



Scriptures: James 1:2-4, Matthew 7:24-27 , Mark 4:39-41 ,
2 Corinthians 1:8-10, 2 Corinthians 1:4-6

Main Idea: God wants us to not only *survive* the storms of this life, but to *thrive* in them!

Good morning! I'm so excited to be back here with you this morning.

[Teacher Note: Share a story about the Weather Channel. I shared a story about growing up and watching TV with my dad. Use your own story or you can adapt it and say I know someone who.]

I have a question for all of you this morning, have you ever been caught outside in a storm? It's not fun, is it? I like watching storms but I'm not really a big fan of being in them. Growing up in our house, my dad would have the Weather Channel on to get an update on the weather forecast. This was during the time before smartphones and being able to Google weather from a device you also made calls on. Anyway, we'd be looking for our 'Weather on the 8's' update and there would be a commercial that would play for a show called "Storm Chasers." Does anyone remember it? The show would follow these scientists/meteorologists as they chased after these powerful storms to collect data and research as well as experience the rush of adrenaline they would get while experiencing the storm. Again, not my idea of time well spent because I generally like to not be caught in a storm, or the one going through the storm.

If you haven't realized it yet, this world is not perfect, and there will be/are days, weeks, months, or even years when it can hit us hard. In this fallen world, we will eventually go through some storms. It's not a question if they will come, but when. I've heard it said, **"you are either currently going through a storm, coming out of a storm, or about to go through a storm."** The fact remains that we will all experience and go through some type of storm like financial storms, physical storms, and relational storms.

From talking with some of you, even our church has gone through some storms. Storms happen, and they can happen at any time. These storms bring pain, hurt, and suffering. Our natural reaction in our human DNA is to

get down, discouraged, fearful, worry, panic, and become anxious. But Scripture tells us to do the opposite!

James 1:2-4 (NIV) *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

If you are like me, that is not my reaction when a trial/storm hits in my life. But it is important to consider the ‘good’ that can result from these storms.

It is my firm belief that God wants us to not only to survive the storms of this life but *thrive* when the storms come! It isn’t any easy thing to do, but it’s possible. I believe it all starts with the foundation upon which we are building our lives!

To Thrive in the Storms of Life we need...

1. A SOLID foundation.

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5-7, we find Jesus giving the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus covered a variety of different teachings throughout His sermon, He laid out how followers of Him ought to live, but today we are going to focus on the conclusion of His sermon. At the end of it, He spoke about two different types of builders.

Matthew 7:24-27 (NIV) *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

What’s your foundation? Are you following Jesus and building your life upon the solid rock? Or are you trying to build your life upon the sand of this world? (wealth, family, relationships, substance, happiness, etc.)

When the storms hit, what do you do? What will your reaction be? Will you stand firm, or will everything come crashing down around you? If your foundation isn't Jesus, it's all going to come crumbling down. Maybe not right now, but when it does, then what?

[Teacher note: You may want to share a story of a time when a “storm” hit in your life. I shared about some unexpected complications when my first daughter was born.]

I remember like it was yesterday, in February 2020, my wife and I were pregnant with our first daughter, and we were so excited to become parents! We went to the hospital when it was time for her to enter this world. But during labor there were some complications. The baby's heart rate kept dropping and the baby was not coming out as planned the doctors and nurses didn't know why. My wife ended up needing to have an emergency C-section. I remember sitting out in the hallway waiting to go into the operating room as they prepped her. It felt like forever, I remember in those moments thinking this is not what we had planned. I was worried for my wife and the baby. I can say in those moments I prayed like I had never prayed before. I begged God for everything to be okay with my wife and baby. I went into the operating room, and the team got our daughter out. Then, I heard one cry, but instead of handing her to us to hold her we were told by the doctor that they needed to rush her to the NICU because she was having some trouble with her lungs.

Again, this is not what we had planned or had thought of when we entered the hospital that day. But again, I began praying, “God I don't understand what is happening, but I know YOU ARE GOOD, no matter what.” As my wife was recovering, the nurses said I could finally go and meet my daughter. As I walked into that NICU room, I was met by a little baby girl who was hooked up to all sorts of machines. I remember going right over to her and kissing her little head and talking to her. I don't understand how but even in those moments of uncertainty and waiting I had a peace. Praise God that a week later, we would get to bring her home with us and she is thriving now as a 5-year-old!

Realize and understand there is nothing in this world, that can give you the peace that Jesus does. He is who we must build our life upon. If my life was built on anything else in those moments, I know I would've crumbled. It

was only by the peace and strength of God that I got through those moments of uncertainty.

To Thrive in the Storms of Life it's also very important for us to have...

2. **A Proper Perspective** of who our LORD is...

The Storms OBEY Him!

Mark 4:39-41 (ESV) *"And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, 'Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?' ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'"*

[Teacher note: Share a story of when you watched a rainstorm or thunderstorm and the power that you observed in it.]

I remember a time when we had a nasty storm come through, as the storm was happening, I was at another church in a meeting with other area youth workers. As we were meeting, you couldn't help but look outside as we saw walls of rain blowing across the parking lot. When we are going through our storms in life, we must never forget that the storms obey Jesus! The roar of our storm is NOT greater than the power of our Savior! You see, the storms we face can bring us to a deeper knowledge of God.

I have never met anyone who enjoys suffering. With God, **trials become tools**. He uses them to shape/prune/refine us into the who He intends us to be. Jesus allowed the disciples to experience the fear and anxiety of being in a boat on a raging sea. He allowed them to suffer because He had something to teach them. He wanted the disciples to recognize their own helplessness, His sufficiency, and their **dependence on Him**.

This leads me to the third thing **we need to Thrive in the Storms of Life we must...**

3. Learn to **GAIN from our PAIN**.

A lot of people, when they are hurt, blame God and run away. What we really need to do is turn to God because He is good and will be able to handle our

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