

Riding Out The Storms Of Life



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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible.



Storms are a part of life. That is true in nature, and that is true in our lives as well. In nature, there are different types of storms. There are thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, and blizzards. In the lives of people, there are also different types of storms. Storms sometimes appear in the form of an illness, an accident, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, a divorce, or some other tragedy.

Some storms, like tornadoes, come suddenly and unexpectedly. A phone call from the doctor can suddenly change your life. An automobile accident can instantly take the life of a loved one. A declining economy can cost you your job. A change of heart by one person can literally tear an entire family apart.

These and other such storms can be devastating. They often leave people confused and angry. They sometimes cause us to ask questions like, “*Where is God?*” or “*If God really loved me, why would He allow this to happen?*” or “*Why did this happen to me?*”

I must confess at the outset that I don’t have the answers to all the perplexing questions of life. But God does. And this booklet contains some nuggets of truth He has shown me from His Word, from His Spirit, from His people, and from some of the storms I have been through in my own life.

I want to share with you some very practical things you can do when the storms of life blow your way. As you read and meditate on these truths, your attitude will change, and your faith will grow.

Remember, Satan wants to use the storms of life to blow you away. God wants to use them to help you grow stronger. Trees that have endured years of storms are much stronger than trees that haven't. The same is true for people. And if you respond properly, you will grow stronger during your storm. And when the storm has passed, you will still be standing. The Bible says, "When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked *is no more*, but the righteous *has* an everlasting foundation" (Proverbs 10:25).

This booklet contains three truths that will help you maintain a proper **attitude** during the storms of life. In addition, it contains seven biblical **anchors** that will steady you when the storm winds blow. **Attitudes** and **anchors**...I like the way those words sound together. And more importantly, I like what they do in my life. So let's get started. Some **attitudes** of victory need to be developed, and some **anchors** of faith need to be dropped into our hearts!!

**Attitude #1 - Storms are a part of life...
accept them.**

Now we wish this weren't the case. All of us like sunny days better than stormy days. But unless you live in Hawaii, not every day is going to be bright and sunny (and even Hawaiians get a brief rain shower most every afternoon!!)

While we understand the importance of rain on the land, we often fail to understand the importance of storms in our lives. We'll talk more about that later, but for now I want you to see that life isn't always sunny. Life has storms.

There is something in our hearts that longs for a storm-free, picture-perfect life. We desire an existence free from illness, death, and heartache. And that desire is from God. The Bible teaches us that God has placed eternity in our hearts (see Ecclesiastes 3:11).

In other words, when God made us, He gave us an eternal soul. Our eternal soul longs for...you guessed it...eternity. And eternity is a place filled with perfection. The longing we have for a pain-free, problem-free life is from God. But that longing will only be fulfilled in heaven.

There is coming a day when “God will wipe away every tear” from every eye of every one of His children (Revelation 21:4). On that day, “there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4). That is enough to make even the most conservative one among us shout, “Hallelujah!!” But that glorious day of a perfect existence is not here yet. For now, “the former things” remain. We still live on this side of heaven and down here, things aren’t exactly perfect.

We live in a fallen world. Sin has taken its toll on creation and on all of us creatures. I’m not perfect. You’re not perfect. And life’s not perfect. The sooner we accept this fact, the happier we’ll be.

Not long ago, I had some wood floors installed in my study at home. The day I came home and saw my new floors, I was ecstatic. They were so beautiful that I didn’t even mind the small fortune I had invested in them. I didn’t mind, that is, until I started looking at them more closely. As I did, I noticed a black spot on the wood right in the middle of the floor. I got a rag and tried to rub it out. Nothing happened. I went to the store where I had bought the wood and described the problem. They gave me a product that cleans wood. I used it. Nothing happened. I called and asked them to come and look at it. They did. Nothing happened!! Nothing happened, that is, except that the “wood-man” laughed at me. He said, “Jon, you can’t rub that black spot out. It’s in the wood.” And then he had the audacity to say, “The imperfections in the wood are what make it so beautiful. The imperfections prove that it’s real wood.”

