

JOHN 6:15-21
THE EYE OF THE STORM!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 6 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

As we saw last time, we are about one year away from the cross and Jesus is pouring Himself into His men, preparing them for the work that they would do, to carry on the ministry.

And in our last study we saw how Jesus fed 5,000 men, plus women and children, maybe somewhere between 15,000 to 20,000 people with five barely crackers and two small, pickled fish!

And we saw how Jesus was trying to get their eyes off the physical, the feeding of all these people with just those five barley crackers and two small, pickled fish, and to have them look to Him, to Jesus for the answer.

Yes, with man, it was an impossible task, but with God, all things were possible.

And I truly believe that God is showing us the same thing.

Why do I say that?

Because look at what is going on in our country. Look at what is going on in the world. Look at what is going on in our jobs. Look at what is going on in our families.

And it is out of that we see people who are hopeless, who have become negative about everything. I even hear pastors that all they do is complain about this and complain about that. They worry about this, and they worry about that.

I call it the Eeyore mentality. You know, the donkey in Winnie the Pooh. He was negative about everything, and I think that mentality is not only seen in the world, but we are seeing it in the church as well.

Think about this for a minute. In our last study we saw Jesus ask Philip to take care of this food problem and Philip, and really the rest of His men were all negative about the situation. ***“How in the world can we feed all these people? We don’t have the money; we don’t have the resources. I know what we can do – SEND THEM ALL HOME!”***

That was their solution to the problem. And today, ***“Leave me alone. I am going to get away. I am staying away from everyone. I am not getting involved. Leave me alone!”***

If you feel that way, if your life is just negative, you are looking at life the wrong way, just as the disciples of Jesus did.

Remember, I said that this was a message for us, but maybe not. Maybe it is just for me, and you get to hear what God is showing me through all of this.

You see, it is easy to look at a situation and become overwhelmed and frustrated and just give up and drop out!

But I think if we are truly honest with ourselves, we all need to deal with this issue because we should not be negative, we should be the most positive people on this planet, but how often the world puts us to shame because they can be more positive than us.

And the problem is this. Their solution to their problems, the world, is wrong. And our solution to our problems is – ***JESUS!*** Thus, we should be the most positive people around because God is working, and He will see us to the destination that He wants us to go!

I have called our study this morning, here in John chapter 6 – ***THE EYE OF THE STORM!***

And the idea here is that even in the midst of the fiercest storms, a hurricane, in the middle of that hurricane is the eye of the storm and there is calm, there is rest, there is peace!

Yes, all around you are blowing winds, torrential rain but in the midst of that storm there is always that peace!

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following points.

NOT YET – JOHN 6:15

JESUS MADE THEM GO – JOHN 6:16-17

THE REASON FOR STORMS – JOHN 6:18

THEY MISSED JESUS – JOHN 6:19-20

JESUS GETS US TO OUR DESTINATION – JOHN 6:21

So let's begin reading in John chapter 6, beginning in verse 15 and let's see what the Lord has for us this morning as we study the Gospel of John and look at this topic – ***THE EYE OF THE STORM!***

JOHN 6

VERSE 15

This day that was supposed to be a day of rest for Jesus and His men, turned into a day filled with ministry.

We saw how Jesus and His men left the area of Capernaum, which was located on the northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee, and they got into a boat and headed to Bethsaida, which was about three miles away.

The people saw what Jesus was doing and they started to follow Him by foot. You see, they were traveling close to shore in this boat and the people could watch where He was going, and they end up getting to the place Jesus and His men were going to before them!

And Jesus spent the day teaching them. But now it was getting late in the day, there was no food, and as we have seen, Jesus fed them with five small barley crackers and two pickled fish!

And not just a few people, upwards of 15,000 to 20,000 people as I have said. And it was not just a little, they were filled, they could not eat any more and there were twelve baskets of leftovers! And those leftovers were given to the disciples of Jesus, a basket for each of them. Kept that in mind!

And we read the response of the people to what Jesus did in John 6:14, where they said, **“... ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’”**

Now what did they mean by that? What is this Prophet who is to come all about?

I believe, as these crowds of people saw this miracle before them, this bread from heaven you might say, I am sure they remembered what Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15, **“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.”**

Jesus was like Moses, whom they thought fed their ancestors in the wilderness for those forty years, but it was really God who was doing that. But they felt this must be the Messiah because of what He was doing.

