaping what you sowed. It's just simple like that, so a storm of our own making means: there's stuff we did, and now we're getting the consequences of it; or there's stuff we didn't do, and now we're getting the consequences of it.

So husbands, if you neglect to love your wives... I was just talking to a guy recently, and I remember trying to help him out a little while ago, and now he's a very, very lonely person, and his marriage has broken up. His wife left him, and I said: did you learn anything from it? He said: yes, I did. He said: I realised I neglected her. I didn't want to say: we came and talked to you about that - it just wouldn't be appropriate in the middle of a storm. People are really needing help; not to sink. They don't need us to help point out they got there, but the thing was that he was reaping the consequences. Now the problem with this is, that you don't always see the connection between: your actions; and the current storm. Sometimes there's a bit of time takes place before finally you start to reap the consequences of your actions; and your inner storm, whether it be in your marriage, in your family, in your finances, in your personal life, in your work life; and actually it's the result of neglect, or the result of poor choices.

Now one of the hardest things is to connect that. You go to someone, like a Pastor or a leader, and they talk with you, and they'll ask you the questions, and help you link the storm you're facing now, to what you actually did or didn't do. That's one of the things of having someone external helping you in the middle of a storm. My observation over many years, is often in the middle of a storm, you can't see one thing from another. You're just fearful, and you want to survive; and you can't connect where you failed with what you're experiencing. Sometimes we just need someone to help us in that; so the key questions to think about here: what has been my contribution to this storm? Has there been any contribution by me to this storm? Now the financial one's an obvious one. If there's more going out than coming in, then you've absolutely been messing up. You've actually made some bad judgement calls, and you're going to have to not just pray about it, and blame the devil on it. You've actually got to own and take full responsibility; you only have power over the storm, if you own responsibility. So the first question then you ask is: what's my part in this? Then the key response is: will you acknowledge, and repent, and make the practical changes?

So some storms, they're not really spiritual. Demons will use them to torment, and trouble, and harass you; but they're basically not a demonic storm. They're just a storm of consequences. How many have had one of those? Probably that's the one that brought you to Christ. [Laughs] I think of the one that got me to Christ. Yeah, it was a storm, and it was horrendous, and in the end I came to the Lord. There was nowhere else to go. How many knew

there was nowhere else to go, that's why you came to the Lord? Yeah, well that's good and honest. That's where most people are, so you'll find people who are in a storm, a lot of people you meet in life, their problems - yes, there's demons around it. Yes, there's kinds of issues around it, but the core of it is: they're messing up. There's sin, there's irresponsibility, and that's why they've got the problem. Many marriages break down because of neglect, not because of actually consciously doing bad things. They've just neglected the marriage over so many years, that in the end there's nothing left, it just ran out when the kids left home.

So the second kind of storm then, is a God-directed storm; a God-directed storm. This one here, you can't pray your way out of it; you can't work your way out of it; you can't repent your way out of it. You just can't get out of the storm, because God's the one who blew the thing in, in the first place, so that's a challenging storm, another storm. We like to feel we have the power to make things happen, but sometimes we can't; so a classic example of that is in Jonah 1:4, where Jonah had been told by the Lord: go and preach the gospel in Nineveh. He said: I don't like them. In fact, actually I despise them; and I'm not going, and he got on a boat and went the other way; and he went a long way the other way. That's kind of the condition of a lot of the church. God says: go and preach the gospel - I don't want to. I don't want to. It's inconvenient. People are not nice to me. It costs my time and my money, I don't think I want to. I think I'll get on a boat and go somewhere nice. It'd be lovely to go somewhere nice; so that kind of storm, it says: the Lord caused a great wind to blow; so it's definitely true in the Bible, that sometimes the winds that people have in their life, are the winds God causes.

