

## JESUS STILL CALMS OUR STORMS



**Scripture:**

**Psalms 9:9-20**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. <sup>10</sup>And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.

<sup>11</sup>Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion. Declare his deeds among the peoples. <sup>12</sup>For he who avenges blood is mindful of them; he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

<sup>13</sup>Be gracious to me, O LORD. See what I suffer from those who hate me; you are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death, <sup>14</sup>so that I may recount all your praises, and, in the gates of daughter Zion, rejoice in your deliverance.

<sup>15</sup>The nations have sunk in the pit that they made; in the net that they hid their own foot has been caught. <sup>16</sup>The LORD has made himself known, he has executed judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. *Higgaion. Selah*

<sup>17</sup>The wicked shall depart to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

<sup>18</sup>For the needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor perish forever.

<sup>19</sup>Rise up, O LORD! Do not let mortals prevail; let the nations be judged before you. <sup>20</sup>Put them in fear, O LORD; let the nations know that they are only human.

**Mark 4:35-41**

<sup>35</sup>On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

<sup>36</sup>And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. <sup>37</sup>A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.

<sup>38</sup>But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" <sup>39</sup>He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.

<sup>40</sup>He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" <sup>41</sup>And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

**This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!**



## JESUS STILL CALMS OUR STORMS

There are three kinds of people. There is the kind that could be called **Storm Avoiders**. They avoid dealing with storms at all costs. Then 2<sup>nd</sup>, there are the **Storm Chasers** who get a thrill diving into the storm. And last there are the **Storm Adapters** who learn how to endure and deal with the storm.

Do you identify with any of these types of people when it comes to dealing with storms? The Storm Avoider, the Storm Chaser or the Storm Adapter?

The kind that avoids storms at all costs are the people who avoid confrontation and they quietly go about their routines trying very hard to not rock the boat of any kind. They work very hard to stay in their comfort zones. Don't do mission trips, don't take many risks, and as a result don't learn a lot about the world either. They are just not all that interested in what they might learn from the storm if it means they might be out of their routine or uncomfortable. When they see a problem arising in their lives they deny it is a problem until they absolutely have to face it. And then when a storm in life hits them, they hurt especially hard because the Storm avoider just wasn't prepared to deal with it.

The **Storm Chasers** are those who get excited when things are stormy, especially if the storm is affecting others. They dive into the storm uninvited and make it worse by stirring up trouble, talking about others, and adding fuel to the fire. These folks create storms, inflame storms and encourage others to stir things up by talking negatively or passing along gossip. When a storm hits these Storm Chasers, they quickly blame others for the storm, including God. Thus, they don't do very well in storms.

Then there are The **Storm Adapters**. They prepare for the storms in life knowing that life isn't perfect. Then when the storm hits, they are able to endure the storm,

trusting that God will get them through it somehow in some way. They don't shy away from confronting the storm, but they don't make it worse by trying too hard to control it. The storm is dealt with as it comes in an objective way and as it passes or as they adapt to the storm of cancer, family conflict, loss of loved ones, (whatever the type of storm it is) they find a way to be at peace about it and look for the light in the darkness. They adapt and often they come out on the other side of the storm even stronger in resilience and in faith.

I titled the sermon today: **Jesus Still Calms Our Storms** because Jesus can help you become a Storm Adapter if you aren't one already. But it takes trust and a faith that provides you with God's peace that surpasses all understanding.

This is one of the main roles of the Church (in my opinion): Is to teach and encourage healthy adaptation through faith in Christ to be ready for the storms of trials and tribulations that always come along life's journey.

Scientific study after study is showing that church attendance and healthy involvement is the way that will help you live longer with better emotional health and wellbeing. That is because the church that does its job well is a place where you can learn how to be a resilient Storm Adapter. Have faith, pray, and follow Jesus as deeply as you can and you will become more resilient in the process. Guaranteed. This is the formula for a healthy happy life. So here is a video that explains the importance of being resilient for your brain's benefit, too.