As I thought about what he said, I thought about the symbolism of it all. An imperfect preacher (me!!) preparing imperfect

sermons in an imperfect study with imperfect floors to preach to an imperfect congregation about a **perfect Jesus!!** Think about that. The only perfect place is heaven, and the only perfect Person is Jesus.

Now you apply that truth to the storm you are now facing. What is it that bothers you the most? A broken heart? A frightening circumstance? An uncertain future? Yes, yes, and yes again!! And behind all of that is a desire to live in a perfect place. And one day we, as Christians, will. But until that day arrives, we must accept the imperfections that come with the wood. We must learn to pray *The Serenity Prayer* which says,

“Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

If there is a problem in your life that you can fix, by all means go out and fix it. But if it's a problem out of your control, I encourage you to accept it graciously. We live in an imperfect world. Only in heaven will the floors be perfect!! In fact, up there they are made out of gold!!

Attitude #2 - Storms can help you grow... embrace them.

One of the most important parts of successfully riding out a storm is learning to identify the **nature** of the storm. Remember, not all storms are the same. Blizzards require one type of response while hurricanes require another. The same is true with the storms you face in life. Before you can respond properly **to** the storm, you must determine the nature **of** the storm.

4 Types of Storms

1. *Storms of Correction* – Some of the storms we face in life are the direct results of our own sinful choices. Not all storms fall under this category, but some storms do. Do you remember the prophet Jonah? God told him to go one way, and he went the other way. He disobeyed God. And as a result, he ended up in a serious storm at sea. So serious, in fact, that he ended up in the belly of a great fish. After three days at the “University of Whales,” Jonah learned a lesson: *Disobeying God never pays off*. In that whale, Jonah had a change of heart. He sought and found God’s forgiveness, and God gave Jonah a second chance. The prophet then obeyed God and preached to the people of Nineveh. As a result, thousands were saved.

And so we can say that Jonah’s storm was a storm of correction. God used a storm to get Jonah’s attention and to correct his behavior.

Could it be that the storm you are now facing is a storm of correction? Could it be that your own sinful choices have led you into the mess in which you now find yourself? If so, don’t blame God and don’t blame anyone else. Instead, confess your sin and receive God’s forgiveness. The Bible says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

God forgave Jonah, and God will forgive you. God gave Jonah a second chance, and He will give you one, too!! **Repentance** is the only way to properly respond to a storm of correction.

2. *Storms of Connection* – Sometimes we face a storm not because of our own sins but because of someone else’s sin. Such was the case of the men onboard the ship with Jonah. Jonah sinned and not only did he end up in a storm, but

they did, too!! They were in a storm because their lives were “connected” to Jonah’s life. Sometimes we suffer because someone else has chosen to sin. Our connection to them places us in a storm even if we had no say in the matter.

I think about Joseph in the Old Testament. He ended up in several storms, and none of them were because of his sins. They were because of the sins of others. His brothers became jealous of him and threw him in a pit. Then they sold him, and he ended up in Egypt. While in Egypt, he was falsely accused of rape. As a result, he ended up in prison. Here is a man who spent many years of his life in a storm simply because he was connected, in some form or fashion, to other people who chose to sin.

So how do we handle these storms of connection? What do we do when the sin of someone else places us in a storm? Well, a couple of things come to mind. First, remember that God has allowed you to be in this situation. We’ll talk more about this later, but let me say now that if you are able to see the sovereign hand of God in even the most unfair circumstances of life, you will be able to handle your storm in a much better way than you otherwise would. The Bible repeatedly says that “the LORD was with Joseph” in his situation, and He is with you in yours as well (see Genesis 39:2, 21)!!

