

# **The Storm Will Pass**

*By Bobby Schuller*

We're in a series about worry, anxiety. Worry is this thing that really erodes our faith, our joy and our life. When we worry, it's hard to have fun with our friends and family. When we worry, it's hard to do well at our job and our hobbies. When we go through a storm it's easy to think how long will the storm go? Is thing going to last forever?

Today we're going to talk about that, of what it means to win the worry war, how we win the worry war, and today I want to talk specifically about what to do when you're in the middle of a storm. You in a storm? You going through something right now? Are you struggling? Maybe with a health problem or an issue in your family you thought would never happen. Maybe you're going through something in your job or your business. And how are we, as believers, supposed to act and feel and respond when we're going through these things.

The dream is to be relaxed, isn't it. The dream is to have some serenity, some peace of mind. In fact, this is something that you see throughout the scriptures a lot. In the Old Testament, for example, there is this curse that God will place on individuals, on tribes, on families when they've done something really heinous or evil, and the curse is they shall never enter my rest. It really is a curse, isn't it, to be in a place in life when you feel like you can't rest, you can't relax, you don't know

what it is, you just can't get yourself to chill. Maybe you think that you're cursed by God in that way. I want you to know you're not. God loves you and He cares for you, and that the promise in Hebrews 4:1 is and will be true for you.

In Hebrews, he promises, or she promises, whoever the author was, promises the reader – the promise to enter His rest still stands. That there is a promise for you when you trust in Jesus Christ. That you can enter into the rest of God. Now very often we think of rest, we think of dying, don't we, rest in peace. But I think that rest is for today; that we can live every day in a relaxed, even if we're working hard, even if we're in the midst of struggle, even if we're in a storm we can relax. We can have a peace of mind, that we can be smarter, sharper, do better, be closer to our friends and family. And what I want to talk about today is it's actually the storm itself that gets us there. That the more storms we go through with Jesus, the more we learn to relax.

Do you ever feel like I can't enter rest? I can't enter God's rest? You ever feel like I can't relax? And maybe nothing's going wrong in your life, you just feel like I can't relax. I can't sleep, I can't think, I can't just enjoy a movie or enjoy company of others. Today I want you to know the promise still stands that you will enter His rest.

Now this is an important thing that Jesus does, by the way. Jesus is relaxed. And some of the times when He's relaxed, it's astonishing how

relaxed He can be. One of those places in the scripture reading that Hannah gave today in Matthew chapter 8.

Now in Matthew chapter 8, the disciples are in the Genesaret, the Sea of Galilee, and if you've ever been to Israel, you know that the Sea of Galilee is a little bit of an exaggeration. It's not much of a sea, it's really a big lake. It's maybe about 13 miles or so across. It's big, but it's not like the ocean. But the weird thing about the Sea of Galilee, if you've ever been there, it's about six hundred feet below sea level, and so it is very nice. It's very calm and the weather can be great. But also because the geography is almost like a bowl, that when the weather strikes, it can strike weirdly. I remember I was reading some commentaries, even today, that it can feel like the wind will blow from every direction.

There's another story, for example, where they can't get back to the shore. They're trying to paddle to the shore and they just can't do it, and it seems like the wind is coming from every direction. I think Yosemite is actually like that. If you go to Yosemite, storms will strike. They'll just come out of nowhere and it's in large part because this weather system comes like down into the chasm. At any rate.

This is what's happening. And remember for these guys, these Jewish folks in these days, their cosmology was odd. They believed that large bodies of water were basically the gateway to hell, to our version of hell. They believed that the world, the universe looked like a sandwich, almost. That you had the underworld, you had our world, and you had

the heavens above, and that in-between were these thick layers of water, so you had the waters above and that's why it would rain sometimes, and you had the waters below and those waters were like lakes and seas. So if you were to jump into the water and swim down deep enough, you'd finally go through and fall to the underworld, this kind of a thing.

So there's this cosmology, a superstitious way of viewing the world in those days that's adding to this. In those days, as strange as it is, most people couldn't swim either. And so you got a bunch of fisherman, they probably can't swim, they're on the gateway to hell, a storm is raging and blowing. It's getting bad, it's getting worse, there's waves coming over, the boat is starting to take on water and what is Jesus doing? He's taking a nap. He's taking a nap.

In all seriousness, it is amazing how often Jesus can just nap, isn't it? The things He can nap in, the ways in which He can relax. But when I see Jesus napping, what I see is a promise. That if we're to be like Jesus, we also inherit some of these traits, some of these character traits.

