

SERMON NOTES

From *In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley*



In the Midst of the Storm

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 14:22–36 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: Deuteronomy 31:6,8 | Joshua 1:5
Isaiah 54:17 | Hebrews 13:5

► SUMMARY

We are in the midst of an incredible tempest—one that has turned so many aspects of our lives upside down and seems to grow worse as the days pass.

Yet now is the moment for us to examine how we have spent this season in the storm. Many of us are in lockdown, with the opportunity to devote more time to seeking the living God. But have we been wise with the days and hours we have been given? Have we invested our energy and attention in worrying and complaining, on entertainment that will not satisfy, or on other pursuits that undermine our wellbeing? Or have we used this occasion to strengthen ourselves and build our relationships with the Savior through prayer and Bible meditation?

► SERMON POINTS

We can learn a great deal from what happened to the disciples when Jesus commanded them to set sail on the Sea of Galilee, and a terrible storm arose. Certainly, as the winds and waves assailed them, they were frightened about the conditions that were so far outside their control. So they called out to almighty God to save them. It was then they saw who Jesus really is and how powerfully He can work through any circumstances.

That was a life-changing experience for the disciples, and it can be for you as well. Therefore, when you experience the storms of life, if you will fix your eyes on Christ, you

can find victory in the midst of your troubles. You do so by:

- 1. Reading Scripture.** Start in either the Book of Psalms or Proverbs and meditate on what the Lord has spoken. Ask Him to reveal the sins you need to confess, give you understanding in your circumstances, make Himself known to you, and guide you. The Father will often work through times of adversity and turmoil to change your life, develop your character, teach you to walk with Him, and bring you closer to Himself. He will speak to you as you engage with Him through His Word—so go before Him with an open heart to listen to Him.
- 2. Remembering God's work in the past.** The disciples had seen Jesus perform many miracles, and the truth is—so have you. You have observed the Lord's mighty work on your behalf as He's guided you through times of adversity, provided for you supernaturally, and even brought healing to different areas of your life. There is no reason to think God will fail you now. Recall what He has done in the past so you can be confident He will intervene powerfully in your present circumstances in ways beyond what you can imagine.
- 3. Holding on to the fact that Christ meets you in the storm.** When the disciples were in trouble and fearful, Jesus walked out on the water to them. But at first, they believed Him to be a phantom. This is instructive. Sometimes when you're in a whirlwind of trouble, you will not automatically recognize Christ's

presence with you either. But realize that whatever your circumstances, Jesus is right there with you in them, ready to help, guide, and sustain you. Therefore, do not listen to the negative voices, turn to the world, or give up on God. Call on Jesus and invite Him into your situation. He is right beside you, offering you hope.

4. Focusing on Jesus rather than your circumstances.

We know what happened to Peter when he bravely called to Jesus, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (Matt. 14:28), and then stepped out of the boat. It only took a moment for Peter to be overcome by the tempest and begin to sink—forgetting who he was trusting to save him. The same is true for us. It is far too easy to lose focus when the conditions surrounding us are beyond our control. So when we are crying out to God, we cannot allow our attention to drift from almighty God, the sovereign Lord of the universe, who loves us powerfully and eternally. He is the One who helps us, and He is greater than any challenge we will ever face. We must fix our eyes on Him, repeat His promises, and cling to His Word. Certainly, the wind, the waves, and all creation submit to His command, and He will see us through the storm.

► RESPONSE

It hurts to face the hurricane. It is natural to be fearful and even grow discouraged when so much is battering against us, and it feels like everything is falling apart. But the Lord God has promised, “I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you” (Josh. 1:5). He will answer your prayers, come to your rescue, and help you in ways you cannot begin to imagine. So do not give up. Instead, search your heart:

- How have I been focusing on earthly forms of comfort, worth, and security? Is God shaking what I have been trusting so I will get my eyes back on Him?

- When was the last time I had a quiet time when I really listened to the Lord and held on to what He told me? Am I truly meditating on God’s Word in a manner that deepens my relationship with Him, or do I need to change some things?

- Do I sense Jesus in the storm? Or do I respond to everything that happens in a negative manner, as if He is completely absent? What is stopping me from maintaining an abiding sense of His presence?

- Spend time in prayer, asking Jesus to reveal Himself to you, and accepting all He wants to teach you.

I realize you may be tempted to read right over these questions—but don’t. That would be a disaster. What you’re facing in this storm is not just about making sure you believe the right doctrines, but about having a dynamic relationship with the living God. It’s about the renewal of your faith, the revival of believers, and the spiritual awakening of the lost.

You need more than good morals or more preaching for that—you need Jesus. Only the One who conquered death has the wisdom, power, and love to do what needs to be accomplished in the tumult you’re facing. This is a fight that only He can engage in for you.

So get on your knees, open the Word, and pray. Present yourself to Him and be willing to do whatever He asks. Because when you do, you’ll see that your Savior is truly able to do above and beyond what you imagine—even in and through the storms.

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