The worst part of it is this: everyone around you gets caught up in your storm. I mean we're meant to advance the kingdom, and bring peace and blessing; that's righteousness, peace, joy and the Holy Ghost, isn't that right? That's what should be flowing out of our lives, so people at your work say: it's great to have you working for us, we see things are right. There's peace, there's joy, it's great we've got you here. Instead of that, they're all in turmoil, because you're in turmoil, because you're totally missing it in God. I think of the marriages where the wife and family are in turmoil because the man's not doing what God says, just deliberately on a boat somewhere else. Well, that storm comes into that boat! Think about that, so some storms God lets happen, and some happen for a purpose. It's actually to realign us with kingdom. It's just to realign us with kingdom. It's to get you realigned, so you don't go off track any further.

I mean, I wonder how many of us here, are going exactly 180 degrees away from where God wanted. You can be sitting in church, and still going 180 degrees away from where God wants you to go, you know. Praise the Lord - but I'm going this way! So we come into worship: oh oh oh praise the Lord! - but I'm going this way; and God says: but I want you going over here. Why aren't you doing this? And we say: oh the worship wasn't very good today. No, of course it wasn't good today, there's a storm blowing, and God's blowing the storm around you. The reason he's blowing around you, is because you're not in a right place in your heart; and God is helping you, because he loves you, to sort something out. So that kind of storm is to bring you to surrender. It's to bring you to surrender, to bring you to the cross; where you stop fighting God any more, and say: God, I'm yielding and letting go.

Usually people are in the belly of the whale before they actually cry out the prayer, when at last the big fish closes in over you, and you're swallowed, going down into darkness, oh how your praying changes. [Laughter] It does, doesn't it? YAAAHH! GOD, help us! I'm really sorry! You know, as that fish is opening up, and you're swimming as fast as you can. It's following you. You know, you do change. [Laughter] The prayers get quite different. They're not sort of long, complicated prayers. It's just a [Sobs loudly] I'm about to go into the belly of whale, of the fish, swallow me up; and there it is, slime; and the last thing he prayed. It was a great prayer he prayed, because it brought him into resurrection. When he let go, and he surrendered, and acknowledged the goodness of God, the bigness of God, and surrendered to God, it got him into resurrection. The fish got a belly ache and chundered him out! Can you just imagine?

Now this is not good, to fight against God, you realise that. You don't want to end up being vomited up by some fish up on a beach, covered in slime and seaweed. It's not really a nice place to be. It's where a lot of Christians get to somehow. At least if they come around and say yes to God, then things can only look better after that. So I wonder if God has been speaking in any area of your life, and the storm you're facing is just because God is wanting you to yield. Even Jesus faced His own storms. Think in Matthew 26, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He faced a storm. Now you see, the storm He faced was the cross; but it brought a storm in his emotions. You imagine if you know, if you knew that in twenty-four hours of walking out that door, you would face the most horrendous death. You've probably heard and seen of others, a terrible slow death, and then you know you're going to face that, what would you feel?

The Bible says: He was extremely sorrowful, but He didn't isolate. He gathered key friends around, and He asked them to pray with Him, and stand with Him through the difficulty He was facing. One of the things that people tend to do in a storm is isolate; and when you isolate, you're going to go down under a tree in depression, wanting to die like

Elijah did. Isolation's not the answer, connection is, and then in the connection He asked His friends, even though they weren't able to solve His problem or change the circumstances, He just shared His heart with them, and gathered them in to stand with Him in prayer. He said: pray with Me an hour, and He shared His heart with them. It takes great courage and humility, when you're going through the face of a storm, and things are very, very difficult, to just share your heart with people; and say: could you stand with me in prayer? Not ask them to solve it, try and pray and fix it, prophesy some great thing. You just ask them: I just want you to stand with me in agreement. That's a Godly thing to do. No one should be alone. We should all be part of the body, and build connections; so when the pressure's on, you've got someone you can talk to, and say: can you pray with me? I really need prayer right now.