When we can become the kinds of people who nap in the storm, we're the kind of people who are in sync with the Lord. That is the fruit of faith. Rest, being relaxed, sleeping well, this is the fruit of truly believing and knowing that God has got this. That He's got it under control. That everything's going to be all right.

And of course, what happens. They freak out and they wake up Jesus, and they say 'Jesus wake up! We're going to die!' And Jesus wakes

up and He says oh you little faiths. This is His like prodding name for these.. they're really kids. You little faiths. He rebukes the winds and the waves, and then I like to think He just goes back to sleep. I think what the disciples learned from that is that a boat with Jesus in it is just simply not going to sink.

I want you to know that when you do life with Jesus, actually very often your life will seem more dangerous, more chaotic, more difficult, especially when you first come to faith, you may come under spiritual attack, you may have storms swirling around you, you may have hell bubbling under you, but if you are in the boat with Jesus, no matter how bad it is you can curl up and take a nap next to Him. You can relax. You can enjoy it because a boat with Jesus in it is just not going to sink. Every storm will pass. It'll pass for you, and it'll come out the other side stronger than you've ever been, tougher than you've ever been, more compassionate, kinder and Christ-like than you've ever been. And the goal of the enemy in your life to trip you up or to get you to make some stupid decision, or to say something you're going to regret, you're not going to do those things. You're going to be wise, you're going to be smart and you're going to come out the other side, stronger. That's who you are.

You know that's the thing is surviving storms; this is the irony: surviving storms with Jesus actually removes the anxiety about storms. It's amazing how many times in life when we're afraid for months,

sometimes years that something will happen to us, it finally happens to us, we get through it and we think well what was I so worried about? It doesn't always happen that way, unfortunately, but very often there are things in life that we worry about, worry about and the only time we overcome it is when that thing actually happens.

I don't think that God is always sending storms into our lives, but I do believe that no matter what storm you're in, God will never leave your side. I do believe that no matter what you're going through, God will get you through. And I do believe that if you trust in Him and engage in the word of God and seek out the Holy Spirit, that you'll come through smarter and stronger than you were before.

Sometimes God does send us into the storm, though, did you know that? Parents do that, too, good parents do that. I remember when I was a kid, I actually had a fear of water for a long time, especially the ocean. This is not a good thing when you grow up in Orange County, California, a few miles from the beach to be afraid of water and you're on a boat, fishing all the time. I remember especially waves were the thing that would really get to me when I was about eight-years-old.

One summer my dad, I think he had to be about my age, 37/38. He had seen Arnold Schwarzenegger's movie, what was it called, Pumping Iron or something like that? And in the 80's, of course, you had these huge meathead muscle guys, and it was very popular and so young men were totally into this. So my dad was like working out all the time.

He's my height, 6'3, but I'm 190 pounds; he was 225 pounds. Imagine me with an extra 35/40 pounds of muscle. About 12% body fat. He was working out like crazy. He had no idea those guys were doing steroids, so he was constantly frustrated about how he couldn't get a six pack like they did.

But anyway, he was a big strong man. And I was just skin and bones. I was like a stick figure. I was like Wart from *Sword in the Stone*, remember just like gangly. And so we were at the beach. We went to the beach and I was able to bring a couple of friends with me, and my friends they go running into the water and they're all excited, hey we're ready to go, and there's waves and they're jumping in, I'm like okay guys have fun! They're like Bobby come with us. I'm like no, I'm going to hang out here. And they're like okay. And so they went into the water.

And my dad sees all of this. And you know a father seeing his son embrace cowardice like that was probably galling for him. He looked at me and he said why don't you go out there and play with your friends. I said oh I just, you know, I don't feel like it. I'm just going to hang out here and build a sand castle, enjoy the view. And he's like I think you should go out there and play with your friends. I was like I'm okay. He's like you're afraid of the waves, aren't you. I'm like I'm not afraid of the waves.

And he gets up out of his little folding chair and starts to walk towards me, and just when I realized what he's about to do, I try and

spring up as fast as I can and this giant log of an arm just slowly wraps, and I just kind of, as I'm running, I go huh, like this? Grabs me and picks me up, and I instantly go no! No! And the truth is revealed. No! Please, no! And I am flailing and scratching and clawing and he's just like the Terminator just walking into the lava.

And he's just holding me. He's like you'll be fine, you'll be fine. He's like come on, these waves it's nothing to worry about. Come on. And I remember just being like NO! NO! No please! And I remember, I was so scared for so long and he just stayed out there with me, these waves crashing up against his back. He was just holding onto me, and showing me how to be in the wave, how to swim the wave, how to not be afraid. And I remember just putting my arms around his neck and he was holding onto me, it'll be okay, it'll be okay. You can learn to swim in these waves. You can learn to swim in these waves. Let me show you. It'll be okay. You can learn to swim in these waves. And I'm so glad he did that because later on, we learned to surf and play in the ocean and play in the waves all the time. It freaked me out. I needed a dad to carry me into the thing that scared me.

