

You Need This

Jason's Dream

- Monet-esque scene in a boat in the water, waves began to pick up, the wind began to get violent, the boat began to list and take on water, I began to lose control
- I found myself in the dream struggling to keep my head above water and at my wits end I cried out, "JESUS I'M DROWNING. WHY AREN'T YOU RESCUING ME?"
- His response cut through the storm, "Because, Jason, ***you need this.***"

Not every season of Christianity is a walk through the flowers.

We find all over the Bible where storms are a part of the human experience

John 16:33 ...in the world you will have tribulation

James 1:2 ...when you meet trials of various kinds

James 1:12 ...when he has stood the test

The biggest personalities from the Bible had incredible storms.

These are not "if" statements but "when" statements

We want Jesus to fix it, to curse the storm, to command the waves, but sometimes he doesn't do that. Sometimes we have to endure all of it.

What do I have the hardest time with:

- **Trusting Jesus' ability to rescue me**
- **Or understanding why he allowed the storm in the first place**

The first issue deals with his ability but the second issue deals with his intent. Why would a loving God let me face this storm, suffering? When I get to a question like this, I always go back to the Bible.

The first storm humans ever faced was not about ability but about intent.

The serpent may have said "Did God actually say," but we see in Genesis 3:5 what was really going on "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Because of this root within us of mistrust, we look at our storm and rather than question God's ability we question his intent. We don't question "can he", we question "why isn't he?"

Sometimes God will rescue you but sometimes he'll just say, "You need this." It sounds pretty cold, but **God doesn't always do things like we expect.**

Mark 6:45-52 "Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a

ghost, and cried out, for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened."

The hearts being hardened part is really odd. Perhaps the twelve loaves were the twelve men, foreshadowing that they would be broken bread just like Jesus, the bread of life. Nevertheless, their hearts were hardened to understand in that moment.

Sometimes God has to keep you in the dark, to keep the "why" hidden because if you saw what was coming you might jump ship before you were ready for the storm. If you knew what was coming you might lose hope.

So when God says, "You need this," it isn't because of meanness. It's mercy.

It is because there's a bigger storm brewing, or a purpose he has for you, and you in your current state aren't ready for it

YOU NEED THIS for at least 3 reasons I'd like to share today:

1. GROWTH

1. Call it strength development, faith building, whatever you want, but you need this if you are going to develop and grow.

For example, muscles are strengthened by being torn. After you workout, your body repairs or replaces damaged muscle fibers through a cellular process where it fuses muscle fibers together to form new muscle protein strands. These repaired strands increase in thickness and number to create muscle hypertrophy or in normal terms, growth.

2. Romans 5:1-5 ESV "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ***Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame***, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Faith is a muscle that must be developed and until your faith experiences resistance, it cannot grow.

You need your faith to grow because you won't be able to weather your storm without it.

2. NEXT STEPS

It is estimated that 86% of people don't like change. Is it change we fear or the uncertainty on the other side of change? Systems Scientist Peter Senge says, "People don't resist change. They resist being changed." If you are going to follow Jesus then you are going to have to be ok with change, not just in your environment, but in your life, actions, thoughts, your heart. God will most certainly use storms to accomplish this.

Exodus 14:10-15 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to **go forward**."

Jesus loves us so much that he isn't willing to leave us where he found us. That means that every one of us has a next step to take. These steps require faith.

Most people don't take steps of faith, they have to be pushed into it. Your storm may be the push you need to take the next step. Tony Robbins says that certainty is one of the 6 basic needs of a human. There is no lasting certainty to be found in your environment, society. The only certainty we have in this life is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Don't get bogged down in questioning the why. Trust God and take your next step

If you don't know your next step, let me give you a safe step.

Matthew 14:25-29 And in the fourth watch of the night he (meaning Jesus) came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.

We see a boldness in Peter in this moment that drove him to do something crazy. But note Peter's desire, it wasn't to walk on water, it was to be close to Jesus.

His current location wasn't working but he knew if he could be close to Jesus then everything would work out. If what you are doing isn't working, then get close to Jesus and let him show you what to do next.

Never let a storm drive you away from Jesus. Let them drive you to Jesus. Storms should always be an indicator that it is time to take a step closer to Jesus, an indicator that it is time to get out of what isn't working and step into a miracle

3. For others

I am thankful for the storms that surrounded the Apostle Paul's life and ministry. The fruit of his storms has changed our lives in the form of 2/3 of the New Testament. These incredible letters were mostly borne out of combatting heresy, chaos in the church, bad theology, basically, storms. We are reaping the benefits of the storms in his life and within the early church.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

We are cups that are meant to be filled and poured out.

Philippians 2:5-11 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

We have to understand that our lives are lived for the glory of God. Our purpose is accomplished only when we are being constantly filled and emptied. We know how to be emptied - serving, loving, sharing, reaching out, doing the work of ministry, but how are we filled? Worship? Community? Prayer? Reading the Bible? YES! But sometimes we are filled by the rains from the storms in our lives.

Your biggest storm has the potential to be your highest purpose.

2 Corinthians 4:7

We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us.

NEVER be afraid to share your life with people. Your struggles, your successes. You may not look perfect, but guess what, you aren't perfect. But what he does in our lives to restore us, to redeem us, IS perfect. If you will be faithful to tell what God has done in your life, through the storms in your life, then he has the opportunity to exponentially use what the devil meant for evil, for good.

Let's change our perspective of the storm.

What is the worst that could happen? This scares us the most.

A storm has the power to reveal your greatest fear and your primary god. The singular answer to this question is either I trust God and he is in control or I don't and he isn't.

In order to keep a godly perspective of the storm we're in, we need to embrace the fact that:

1. We are never alone.

Even in the worst situation, God is there.

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

2. God is in control.

Either he is God or he isn't. If he is, then he is in control of the storm AND its outcome.

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were

created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

3. You can have peace in any environment.

Peace isn't relative to our environment. It is relative to our relationship with God.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

4. You can trust God.

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The rest comes after the taking of the yoke.

The benefit comes after the obedience.

If you have a hard time trusting God, then just obey him. Obeying doesn't require trust, only action. Trust, on the other hand, requires history - instances of God's faithfulness. When you obey, you see his faithfulness, and you begin to trust him.

If you are going to get through the storm, you will have to trust God.

If you can trust God for your salvation, why not to get you through the storm?

James 1:2-4 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

The last thing on your mind right now might be being perfect, complete, lacking nothing. But that is exactly what God is thinking about. So when we experience storms, know that "making you better" is exactly what God is doing.

We are all in one of three spots: just finished a storm, in a storm, or waiting for the next one. Instead of "Why are you not rescuing me," ask, "Why am I in this storm?" "What do you want to show me, God?" "What are you preparing me for?"

Be careful you don't curse what God is using to develop you.

Take heart. Count it joy. Be encouraged. You will have storms in this world, but he has overcome the world - and that includes your storm!

So how do we respond today? Respond in one of three ways:

1. God help me trust you are in control of my life
2. God change my perspective of the storm I am in
3. God open my eyes today to see what you want to show me in the midst of my storm