Second, and this is very important, refuse to become bitter. Joseph never became bitter toward his brothers or toward Potiphar’s wife, the woman who falsely accused him. Someone has said that bitterness is like an acid...it eats away at us from the inside out. If someone else’s sin has made your life difficult, I encourage you to forgive that person immediately. You say, “Jon, I’ll forgive them as soon as they ask for it.” Friend, if that is your attitude, you may well go to your grave with an unforgiving spirit because they may never ask for your forgiveness. You don’t forgive them because they ask for it. You forgive

them because God has forgiven you. The Bible says, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God in Christ forgave you**” (Ephesians 4:32, emphasis mine).

After you have forgiven them, begin to pray for them. As you pray **for** them, God will change your attitude **toward** them. You will find a new love developing in your heart for that person whose sin has hurt you so. Don’t misunderstand what I am saying. I am not saying that you approve of what they did. I am not saying that what they did didn’t hurt you. I am simply saying that you must be able to make a distinction between **what they did** and **who they are**. What they did was wrong. But who they are is a person made in the image of God. They are someone for whom Jesus died. And they are someone you must forgive and someone God can enable you to love.

Perhaps you are in an emotional storm because a child or grandchild is away from the Lord. Your heart is broken, and you feel like there is nothing you can do. But there is!! You can love that child. You can pray for that child. And you can trust God to change his or her heart. And then you can wait on God to work in His own time and in His own way.

If you are in a storm because you are connected to someone who **has sinned** or someone who **is sinning**, I assure you that what I have just prescribed for you is God’s way to deal with the situation. Trust God. Forgive the person. Pray for the person. Love the person. And see if your perspective doesn’t change. The situation may not change, but your attitude will change. And your attitude toward your circumstances is much more important than your circumstances anyway!!

3. Storms of Perfection – Some storms in life are designed to perfect our faith. The Bible teaches that God uses difficult circumstances to strengthen our faith. The

apostle Peter encourages us with these words: “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:6-7).

Do you remember the story of the disciples being in a storm on the Sea of Galilee? I can imagine someone saying, “Well, the reason they got into that storm is because they were out of God’s will.” While that sounds logical, it is not true. In fact, the Bible says, “Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side” (Matthew 14:22). Think about that. The disciples were in a storm, and Jesus was the One Who sent them into it. They weren’t in a storm because they were **out** of God’s will. They were in a storm because they were **in** God’s will.

Sometimes we end up in a storm for the same reason. We are trying to follow God, but our faith is weak. Doubts dominate our thinking. And God knows that one of the best ways to remove our doubts and strengthen our faith is by allowing a storm into our lives. In a storm, we are forced to make a decision: “*Will I trust God or will I not?*”

When I was going through a very difficult storm in my own life, a wise pastor gave me some counsel I have never forgotten. He said, “Jon, anything that brings you closer to God is a good thing.” He wasn’t saying that the actual storm I was going through was good. He was saying that if, in the middle of the storm, I could grow in my faith and become more Christ-like in my character, then God would be bringing something good out of something bad. He would be “perfecting” me.

We’re all familiar with the verse that says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who

love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose” (Romans 8:28). We know that God brings good out of bad; we just don’t always understand what the good is. But in the very next verse the Bible tells us. It says that God wants us “*to be conformed to the image of His Son*” (Romans 8:29).

Think about that. God wants you to be like Jesus. And if a storm can accomplish that goal, then the storm can become an effective tool in God’s hands. Remember, *anything that brings you closer to God is a good thing*. It may well be that God has allowed this storm into your life for that purpose. Maybe God is “perfecting” you.

4. Storms of Reflection – Some of the storms we face are not intended to correct our behavior nor are they intended to perfect our faith. Some storms are intended only to reflect God’s grace and goodness to others. I think of the apostle Paul who had a thorn in his flesh. We don’t know exactly what Paul’s problem was, but we know that it was painful and that on three separate occasions he asked God to take it away. God didn’t take Paul’s problem away, but He did say this to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Corinthians 12:9).

Paul’s behavior wasn’t sinful. And his faith wasn’t weak. God allowed Paul to have this problem simply so he could come to know the power of God in a deeper way. As Paul began to rest in God’s grace, his witness for Christ began to grow.