Not only that, but this Messiah will also lead them out of this Roman bondage just as Moses led them out of their Egyptian bondage! At least that is their thinking!

And because of this they wanted to make Jesus their King and to lead them to freedom and provide this bread for them.

Trench gives us this insight as he wrote, *“He saw the crowds were in great excitement and were meaning to come and violently carry Him off and declare Him their king and Messiah in opposition to the civil power; perhaps already He saw His disciples beginning to be caught in that wild enthusiasm.”*

So, in their excitement, they wanted to make Him King, but Jesus withdrew.

Why?

Because the crowds were willing to support Jesus as long as He gave them what they wanted, and that is what many do today!

God didn't accept it back then and He won't today. If you refuse to make Him Lord and Savior of your life, He will depart!

Also, it was not time to usher Him in as King. That is still about one year down the road when He will ride through Jerusalem as Messiah the King as we read in Daniel chapter 9.

In fact, it is the exact day that Daniel said this event would take place, 173,880 days after the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah the King would come!

This command was given in Nehemiah by the Persian King, Artaxerxes on March 14, 445 B. C. (Nehemiah 2)

If you counted off 173,880 days from that point, including leap years, you would come to April 6, 32 A. D., the only time that Jesus allowed the people to worship Him as King. And we call that day Palm Sunday!

So it was not time for Jesus to be ushered in as King, so **“... He departed again to a mountain by Himself alone.”** John 6:15. He withdrew because it was not time yet!

Make no mistake about it, the timing of God is perfect. Now I do have to admit that I don't always feel that way.

I sometimes think, "*God, where are you? What is taking you so long?*" Have you ever felt that way?

I am sure you have and here is what we have to remember. God is never late. He is never early. He is always right on time, and He knows what we need when we need it, we just need to trust in Him.

Again, is He Lord and Savior of our lives or do we just want Him around to deliver us when we get into trouble? These people were looking for someone to deliver them from the Roman bondage they were in, and to feed them.

In fact, as we read on here in John chapter 6, we are going to see Jesus rebuke these people because they came to Him for the wrong reason. He said to them in John 6:26, "... **Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.**"

I wonder how many health, wealth and prosperity teachers teach on this verse?

Make no mistake about it, Jesus meets our needs, He cares of us, He provides for us, but if that is the reason that we are seeking Him, then it is wrong. You see, once you don't get what you want, you are more than likely to just walk away from the Lord. He wants that spiritual relationship with you!

Jesus will teach them this lesson, but for now, He is working with His men, He will teach them some lessons of faith!

Here we see – **NOT YET!** It was not yet time to make Him King and so He departed.

As we read on, we will see – ***JESUS MADE THEM GO!*** And here it is His men that He sends away!

VERSES 16-17

So now it is late in the day, it was dark out and we are told that the disciples got into a boat, and they are headed toward Capernaum.

But John doesn't give us all the details and it almost seems like they just decided to get into a boat and travel to Capernaum. That is not the case.

You see, in Matthew 14:22 we are told, "**Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.**"

Also, Mark fills in those details as well as we are told in Mark 6:45, "**Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.**"

Why did Jesus compel them to go away, to get into this boat?

Remember what we read in John 6:15, that the crowds of people "**... were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king . . .**"

And maybe the disciples of Jesus were getting caught up with all the emotion of the people and they too were desiring to make Jesus King! And thus, Jesus wants to remove them from this situation as He sends the crowds away and tells His men to get into the boat and head to Capernaum.

That is something that we need to be careful of, getting caught up with the crowds, allowing our emotions to get the better of us and before long we are following the crowds instead of Jesus and His Word!

I will give you this example and it breaks my heart when I think about this.

Several years back we had a Christian singer come to the church to share the songs that God had given to her. She is a wonderful Christian woman; her husband was the pastor of a Calvary Chapel.

And she was drawn, got caught up with all the emotion, all the activity, all the hype, all the excitement at Bethel Church in California and is now working with them and involved in their School of Miracles and all that other non-biblical stuff.

Her friends have tried to talk with her, but to no avail, she was caught up with the crowds and instead of following Jesus and His Word, she is following the words of men!

Even as Christians we can get caught up in this stuff and the warning here from Jesus, to move away from it, don't entangle yourself with it!

