

God Is with You in the Storm

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1. Introduction

We marvel at rainbows for a reason. They are a stunning sight in the sky, and they represent the calm that follows the storm. But a rainbow is the last thing we are thinking about in the middle of a storm, We're just trying to get through it, or out of it, or away from it. During difficult storms in life, it is easy to become so focused on the problem-whatever is causing the storm-that we miss what is happening in the midst of it.

In today's study, we will look at two more miracles of Jesus that John relates in his Gospel. The first involves Jesus feeding 5,000 men plus women and children, and the second involves him safely delivering the disciples from a raging storm on the Sea of Galilee. These miracles prove two things: (1) Jesus is with us in the storm, and (2) he knows how to get us out of it.

Both truths are critical when enduring hardship. Hardship blinds us, making it difficult for us to see a way out or experience the presence of Christ. Jesus can solve our problems. But he also wants us to know he is with us in the midst of them, not only when they are over.

Think about your closest relationship. Perhaps it is with a spouse or an old friend. What has made you closer over the years? What has made your relationship last this long? Chances are you have both endured trying times together and made it out on the other side. Did this weaken or strengthen your relationship? The fact you didn't abandon each other in the midst of the hardship likely means it strengthened your relationship.

It is the same with Christ. He is not just there to be your problem-solver. He does not only show up in the rainbow or the light at the end of the tunnel. He is there to weather the storm right there with you as you are going through it. Storms strengthen relationships. Jesus isn't going anywhere when one hits. instead, he is as near as ever.

As you study these miracles, ask yourself where Jesus might be in your storm. Have you sensed his presence recently? Or have you been too focused on the problem? Jesus can lead you out of your storm. But he also wants you to know you are never alone in the midst of it.

2. Share

When you are going through a difficult time, are you a glass-half-full or a glass-half-empty kind of person?

3. Read John 6:5-13. *(5 Lifting up his eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?"*

6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9 "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. 11 Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 And when they had eaten their fill, he told his disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." 13 So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten.)

We often read the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 as a story of abundance, Jesus miraculously produced an abundance of food, and we hope he will produce an abundance in our lives. But what if we read this story as a lesson in contentment? what if Jesus wanted us to know what we have in him is enough?

1. The day that Jesus performed the miracles of feeding the 5,000 and walking on the water had dawned with the news that John the Baptist had been killed by King Herod. King Herod had also sent word he wanted to kill Jesus next. How does this context affect the way you view the miracles Jesus performed? What does this say about who Jesus is?
2. How did Andrew and Philip respond to Jesus' question, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" (John 5:5). Do you think you would have responded to Jesus this way? Why or why not?
3. What does this miracle say about contentment? How can you apply this model of contentment to what you feel you are lacking today?
4. **Read John 5:16-21** (*16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working." 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. 19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.*)
 1. How do you typically weather the storms in your life? what are your coping mechanisms for hard times? Are your coping mechanisms effective? Why or why not?

2. The name Jesus used to announce himself was the same one that God used in the Old Testament: I am. What is the significance of Jesus' calling himself by this name?
3. Have you ever felt peace in the midst of a storm in your life-not when the storm was over-but in the middle of it? What caused this peace?

Application

In a difficult time, it is natural to ask, "when and how will this end?" But what if instead you asked, "who is God in this time?" How would asking that question change your outlook?