Two thousand years have passed, and we are still talking about Paul’s thorn and how God’s grace gave him the strength to deal with it. Paul actually said, “When I am weak, then I am strong” (II Corinthians 12:10). Millions of Christians have been strengthened by Paul’s example. When he could have become bitter, he chose to receive God’s grace and reflect God’s glory.

Perhaps yours is a storm of reflection. If so, in the midst of your storm you have an opportunity to reflect the grace of God like the moon reflects the light of the sun. When you are facing difficulties in your life, you have a chance to be a witness for God that you wouldn't otherwise have.

Someone has said that life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we respond. I don't know if those numbers are accurate, but the principle is true. When you are in a storm, people are watching you. They are watching how you respond. And in your right response, God is glorified.

Let me say again that it is imperative for you to identify the **nature** of your storm. It is possible that a storm could serve more than one purpose, but in order to "move on" in life, you must deal with your storm properly. Ask God to show you the nature of your storm. And ask Him to help you respond in the right way.

Attitude #3 – God is in the middle of your storms...ride them out with Him.

If you are able to see God in the middle of your storm, you are going to be okay. If you aren't able to see God in it, then you are going to have problems. Do you remember the story of Jesus walking across the Sea of Galilee to rescue His disciples from the dangerous storm? As He approached their boat, Simon Peter decided that he wanted to walk on the water to get to Jesus. So he did. He was doing just fine until he started thinking too much. He began to think about the storm and the danger of walking on water. Before long, he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to focus on the rain, the wind, and the waves. And when he did that, you know what happened...he began to sink.

That's what happens when we fail to see Jesus in the middle of our storm...we sink. We sink spiritually. We sink mentally. And we sink emotionally.

Do you feel like you are sinking? If so, I am glad you are still reading this booklet because I want to share with you several truths that will keep you above water. These “spiritual life jackets” will keep you afloat no matter how intense the storm may be. By the way, this is the most important part of this booklet, so read these pages slowly and apply these truths personally. These truths are actually the **anchors** of our faith. Without them we drift, but with them we stand!!

Anchor #1 - God is in control.

The first anchor of your faith is simply this: *God is in control of every circumstance of your life.* That means that even when life appears to be **out** of control, God is still **in** control. No matter what you may be going through right now, God is absolutely in control.

The Bible says it this way: “The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all” (Psalm 103:19). What does that mean? That means that God is in control of everything. Jesus said that not even a sparrow “falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will” (Matthew 10:29). Jesus was affirming the fact that God the Father is in control of every detail of our lives...the big ones and the small ones.

Here is the confidence you have as a child of God: *Everything that comes into your life has either been **sent** by God or, at the very least, **sifted** through His hands of love.* The Bible says that Satan couldn’t do anything to Job until God first signed off on it (see Job 1:12). Now that does not mean that God causes tragedies. Not at all. Satan is the one behind many of the problems we face. Satan was certainly the one who caused all of Job’s troubles. But since God is in control, we know that He has allowed us to be in the place where we now find ourselves.

I don't know what that does for your faith, but it strengthens mine. That means things don't "just happen." There is no such thing as "bad luck." God is seated on His throne. He is in control of the universe, and He is in control of every aspect of your life as well. Be encouraged. God has you in the palm of His hand. He has allowed this storm into your life. Even now, God is completely in control.

Anchor #2 - God has a plan.

Not only is God in control of the situation you are now facing, but He also has a plan. On one occasion, God spoke these familiar words to His people when they were in a storm of their own. When they were in Babylonian captivity, He said to them, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).

When we are in a storm, we sometimes think that life is over. We focus on what is wrong, and we focus on what we have lost. But God says that all is not lost. He still has a plan. We want to talk about yesterday, but God wants to talk about today and tomorrow.

One of the worst things about a storm is that feelings of hopelessness often set in. We are so consumed with the storm that we cannot see anything good. We miss the blessings that surround us each day.