There is another reason why Jesus told them to get into this boat and we will see that played out as we read on, but there is a storm that is coming, and it is going to be a doozy!

And I believe this is the other reason they had to get into this boat as Jesus is going to teach them lessons of faith as they travel across the Sea of Galilee.

We are also told of the timeframe of these events. It was dark, in the evening.

And by the time this storm comes upon them, the time frame is the "**fourth watch**" (Matthew 14:25, Mark 6:48) or between 3 and 6 in the morning.

Now where was Jesus in all of this?

Did Jesus travel with them, is He in the boat as well?

No, Jesus did not get into the boat, which is interesting to me.

In fact, John says that "**... Jesus had not come to them.**" John 6:17.

That is interesting to me because as I read that it tells me that He was not with them, not yet, but He will be. He is not going to leave them all alone, He never does!

Then where is Jesus?

In Matthew 14:23 we are told, “**And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.**”

And we also are told the same thing in Mark 6:46, “**And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.**”

Remember, the disciples of Jesus are going to encounter a tremendous storm on the Sea of Galilee and where is Jesus?

He is up on a mountain, all alone, He sent the crowds away!

What is He doing up on that mountain?

He is – ***PRAYING!***

What do you think He is praying about?

He is praying for His men who are battling this storm on the Sea of Galilee!

That should sound familiar to us because that is what the Lord does for us, He lives to make intercession for us.

Paul tells us this in Hebrews 7:24-25, “**But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.**”

Did you see that? Paul is telling us that “**. . . He always lives to make intercession for them**” or us and what a comfort that should be to each and every one of us who has asked Jesus to be their Lord and Savior.

Notice what Paul said in Romans 8:31-39 about God's love for us and who can take it away.

He said, **“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

No one can take the love of God from us, no one!

Do you believe that even when you are not walking as you think you should?

You need to because that is what God says. He can't love you anymore than He already loves you and He can't love you any less!

But it doesn't end there, He loves you too much to let you stay where you are at and that just shows His love for you is real.

If He didn't love you, He wouldn't care what happens to you, what you are doing, but He does love you and He does care!

Now as Jesus is interceding for us before the Father, please understand that He is not trying to placate the Father because He is angry at us, but He represents us before the Father as we draw near to God through Jesus.

Remember what Jesus said in Luke 22:31-32, **“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.’”**

God is not waiting for us to fail and then hammer us, but He is praying for us, that our faith will not fail and as we go through a difficult time, we would be able to strengthen others because of it, strengthen them in the Lord! That is what Jesus is doing for us.

Also keep in mind that Satan is the accuser of the brethren. Think about that for a minute. Does Satan have the evidence to present to God the Father to show that we failed?

I don't want to discourage any of you, but he does. I am sure that Satan lays it all out before God the Father.

“Did you see what Joe did today! He says he loves you, but did you hear what he said? Did you see the way he responded in that situation?”

And it is true, I am guilty, and if I keep listening to Satan, I will condemn myself!

But what about Jesus?

Jesus steps in and makes intercession for us. He does not excuse my behavior, your behavior, but He says, ***“Father, this one is mine. His sins have been paid for!”***

PRAISE THE LORD!

Now keep that in mind, that as these men are in the storm, Jesus is up on this mountain, and He is watching over them and praying for them!

You see, as we find ourselves in the midst of the storms of life, do we believe that Jesus is there praying for us, interceding for us? We might not but He is, and we will see that in our study this morning!

But keep in mind that we have seen here that – ***JESUS MADE THEM GO!***

And as we read on, we will see our next point – ***THE REASON FOR STORMS!***

VERSE 18

That is all John tells us, that this great storm arose on the Sea of Galilee, but this was a vicious storm.

Listen to what Matthew tells us of this storm, “**But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.**” Matthew 14:24.

And Mark tells us, “**Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.**” Mark 6:48.

Imagine the waves and you are trying to row but you are going nowhere. And yes, many of them were seasoned fishermen, but I think this storm put them out of their comfort zone!

And maybe this doesn't come across in the English, but in the Greek, when Matthew tells us that they were “**tossed by the waves**” the Greek is telling us that they were “***tortured or tormented***” by these waves!

And you can row and row and you will go nowhere when the wind and the waves are against you and that is the predicament that these men were in!