And then Jesus personally worked through, and wrestled through, to the place of surrender to the will of God; Father, not my will, your will be done. That's a huge challenge to go through those kinds of surrenders, but don't think He didn't have a storm with His emotions. It was a major storm, and the storm was about surrendering to what God wanted, when His flesh didn't want to do it. You may come across that in marriage, you can come across it in family. There's every area of our life we can face those kinds of pressures; and it's about: will you align with God, or not? When you're going through financial pressure, and someone talks to you about realigning your finances, that can be a terrible storm; and it takes huge courage to break through, and yield, and put your finances in God's hands; and then walk through the practical process of budgeting, and managing, and debt repayment, and getting yourself back on top again. Isn't that true?

Here's another one. There's just some natural storms that come in life. Now I hadn't thought about this, but I was thinking about it as I was praying, there are just some situations come. God didn't arrange it, the devil didn't arrange it, and you didn't do anything wrong. It's just because we live in a sinful world; like there's landslides happen, there's storms happen, there's earthquakes happen. There's things that happen. People do stuff. You drive down the road, and someone crosses the line, and there's an accident. It doesn't mean that the devil made it all happen, or that God was trying to get your attention and punish you. It was just we live in a fallen world, and in a fallen world - stuff happens. People are born with DNA issues, and it's a tragedy, and the parents grieve; where's God in this? And they go through all this whole thing. Sometimes it's just, we're living in a sinful and a fallen world; and God calls us - it says in Romans 8: the whole world groans, because of it's travail and it's problems.

The whole world is groaning because of sin in the world; so we're in that world. It's not heaven, but we are called to bring heaven into the earth, so some storms are just because there's stuff going on; and there are many people face storms in life. One of the key things, if it's a God directed storm is: what's God trying to say to me; and will I surrender? But if it's a natural storm of life, then the kind of question you have to ask is this: how should I respond to this? See sometimes it's no use blaming people, no use blaming yourself, no use blaming God, or blaming the devil. Just ask: what do I need to do, to walk through this storm? How do I walk through the storm; and then second: release grace into it; not judgement, because most people get offended, and want someone to blame when they're in a storm; rather than saying: God, how should I respond? How can I bring grace, the goodness of God, the life of God into this situation? I've got to come to the Lord and say: God, just give me the grace to stand in the middle of it.

The Bible says: by faith and endurance we inherit promises of God; you know, be followers of those, who by faith and patience, receive the promises of God. Sometimes it's just like that, you've just got to learn how to stand, and learn how to bring the grace of God into a difficult circumstance. Now that's part of being a kingdom person; so a lot of people just look around, and they complain; but we don't do that. We don't look around and complain. We're the sons of God, the sons of light; we find a way that we can bring goodness into it, overcoming evil with good, blessing where we're being cursed, starting to engage in reconciliation, or restoration of relationship. So think about that. The storm you're going through, no one may be to blame. It's just something to grow you;

Here's the last one. This is the one I want to pick up here, because this is the one this story's about; and there can be some storms which are just straight out demonic. In this situation, Jesus faced two demonic storms, one after the other. The first was in His natural circumstances, the wind and waves that were going to sink the boat. Second was, He met a totally demonised man, who become a life-threatening danger to them, because of his supernatural strength. One was circumstances, the other was a person; and in our life, we may face some circumstances which are demonically empowered, some people which are demonically empowered; but all have the same effect. They tend to intimidate, and cause you to feel like you're sinking, and can't handle it. I want you to just see what Jesus did. He did the same in both situations. Let's have a look what He did in this one here, because it's a great key to what to do in this situation.

If it's a demonic situation, here's the core question: what is the source of this storm? Is it God? Is it me? Is it reaping something? Is it just a natural storm of life; or is it a demonic storm? If it's a demonic storm, God will give you some indication of it. Now whenever I go overseas, I have demonic storms. I have them before I go, I have them when I'm

there; even the people I go to have them. They constantly can't get over the problems they have: power failures, equipment failures, difficulties, setbacks of all kinds, miscommunication. They're just normal, just little stuff; and sometimes it's bigger, but not often. Notice now how they respond, and Jesus models for us how you respond when there's a spiritual pressure comes on you. Your emotions, and your mind, and your body or spirit are in turmoil. This is the first thing they did: they had a panic attack.