I have a friend who, several years ago, lost her husband. They had been married for almost 40 years. His death understandably devastated her. For months she moved about in a mental fog. As depression began to set in, no one knew how to help her. I can remember praying with her on two separate occasions simply asking God to lift her spirits and see her through. Not long after that second prayer meeting, I saw her at church one Sunday, and

she was like a different person. Her joy had returned. Her smile was back. Her depression was gone!!

Not long ago, I asked her what it was that had changed her countenance. She said, “Jon, I will never stop missing my husband, but I decided that I couldn’t allow his death to cause me to stop living. I realized that God still has a plan for my life, and I didn’t want to miss out on His plan while mourning my loss.”

She has since moved to another city to be close to her son and his family. She has joined a good church there, and she has moved into a new house. Now, does that mean she isn’t sad from time to time? Absolutely not!! But it does mean that she has come to see that no matter how dark the night, no matter how strong the storm, God is still in control, and God still has a plan.

What is true for her is true for you. You see, storms often signal a change of seasons. That is true in nature, and that is true in our lives as well. It just might be that a new season is dawning in your life. And might I add that God’s plan for this new season is good...better than you might imagine!! That’s His promise to us (read Jeremiah 29:11 again).

Anchor #3 - God is with you.

Not only is God going to lead you into a new season, but He is also going into that new season with you. He has promised, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you*” (Hebrews 13:5).

Think about that. God is with you right now. The greatest part about God’s plan for us is that He will always be with us. His presence is His greatest blessing!!

If you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, you can be sure of this: *You are never alone!!* God is with you around the clock, and His presence gives you peace, contentment, and joy. King David said, “In Your presence is **fullness of joy**” (Psalm 16:11, emphasis mine).

One of the wisest things you could do in this storm is to focus on God's presence. Talk to Him when you wake up in the morning. Talk to Him throughout the day. Talk to Him as you prepare for bed. And may I make a suggestion? Read from the book of Psalms every day. During various storms in my life, I have done that, and there is something about the Psalms that lifts my spirits and steadies my faith. The book of Psalms helps us to see God in the middle of our storms, and it is very reassuring to know that God is with us no matter what we face. Remember this: *The greatest thing about Jesus is Jesus!!* And He is with you now. So walk with Him today!!

Anchor #4 - God is bigger than your storm.

As you begin to focus on God's presence in your life, you will discover that God is bigger than your storm. I love the story of Jesus walking on the water to rescue His disciples. The disciples were in the midst of an awful storm. The waves were crashing into the boat, and they thought the end was near. Then Jesus came to them walking on the water. Picture that. The very waves that were **over** the disciples' heads were **under** Jesus' feet!! What they thought was going to destroy them became a bridge that Jesus walked across to get closer to them.

The same is true in your situation. Your storm may threaten you, but it doesn't threaten Jesus. It may frighten you, but it doesn't frighten Him. He is actually walking on the waves to get closer to you. Imagine that. The storm is the bridge Jesus is walking across to get closer to you. If it had not been for the storm, Jesus never would have walked on the water. And had He not walked on the water, He never would have gotten in the boat with the disciples. The storm was the catalyst for bringing Jesus and disciples together. And He wants the same thing to happen in your storm. If you'll open your eyes of faith, you'll see Jesus coming your way. He's walking on the water, and He wants in your boat!!

Anchor #5 - God will get you where you need to be.

After Jesus got into the boat, the Bible says, “and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going” (John 6:21). That is to say that the storm didn’t prevent the disciples from arriving at their God-ordained destination. And your storm won’t either. God will get you where you need to be.

Often times in a storm we think that our dreams will never come true, that our best days are behind us, and that our lives are over. But that is not true. Listen to these verses:

- ◆ “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it*” (Philippians 1:6).
- ◆ “The LORD will fulfill His purpose for me” (Psalm 138:8, NIV).
- ◆ “No weapon formed against you shall prosper” (Isaiah 54:17).