And keep in mind that they are about half-way across the Sea of Galilee when this storm hit them, so they are not close to shore. Can you imagine doing this for hours and getting nowhere! How frustrating that must have been.

And I am sure they were fearful at this point. Imagine being out on Lake Michigan some 3 or 4 miles and a big windstorm hit tossing your boat side to side. You would be afraid too!

And yes, they must have endured many storms on the Sea of Galilee, at least some of them. But this one was different.

Now let me stop here for a minute and let me ask you this question.

Did Jesus know that this storm was coming?

You bet He did.

Then why did He command His men to get into this boat that was headed for this violent storm?

Because He was going to teach them a lesson to build their faith.

Let's face it, as Christians, we will face storms in our lives and God has a purpose for them, He knows about them, and He is interceding for us as we go through them.

Now let me say this before we look at some storms we face in life.

There are some who teach and some who believe that if you are obedient to the Lord then you will have smooth sailing. You will not find storms, or they will not find you.

And on the other end of the spectrum are these storms that many feel are a result of being disobedient to the Lord, they are the consequences for disobedience.

Some may be but let me ask you this. Were these disciples obeying the Lord?

Absolutely they were. The Lord told them to get into the boat and they did!

So this storm in their lives was not a result of disobedience and the same is true many times in our own lives.

In fact, what did Jesus say in John 16:33? He said, "**in the world you will have tribulation.**" That is not a might, ***YOU WILL!***

Now, in regard to these storms on the Sea of Galilee, one writer explains that *“The Sea of Galilee is six hundred feet below sea level, in a cuplike depression among the hills. When the sun sets, the air cools; and as the cooler air from the west rushes down over the hillside, the resultant wind churns the lake. Since the disciples were rowing toward Capernaum, they were heading into the wind; consequently, they made little progress.”* (Tenney)

Make no mistake about it, as you serve the Lord you will encounter storms of life to help you to grow, deepen your faith. And they can be intense, they can be violent, you may feel like you are doomed, there is no way out!

Because of that many don't like these storms. In fact, I can be honest with you, often I don't like it. But think of it this way. If you don't play baseball, you will never strike out, but you also won't know the joy of hitting a home run.

If you don't serve Jesus, you may escape some trials, but you will never experience that abundant life that He has for you.

I like the way one writer put it as he wrote,

If we are obedient to Christ, there will be plenty of storms. There will be danger and difficulty and weariness and exposure and anxiety and dread and sadness. We will be open to an index of sorrows and stresses which are unknown to the uncommitted heart.

But take cheer: Christ sees all and knows when we feel we are alone and fear that no one knows or cares. He prays for us, even while we are in the storm. He comes to us in the midst of the gale, treading across the problems that afflict us.

This brings great blessing to us. We learn more about Christ as we venture out onto the troubled waters. And we worship as never before.

Jesus calls all of us who are in the boat to follow his course. Today, with eyes wide open, will you commit yourself to sailing where he directs? Will you commit yourself to following him when the inevitable storms come? Those who keep their lives pointed in the direction that Christ dictates will encounter contrary winds. But they will also experience the wind of the Holy Spirit in their sails, bearing them on in power, healing, and blessing to a needy world.

- R. Kent Hughes, Mark Volume One, Jesus, Servant and Savior, p. 161

We are going to take a few minutes and look at some storms that come our way because, since we all will go through the storms of life, it is good to be aware that God is working.

The first storm I am going to deal with are those *storms of correction* when we are not obeying the Lord and He is trying to get us back on track.

A good example of a storm of correction is seen in the life of Jonah. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and warn them that judgment was coming.

Well, Jonah did not want God to spare the Ninevites, so he went **DOWN** to Joppa. Then he found a ship and went **DOWN** into the ship. In the ship Jonah went **DOWN** to the lowest parts of the ship and he laid **DOWN!**

He was not willing to go to Nineveh and God was going to send a storm of correction into his life to get him back on course. You see, Jonah was running from God and when you are running from God you are going down, down, down and not up!

So as Jonah is in this ship, this ship was off in the opposite direction from Nineveh and a storm arose. This storm was so bad that they thought they were going to die. These were seasoned sailors and thus, this storm must have been intense. So they cast lots to see who was bringing this upon them and the lot fell to Jonah.

