

"A STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE"

TEXT: Mt. 14:22-33

THESIS: To show that when our faith is tested we must trust in His love and compassion for us to get us through.

INTRO: A. A faith that can't be tested can't be trusted! Whether we like it or not, our faith in Christ WILL be tested in the storms of life. The question is, how do we respond to these storms?

B. We need to work out "A STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE." Then when we find ourselves in the middle of the storm we can turn to our "Statement of Faith" and remind ourself that...

I. ARTICLE I: HE BROUGHT ME HERE: v.22

A. Our Storms Are His Appointments:

1. A FAITH THAT CAN'T BE TESTED CAN'T BE TRUSTED!
2. So the Lord tests our faith by sending us into the midst of the storm.

ILLUS: The disciples had just witnessed the spectacular miracle of the feeding of the 5000. No doubt they would have preferred to linger at that spot and savor the heady wine of popularity they were no doubt enjoying. But Jesus "constrained" them to leave so He could disperse the multitude. (The people were so affected by the miracle that they were about to take Him by force and make Him their King.)

Jn. 6:15

When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

- a. When things are going well and the Lord is blessing our lives, we have a tendency to become satisfied and our faith doesn't grow.
- b. The Lord must often push us out of our complacency and comfortable state in order that we might grow.

NOTE: The next time you find yourself in a storm remember that it was not an "accident" but a Divine appointment. There are no "accidents" for God's children, there are only appointments that need to be kept. You need to remind yourself: HE BROUGHT ME HERE!

II. ARTICLE II: HE SEES MY CIRCUMSTANCES V.24-25

A. Our Storms Are His Concern:

1. A FAITH THAT CAN'T BE TESTED CAN'T BE TRUSTED!
2. No doubt they wondered why:
 - a. ...He sent them away when things were going well.
 - b. ...The weather was calm when they left and now the storm came; surely He could have prevented the storm.
 - c. ...He didn't come with them to protect them at least.

ILLUS: Jesus was obviously developing their faith, testing them. This is their 3 lesson. The first lesson took place in calm water in the morning, with Jesus in the ship (Lk. 5:1-11 - the miraculous draught of fish). The second lesson came in stormy weather at night with Jesus asleep in the ship (Mt. 8:23-27). Now comes the 3 lesson at night, with stormy weather, with Jesus no longer with them! Each new test required more faith on their part: Jesus present, Jesus asleep, Jesus absent. How would they handle this new test of faith?

3. Our response to our storms is crucial; we **MUST KNOW** that He sees our circumstances, and our storms are His concern!
4. We are **NOT** adrift at sea in the storm with out His awareness and we must trust that He knows what is best for us.
5. The disciples are to be commended at least for not turning back; He had ordered them to go to the other side and in spite of the storm they continued.

NOTE: Trouble and testings must never deter us from duty.

III. ARTICLE III: HE IS PRAYING FOR ME V.23

A. Our Storms Become His Burden:

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!

2. Sandwiched between Jesus' sending His disciples away in the ship and the howling winds and contrary waves is a prayer vigil.
3. When His disciples went to sea, He went to prayer.

ILLUS: Jesus is our High Priest and our Intercessor and He "ever liveth to make intercession" for us. Between His leaving and return He is praying for us.

There is no doubt that the subject of Jesus' prayer included His disciples. While they were on the water and in the storm, He was on His face before the Lord.

4. He is always above our storms and though touched with the feeling of our infirmities, He is not in danger of being overwhelmed by our storms.

IV. ARTICLE IV: HE WILL SPEAK TO ME V.25-27

A. Our Storms Are His Opportunities:

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!
2. In the storms we seek Him out.
3. In the storms He comes to us.
4. In the storms He speaks to us...thru His Word. v.27

NOTE: We are never alone in the storm! He will meet us in the midst of it and speak to us if we avail ourself of the opportunity.

I am often dismayed when I visit someone in the hospital or at home sick when I don't see a Bible nearby. There are often magazines and novels, but no Bible...

If you can't read the Bible, then He may speak to you through His Spirit. In either case you must be open to His voice.

It is interesting that when they were afraid, His voice gave them peace. It is also interesting that He only said "It is I" not "It is the Lord."

Apparently they knew Him well enough that "I" was all that was necessary. (Someone calls you on the phone and they say, "Hi, it's me!"...)

V. ARTICLE V: HE WILL HELP ME GROW IN FAITH v.28-30

A. Our Storms Are His Classroom:

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!
2. First Peter tested the Lord: "If it be thou, bid me come..."

ILLUS: Peter is often criticized for not having much faith, but none of the others asked to try to walk on water! Only 2 men in history ever walked on water! Peter was one of them.

3. Some of the lessons taught in this classroom:
 - a. A lesson of love; He sent them into the storm because it was good for them.
 - b. A lesson of faith; so they would learn to trust Him in storms.
 - c. A lesson of hope; for when their storm was at its worst, He came to rescue them.
4. Peter learned to walk on water! "he walked on the water..."
 - a. Talk about growth in faith!

- b. Yes, his faith failed when he measured the circumstances and he began to sink, but even then He called on the Lord...he didn't try to save himself! v.30
- c. Peter's faith grew more than the others, in spite of his lapse.

ILLUS: The other fishermen didn't get out of the boat! John, the beloved Apostle didn't jump overboard! Only Peter went water-walking!

VI. ARTICLE VI: HE WILL SEE ME THROUGH v.31-33

A. Our Storms Are For His Glory:

1. A FAITH THAT CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED!
2. He has just given Peter a lesson on water-walking He could not have done with out the storm!
3. When Peter began to sink, Jesus "caught him" and saved him; it is doubtful that Peter was ever the same again.

ILLUS: Perhaps later on the other disciples would joke with Peter about his lapse of faith. No doubt Peter would boast that at least he walked on water for a little while when they didn't, but surely he would praise the Lord for His saving and sustaining power and give Him the glory! (As WE should do every time He bails us out of trouble!)

4. When He calmed the winds and waves, the disciples were no doubt in awe of Him.

Mt. 8:27

But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

5. Everyone on board gave Him the glory and WORSHIPED HIM!

NOTE: That's what He desires: our worship. Nothing less will do! He is God! God alone deserves and demands worship from His creatures and His children. Only then will HE get the glory He deserves.

CONCL: Here then is "A STATEMENT OF FAITH FOR THE STORMS OF LIFE" which every believer has access to when ever he is being tested. We need to remember that A FAITH WHICH CANNOT BE TESTED CANNOT BE TRUSTED! What about yours? Are you in a storm now? Review your "STATEMENT OF FAITH" - it will help you get through it.