Jesus had instructed His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the sea. So we could say that the “other side of the sea” was God’s will for their lives. A storm threatened their safe arrival, but the storm did not ultimately prevent them from getting where God wanted them to be. And your storm won’t either!!

Some of the best counsel I could give you is simply this: *Don’t give up!!* The primary way people **mess up** during a storm is by **giving up**. Don’t give up...**look up!!** Jesus is in your boat, and He is steering your life in the right direction. So don’t jump overboard now!! Stay in the boat with Jesus!!

This is a lesson I learned from my father. For most of my life, he has been my pastor. I have seen him serve the Lord when it was

“smooth sailing,” and I have seen him serve the Lord when the waters were rough. But I have never seen him give up. His faithfulness has been an inspiration to me. He has always **stayed in the boat with Jesus**, and as a result, he has always **made it to the other side of the sea**.

God is the “Great Completer.” He always finishes what He starts. When He saved you, the work began. And you can rest assured of this: *No storm is going to cause God to give up on His plans for your life.* Whatever God’s plan **was**, it still **is**. He will get you to His desired haven even if a detour is part of the process.

Anchor #6 - God’s timing is perfect.

You might be saying, “Well that sounds good, Jon, but when does my ship come in? When does my storm end?” The answer to that question is simply this: *It ends when God tells it to end.*

As I said previously, storms are allowed into our lives to accomplish specific purposes, and when those purposes have been accomplished, the storm will end. Most storms end while we are still on earth. In fact, most storms end in a relatively short period of time. Some storms, however, won’t end until we get to heaven.

I think of Joni Eareckson Tada. When she was a teenager, she was involved in a diving accident. The water in the lake where she dove was much more shallow than she thought, and she suffered a serious spinal cord injury that left her a quadriplegic. Many good things have resulted from this tragedy. Joni gave her heart to Jesus not long after the accident. In the years that have followed, she has become an accomplished artist...painting with her mouth!! She is a much sought-after Christian speaker and a successful author. Her faith in God has truly encouraged thousands of people. Despite all the good, though, she remains a quadriplegic. Now when will that storm end? Her storm will completely end when she enters the gates of heaven. Until then, she will continue to **reflect God’s**

grace under some very difficult physical circumstances, and many will continue to be blessed by her faithfulness.

Several years ago, I heard her giving an interview about her situation. She was asked what she will do when she first arrives in heaven. She said that she will run and dance and enjoy being free. Then she said, and I am paraphrasing her own words, “When I get to heaven, I want to see Jesus. I want to thank Him for all the good things He has done for me. And then I want to thank Him for my wheelchair...because without that tragedy, I may never have received Him as my Savior and Lord.” You talk about responding properly!! Wow!! What an example.

When I first began preaching as a teenager, a godly man named Bruce Fielden once said to me, “Jon, there are four letters you need to remember...and they are TTSP.” I said, “Bruce, what in the world does that mean?” He said, “Jon, those letters mean, **this too shall pass.**” He went on to say, “Right now, Jon, that doesn’t mean much to you, but one day it will. One day, when you are facing a difficult situation, just remember that it won’t last forever...TTSP...this too shall pass.” I can’t tell you how many times over the last twenty years I have said to myself, “TTSP.” And do you know what? Bruce was right. No storm lasts forever.

There is coming a day when your storm will end. One day you will look back on this season of your life, and you will be able, if you have responded properly, to thank God for all the good things He did in your life during the storm. You will thank Him for strengthening your faith, for meeting your needs, and for seeing you through. That day is coming, my friend!! And it will get here when God says, “That’s enough. The storm has accomplished My intended purpose. Stop, storm. Your time is up.” The Bible says, “The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm” (Nahum 1:3). And when He has had His way, when His purposes have been accomplished, your storm will end.

Anchor #7 - There is life after the storm.

I'm including this final anchor because you need to understand that this storm is not the end of your life. There is life after a storm.