And he admitted this was his fault and asked them to throw him overboard and the storm would stop, and he would die and would not have to go to Nineveh! I guess he really did not want to go!

As soon as Jonah hit the water the storm stopped and then a giant fish swallowed Jonah. And it took him three days before he prayed and then this giant fish vomited him up on dry land, the place from which he was at before he disobeyed the Lord. And now it was time to go to Nineveh and he did.

You see, this *STORM OF CORRECTION* brought Jonah to where he needed to be, and God spared the people of Nineveh because they repented at the words of Jonah!

In Psalm 119 we are told, **“Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word. . . . It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.”**

Psalm 119:67, 71.

As much as we might not like these storms, God will use them to get us back on track – *STORMS OF CORRECTION!*

Then there are the *storms of perfection* where the Lord is making us more like Him, causing us to depend upon Him more.

I think these men were involved in a storm of perfection because they were doing what the Lord told them to do!

Remember what James 1:2-4 tells us, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”**

In this storm God is working to build up our faith and I think we see that here with these men in this boat.

Think about this for a minute because Jesus was not in the boat with them at this time but something else was.

What was in the boat with them?

In the boat with them were the twelve baskets of leftovers and not one of them thought, ***“Maybe we should ask Jesus for help! Maybe we should call out to Him! He was able to multiply the food, maybe He can calm the storm!”***

They did not do that!

What did they try to do?

They tried to row and row and row to shore and as hard as they tried, by their own efforts, it wasn't working! They were rowing nowhere fast!

And the same is true in our own life, you can fight and struggle all you want but you will miss the power that is right before you, the power of God and the victory that God wants you to have!

And, as we will see, after rowing for hours, Jesus comes out to them.

Why did He wait so long?

I think He was stretching their faith, waiting until there was no hope in what they were doing and thus, their only hope is Jesus!

Think about the things we face in life. A sickness, major health issues, job loss, home loss, family issues. And our response is to do everything we can to fix those problems, to help get out of that situation and we forget that with us is the greatest miracle in the world that will lead us to the greatest hope we have in this world, Jesus.

You see, the greatest miracle that we carry with us is *US* and the miracle of salvation that God has given to us! And that should remind us to bring everything to Jesus, the One who can take a dead spiritual being and make them alive again in Christ!

It is as Peter tells us in I Peter 5:10, **“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”**

And these storms of perfection will strengthen our faith by making us more aware of Jesus and how He is able to deliver us from all that may come our way!

Again, as much as we might not like them, these *STORMS OF PERFECTION* will help our faith to grow!

We also see these *storms of direction* where the Lord is leading us to go somewhere, to do something.

We see a good example of this in Acts 16:6-10 where we are told, **“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.”**

Now we might not see this as a storm, but for Paul, his desire was to bring the Gospel message to people, and it seemed like everywhere he turned the Holy Spirit was shutting the door. Thus, it was a storm for him!

Look again at what Luke tells us here in Acts. As they begin to move, they are heading mostly west and a little south, probably towards Ephesus, an important city. They are moving towards the Roman province of Asia. But the Holy Spirit stops them.

Keep in mind that Lystra and Derbe were in the **Roman province of Galatia** also, but in south central **Asia Minor**.

We don't know how the Holy Spirit stopped them, and some people like to speculate, but there was some kind of roadblock, and they knew the Lord did not want them to go there.

Then they tried to go Northwest to Bithynia, but once again the Holy Spirit stopped them from going there!

But why in the world would the Holy Spirit stop them from going to preach the Gospel in this area? Didn't they need to hear the Gospel message?

Of course they did, but here's the thing. It was not God's timing yet for them to go there. And we need to understand that God has a perfect plan with perfect timing and thus, the Holy Spirit stops them, and they listen! May we do the same!

Paul was to go to the area of Greece, as we will see, bringing the salvation message to Europe, the Good News of Jesus Christ!

One writer put it like this, *“Asia needed the Gospel, but this was not God's time. Need did not constitute their call. They had just come from the east; they had been forbidden to go south or north, but they did not presume that the Lord was leading them to the west - they waited His specific directions. Logic alone is not the basis for a call.”* (Charles Ryrie)

Let me show you what I mean.

David Livingstone wanted to go to China, but God sent him to Africa.

William Carey wanted to go to Polynesia, but God sent him to India.

Adoniram Judson went to India, but God guided him to Burma.