They had a panic attack; and then they went to Jesus, and literally they just complained: you don't seem to care about us! You seem to be totally not concerned about this terrible issue we're facing. Can't you see our boat's about to sink! See, they're getting quite angry, because Jesus is totally unconcerned. Now this is why Jesus is unconcerned: He's on a kingdom assignment, and He knows absolutely He will arrive there, and He will deal with the thing, and He'll finish His assignment. His life cannot be ended before His assignment is finished. Your life can't be ended before your assignment is finished, unless you do something goofy on the way. But in the midst of the storm, the tendency they had was to: one, be filled with fear, and that magnifies the emotions, and all the situation, out of control, out of perspective; second, they got angry and upset; third, they wanted to blame Jesus, and accused Him of not caring about them.

This is ridiculous. His idea to get in the boat in the first place, His idea to lead them over there. He had a harvest in mind, but there were unexpected demonic resistance on the way to harvest. Every one of us who intentionally reaches people, will find demonic storms of difficulty and pressure will come. You've just got to toughen up, and learn what to do in it. It's very simple. They woke Him up; and this is what Jesus said. He arose! Don't lie down, don't go down in your prayer life. Don't go down into self pity and depression. Rise in your spirit! Start to begin to pray, and let your spirit rise up again. You have to stand up!

When I come into worship service, I'm interested not in what the musicians are doing, because they work hard, and they pray and they prepare well and everything. I'm interested in what the church is doing in it's spirit; whether we're standing up to worship God on the inside, or whether it's only on the outside. Whether our spirit is bound under sadness, and heaviness, and difficulty or oppression; or whether we've risen inside, by conscious choice.

You don't have to keep praying for God to pour His spirit out. He's already poured His spirit out. What you need to do is, remember that truth; and arise into it again. You see when storms come, they flood your soul. They affect the mind, the thoughts, the emotions; and if the enemy can get management of that, so you're not managing it properly, down you go; your spirit shuts down, then there's disengagement from the kingdom. The only answer to demonic storms is: engaging in the kingdom. It's the only way, because you actually have to demonstrate your determination and authority to beat the spirits behind it. To do that, you have to arise, number one; second, you have to speak into it. From arising into the presence of God, arising into His throne room, arising and standing before Him; then see it from His perspective: it's just a few demons hassling you. Speak and command them to shut down! Speak and direct them to be quiet! Speak and command them to depart! In other words, speak over the circumstances, and direct how they ought to be; rather than let the demons manipulate them. Get up every day, and rise in your spirit with gratitude to the Lord, because gratitude is vital for maintaining your relationship.

Start to thank Him for all the blessings, allow your spirit to rise and come into His presence; then begin to speak, and command your day to align with the kingdom of God, and align with God's will. You start to command your day to align, oh my, you'll start to engage a few things that are pushing against you through the day.

You'll be surprised when you start to command each and every part of your day to align with God's will. I speak to every spirit assigned against me today, to block and distract or to frustrate. I take dominion over you! Be quiet and silent today! You start to order your day, it's quite interesting. The first two or three days, you'll start to find yourself entering in to sight some awareness of the spirit world; then after that your life will start to become smoother, things will start to come into order. You see, storms come to every person who's determined to carry the gospel. Why would we think we're any different? Why would we lie down when some demon says: boo; when we have a command from heaven to go? Why would we allow ourselves to be overcome by rejection, and self pity, and defeat and fear; when we have a mandate from heaven to advance the kingdom?

I tell you what, it brings shame to the gospel. It brings shame to the kingdom we're called to represent; because I've been to enough nations now, and been to places where people die for their faith. There are more people dying for their faith today, than ever happened in the New Testament church, on a per capita basis. The numbers of people dying today in the world, this Century, exceeds what happened in the New Testament church persecution. Globally, there are challenges to the gospel; and I tell you what amazes me. There's people standing up, and refusing to be intimidated; and saying: God, we will carry the gospel. We will represent You. We will bring Your word to those who don't know. In New Zealand our opposition is not so direct. In Pakistan it's quite direct, you know, it could be just

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