I think about Job. He lost practically everything during his storm. He lost his children, his finances, and even his health...not to mention that he lost the respect of those who wrongly judged him. But his storm eventually ended, and God began to restore what had been lost. In fact, the Bible says that "the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10). We could say it this way: *Job's "post-storm" life was, in many ways, better than his "pre-storm" life.* And the same thing can be true for you.

The Lord wouldn't have allowed this storm into your life if He didn't have something good on the other side of it. We know that during the storms of life we have to wait on God to act (see Isaiah 64:4). But did you know that while you're waiting on God, He is also waiting? Yes, the Bible says that "the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you" (Isaiah 30:18). Think about that. God is **waiting** to bless you. When you don't see any change in your circumstances, when nothing seems to be happening, God is working behind the scenes, and at just the right time, He is going to open the windows of heaven and do something beautiful in your life!! Just like He did for Job, He will bring you out stronger than you were before. As one of my favorite preachers says, "God will give you **double** for your **trouble**."

I heard a story about a little girl who was scared of the rain. One night a terrible storm blew into town, and she was very frightened. The thunder, the lightning, the wind, and the rain were almost more than she could bear. She didn't understand why God would let that storm come to her family's house. By the next morning, the storm had passed, and the sky was beautiful. The sun was shining. The birds were singing. All was well in the world. At breakfast, she asked her father a difficult question. She said, "Daddy, where was God last night during that storm?" While her

father was trying to come up with an intelligent response, the little girl began to answer her own question. She said, “Oh, I know where God was during that storm last night, Daddy. It just came to me. He was in heaven, and He was busy **making a morning.**”

And that’s where God is during your storm. He’s in heaven, and He’s busy making a morning just for you. The storm will pass. The sun will rise. And you will discover that there is life on the other side of the storm. The same God who protects us **during** the storm, provides for us **after** the storm. So be encouraged. Before you know it, this storm will pass, and the sun will shine again!!

A Closing Word

If you have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, I encourage you to do so now. The worst storm of all is the storm of God’s judgment on sin. And by receiving Jesus, that is one storm you won’t ever have to face.

God loves you. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross to pay for your sins. Jesus did that and then, three days later, He rose from the grave. After that, He returned to heaven where He is now seated at the Father’s right hand. One day, He is coming back to live forever with those who are His.

But right now, He wants to come into your heart. He wants to forgive your sins. He wants to save you. And He wants to do all of that today.

If you have never received Jesus or if you’re not certain that you have, pray this prayer from your heart to God’s heart:

“Dear Jesus,

I need You in my life. Please forgive my sins. Please come into my heart. Please make me a Christian. And please do it right now.

Thank You, Jesus, for hearing and for answering my prayer. Thank You, Jesus, for saving me. Welcome to my heart. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be.

In Your Name I pray,

Amen.”

If you just prayed that prayer, God just saved you!! The Bible says, “For *whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*” (Romans 10:13).

I want to welcome you to the family of God. I also want to encourage you to share your decision with another Christian. And finally, I want to encourage you to become a part of a good church. As part of a church family, you will grow spiritually, and you will meet others who have experienced some storms of their own. You will be a blessing to them. They will be a blessing to you. And together, we can all become the people God wants us to be.

As I listen to people who have been through storms in their lives, I hear the same words over and over. People repeatedly say, “I don’t know what I would have done without my church family.” That is my testimony, too. During various storms in my own life, my church family has given me encouragement, support, and a lot of love. Only in heaven will they know how grateful I am.

Obviously, our greatest Friend is Jesus. He is the One Who saves us from our sins and steadies us during the storms of life. Jesus is the One Who places us in the family of God. But part of being in a family is having brothers and sisters. And that is what you will find in a church. The Bible says that “God sets the solitary in families” (Psalm 68:6). That’s what a church is...the

family of God. And that's the best place to ride out a storm...in the safety of God's family.

Jon Redmond

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A graduate of Baylor University (B.A.), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M. Div.), and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (D. Min.), Jon's desire is to lead people to trust Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord and to help them grow in their relationship with Him.