God guides us along the way, to just the right place.

So, as we will see, they are in Troas waiting upon God for direction but always ready to take steps of faith.

As they are in Troas, which was located on the Aegean Sea, God revealed to Paul that the Word of God needed to go to Macedonia, which is in northern Greece today. The Gospel was now spreading to Europe!

And keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is still guiding them. Yes, they tried to go southwest, to Mysia, but they were stopped.

Then they tried to go northwest to Bithynia, and they were stopped again.

And now they are going to go farther west, across the Aegean Sea to Greece.

And like I have said, they didn't just sit around, but were on the move and the Holy Spirit was directing them.

And it is there, in Philippi, that they meet a woman by the name of Lydia who gets saved and brings the Gospel message home with her to Thyatira!

And sometimes that direction is to salvation, as we also see in the life of Paul as God got a hold of his heart on the road to Damascus.

Let me say this. Maybe you feel you need to go somewhere, do a certain thing. But before you do it, get your direction from the Lord, it is that important and He will direct you!

As much as we might not like these storms, God will use them to direct us to where He wants us to go – ***STORMS OF DIRECTION!***

So we have seen – ***THE REASONS FOR STORMS!***

STORMS OF CORRECTION!

STORMS OF PERFECTION!

STORMS OF DIRECTION!

Now, for these men in the boat, the storm was upon them, they tried as hard as they could to get to land, but they are getting nowhere and what was the thing they forgot?

THEY MISSED JESUS!

VERSES 19-20

Keep in mind that this was windstorm and it was not a rainstorm or thunderstorm.

Because of that Jesus was sitting upon a mountain watching all that was happening there on the Sea of Galilee with His men.

Now if it was dark out, how could He see them?

Keep in mind that it is around the time of Passover and thus, there was a full moon. That means He could see His men struggling out there.

So He begins to walk out towards them, He is walking on the water!

What I love here is that this storm was overwhelming to these men, but Jesus walks right over these waves, this storm that had paralyzed these men!

Now as much as we can come against these men and their lack of faith, don't we do the same?

Of course we do. We find ourselves in a situation where there is no hope, none, there is nothing we can do to resolve the problem. And we reach that point where all we can do is cry out to the Lord!

Now that sounds funny and it is, and it is also wrong. All we can do is cry out to the Lord and if you look at this as a last resort, you are wrong.

You see, all we can do is cry out to the Lord and not as a last resort, but He alone can walk right over the problems we face, those problems that have us sinking! It is all on how you look at the situation!

Now think about this. As they see this person coming towards them, not knowing it was Jesus, not expecting Jesus, these brave men cry out, ***“Ahhhhh!”***

They scream in terror - they thought it was a ghost! Don't laugh, you would do the same thing!

We see this in Matthew 14:26 where we are told, **“And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear.”**

And in Mark 6:49-50 we are told, **“And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were troubled.”**

Now why did they respond that way?

Because they were not expecting Jesus because they were not praying, seeking God in the midst of this storm. So when He does come, they are surprised!

And notice that Jesus came to dispel their fears.

He tells them, **“Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”**

As much as Jesus came to dispel the fears of these men, He does the same in our life if we would only look to Him!

And let me say this, because it is even more amazing.

That phrase, **“It is I”** in the Greek is the EGO EIMI, (eg-o' i-mee') or it is literally saying, **“Be of good cheer! I AM, do not be afraid.”**

It is the name of God and that should bring comfort to anyone's heart, it should dispel all fear that may come our way because God is with us, and He will never leave us nor forsake us!

Like I have said, just because you are doing the will of God doesn't mean you will have calm seas!

As followers of Jesus, we sail our lives into the winds of this world and the world is fighting hard against us. The world does not want us to progress any further. And we try, and we try, and we get frustrated.

Pray, seek the Lord, ask for His help. Don't become frustrated and tired in the work, look to Jesus to be the strength of your life!

May we not *MISS JESUS* in our life or put Him on the back burner. He is the One who will correct us, perfect us and direct us! May we seek Him!

And make no mistake about it, *JESUS GETS US TO OUR DESTINATION!*

VERSE 21

In this story Peter walked on water and I am not going to focus on that this morning. But he had the faith, at least for a short period of time to get out of the boat and walk on the water to Jesus.