### Show Video

When you have resilience, you harness your inner strength that comes from God. It helps you rebound from a setback or challenge, a storm so to speak that puts a dark cloud over your head for awhile, such as a job loss, an illness, a disaster or the death of a loved one. If you lack resilience

based on a healthy prayer-life and faith, you might dwell on problems, feel victimized, become overwhelmed or turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as too much alcohol or other negative behaviors.

Faith-based Resilience won't stop the storms of life from coming. But resilience can give you the ability to adapt, and better handle stress.

If you aren't as resilient as you'd like to be, you can develop skills to become more resilient. First, don't come to church just for the social club aspects. Come to church to develop your faith and understanding of how to be more Christ-like in your daily life. Jesus was a very resilient role-model. He didn't let the gossipy Pharisees bring him down. He didn't succumb to temptation to just zap them when they talked behind his back.

Resilience is the ability to roll with the punches. When stress, adversity or trauma strikes, you may still experience anger, grief and pain as Jesus did, but you're able to keep functioning — both physically, spiritually and psychologically. Jesus would go away to a mountain or out on a boat by himself to get away from the hustle and bustle of the crowd and pray. We all need to do that on a regular basis, too.

When I worked with the child victims of abuse at San Francisco General's ER, it was mandatory for the nurse therapists to go away for 2 days to the Zen center every 6 months to prevent us from burning out. We were sent to silent retreats where no one spoke. You just ate soup and bread and walked in nature and sat on the shoreline and watched the sunset all in silence. You could pray, journal, read, mediate, but not talk or listen to the radio or TV. And it was amazing how hard it was in the first few hours, but how refreshing it was to the mind, body, and spirit. WE all need to unplug from technology and reconnect to Nature on a regular basis.

Resilience isn't about toughing it out, being stoic or going it alone. In fact, being able to reach out to others for support is a key component of being resilient. Jesus would go back to his intentional community of men and women disciples and accomplish his ministry alongside them. He needed social support like we do. Jesus designed the church to be a positive nurturing community that would support one another in good times and in bad.

Resilience can help protect you from mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety. And help you heal if you experience these.

Jesus had lots of reasons to be depressed. He was always dealing with the sick, always persecuted by those threatened by his power and popularity. He was always teaching, preaching, and healing with big demands being placed upon him constantly. Yet he never gave up. Jesus always persevered. And so should we. So here are some:

#### **TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR RESILIENCE FROM THE MAYO CLINIC**

- **Get connected.** Building strong, positive relationships with loved ones and friends can provide you with needed support and acceptance in both good times and bad. Establish other important connections by volunteering and joining a faith community.
- **Make every day meaningful.** Do something that gives you a sense of accomplishment and purpose every day. Set goals to help you look toward the future with meaning such as helping others through church.
- **Learn from experience.** Think of how you've coped with hardships in the past. Consider the skills and strategies that helped you through rough times. You might even write about past experiences in a journal to help you identify positive and negative behavior patterns — and guide your future behavior to be positive.

- **Remain hopeful.** You can't change the past, but you can always look toward the future. Accepting and even anticipating change makes it easier to adapt and view new challenges with less anxiety because you are prepared.
- **Take care of yourself.** Tend to your own needs and feelings. Participate in activities and hobbies you enjoy. Include physical activity in your daily routine. Get plenty of sleep. Eat a healthy diet. Practice stress management and relaxation techniques, such as yoga, and prayer.
- **Be proactive.** Don't ignore your problems. Instead, figure out what needs to be done, make a plan and take action. Although it can take time to recover from a major setback, traumatic event or loss, know that your situation can improve if you work and tap into your faith resources.

So whether you are a **Storm Chaser, a Storm Avider or a Storm Adaptor**, you can learn to lean on Jesus to calm your storms.

Jesus hears your voice as well today as he could hear the disciples shrieking for his help on that boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. He cares when we are perishing. So trust that as you deal with the storms of life with faith in Christ, you will become more and more resilient, not just for your sake but to help others be more faithful and resilient as well.

Jonathan Lockwood once asked, "Is today a day to gather strength from the storm, a day to learn life lessons for the next battle? Or is today a day to sit by the fire and watch the storm rage outside? Either way, the storm is just life. Give thanks for all of life." Amen

**Benediction:**

**Vivian Greene once said, "Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain."**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and forever more. Amen**



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