It wasn't until he realized the impossible was happening, waves crashing all around him, that he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to sink. And the Lord reached out to Peter and brought him up!

God wants us to walk on water, to do the impossible, but that will only happen as we keep our eyes upon Him and walk where He is calling us to walk!

What I want to focus on here is what this verse says, **“Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.”**

The implication here is that as soon as Jesus got into the boat, the wind stopped, and they were at their destination. We need to let the Lord on board in our lives so He may calm those storms and see us through to our destination.

On this, one writer tells us, *“From this detail given by John it is inferred that the ship seemed to move automatically, without sail or oar, in obedience to His will: so that without effort of the disciples or crew it quickly passed over the remaining distance (two miles or so) and came to shore.”* (Trench)

Make no mistake about it, Jesus will get us to the destination that He wants us to go. They were instantly where they needed to be.

Let me also say this because sometimes we miss this. Sometimes the destination that Jesus is calling us to is – ***HOME!***

As Christians, going home to be with Jesus is what we long for but until that time we want to be used by God to bring the good news, the Gospel message to the lost. We want to grow and mature in the Lord. We want to shine brightly for Him!

Also, listen to how this story ends. In Matthew 14:33 we are told, **“Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped Him saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God’”**

Did you notice what this did for the faith of not only Peter but for the other men who were in the boat?

They saw that Jesus is God and thus, they don’t need to fear, they need to obey, take those steps of faith and go where God is calling them to go!

May we not only believe that in our minds but in our hearts so that we can walk accordingly!

Yes, it was not time to make Jesus King, ***NOT YET!***

And yes, ***JESUS MADE THEM GO*** just as He makes us go into this world where we will face those storms of life. It may be a storm of correction. It may be a storm of perfection. It may be a storm of direction. But in these storms God is guiding, He is directing our lives for our good!

Those are the ***REASONS FOR THE STORMS***, and we need to learn those lessons so we can grow.

And yes, we will face storms all our lives, that is not the issue. ***THEY MISSED JESUS*** because they were not looking for Him, they were not looking to Him, they were not seeking Him. They tried to do it on their own and it did not work, not even close. May we keep our eyes upon Jesus and expect Him to give us the victory in the storms we face!

Make no mistake about it, ***JESUS GETS US TO OUR DESTINATION!***

Years ago we had another Christian musician here by the name of Peter Oliva and he had an album out called ***THE EYE OF THE STORM!***

He also had a song by that title, and this is how the lyrics went to this song.

***We put out to sea
We sailed across the waters
Stretching endlessly
Far from any boarders
Where I was free to chart my course
Anywhere I cast my eye
Face the storms cold force
Oh was I willing to die***

*Now in the waves I was tossed
 And tossed about
 You know I nearly lost my grip
 I prayed for solid ground
 And cursed this wretched ship
 Till sunlight touched me warm*

*Now I think I understand
 There is calm in the eye of the storm
 And there is peace in the palm of his hand*

*There's no safe place you can tun to
 Anywhere a man has laid his head
 Just look to the calm in the eye of the storm
 And rest in the palm of his hand*

*Bless the ships at sea
 That follow where their lead
 Through much adversity
 We set our sails straight ahead
 And if I'm found tattered and torn
 With no sight of land
 I'll just look to the calm of the storm
 And I'm gonna rest in the palm of his hand*

*Oh you want gold
 At the end of the rainbow
 Such things are built on sinking sand
 Just look to the calm in the eye of the storm
 And rest in the peace of his hand
 Just look to the calm in the eye of the storm
 And rest in the peace of his hand*

- Peter Oliva, Eye of the Storm

Yes, we will face storms in our life and God will use them in powerful ways if we allow Him to. But remember, even in the midst of those storms is the eye of the storm and that eye of the storm is Jesus where we will find rest and peace in Him.

Let me close with this. One writer put it like this,

Are you going through the storms of life now? He sees.

Believe that, rest in it, appropriate it.

Rejoice that understanding help is on the way. Help was on the way for the disciples long before they saw it, and the same is true for you.

Are you surrounded by darkness?

Do you wonder if there is a way out?

Keep expecting him to come because he often comes in the 'fourth watch' [when we're exhausted, our strength is gone and we're about to give up].

Be open to the hand of God in your life.

Focus the gaze of faith upon him.

- Source Unknown