God does that with us sometimes, doesn't He? But He's not doing it to hurt us or to harm us or to make us feel afraid. He wants to get rid of our worry. It can be a very scary moment, but this moment of breakthrough for us. Maybe that's what God's doing in your life today. Maybe you should have walked away from that job a long time ago and



so getting fired was God's way of walking you into the ocean. Whatever it is you're going through, whatever it is you're facing, I know that God loves you so much more than you could ever imagine. He loves you more than Himself, that's why He gave His son on the cross to die for us. He loves you so, so much. And He will not let you sink. And I want you to know He'll carry you through the other side, and when you get through, if you can learn to just rest and not do anything foolish, and just trust, and not hurry, you'll come through shining like gold. I believe that for you. I believe that for you.

Actually recently I was able to do the same thing with my daughter Haven, who's eight, who's not at all afraid of the ocean. She wanted to go in, she just needed someone to hold onto. And so I carried her in and I remember seeing how small these waves were and how little she is, the little stick figure, and I remember this memory of being her age and doing the same thing with my dad, and I was like these are not big waves. When I was her age, these were tidal waves. And now I'm just standing in them and they're splashing against my back. Someday you'll look at that storm and you'll say that was not as big as I thought it was. You know why? Because you'll be so much bigger than that storm you're facing today.

You will be bigger than the storm you're facing today if you trust in the Lord. Trust in God. His arms are strong enough. He will hold you and won't let you go. Don't be afraid. It'll be all right.

This is what Jesus does. I mean Jesus, He's not afraid to send us into things because He knows we'll be fine. We don't always know that, though. This is when Jesus, I remember in a story, there's this famous line that seems so horrible when Jesus says I am sending you like sheep among wolves. Remember that passage? Doesn't that seem like mean? Why would you send your disciples like sheep among wolves?

Well the truth is that His disciples were the true wolves. He said like sheep, right? I mean you find out in that story, actually the context of that story is this. This is in Matthew 10, so it's right in the middle of the gospels, well before the cross and resurrection and the great commission. And Jesus is teaching His disciples what it means to take spiritual authority over the world they're in, to cast out demons, to heal the sick and to preach the good news of the coming of the kingdom.

And this is what He says. He says don't go to the gentiles yet, you're going to go just to the Jews, your brothers and sisters, your fellow Israelites, and don't take anything with you. Don't take gold, don't take a sword, don't even take a coat or extra clothing, just like as you are, just go and begin to proclaim the coming of the kingdom. Look for a good man in every town you go to, and proclaim peace over his house, and just watch, everything's going to be fine.

And so they go and they're gone for a long time, and they come back and they say it really worked. We cast out demons and we did all this stuff, and we never needed anything. And later in the Luke version

of what we call the great commission, before Jesus is now sending them out to the real big job, to go to the whole world where they're really going to face big monsters, tough things, He says remember back, it doesn't say Matthew 10, but remember back in Matthew 10?

But He says remember when I sent you and I told you don't bring anything? Don't bring any food, don't bring any money, don't bring extra clothes. Did you ever lack anything? And they said never, Lord. Jesus knew this moment was coming, and so the reason back then that He sent them out for nothing is so they would be trained and ready for this moment.

What if what you're going through and all that you're facing is a small step to the great reward that awaits you if you just have courage? If you just stay the course. If you just refrain from foolishness or in the midst of being afraid and embrace wisdom. And what if you just trust in the Lord and believe that in the midst of the storm He can teach you something. Believe it, He can. That whole thing was training so they could be miracle workers. They weren't sheep among the wolves. They were fine.

I think that God is not always about making your situation better. He is sometimes. But He is always about making you better. Always. That is what God is interested in – disciples, disciples, disciples. People who are committed to becoming smart, as strong, as powerful, as loving, as forgiving, as merciful and as wise as Jesus. If that sounds egotistical, I

want you to know that is what Jesus wanted of us. And that's what He intends to do. He can use the storm to help you.

The stress that we face in life, there are so many magazine articles that talk about how bad stress is for you, like how hard it is on your body. But if you actually see the research, you'll actually find out that stress, as long as it doesn't turn into anxiety, that stress is actually good for you. Stress can be really good for you. Stress is the thing that stretches you. It makes you stronger. We just can't allow that stress to become anxiety, worry, constant fear.

In fact, sometimes not enough stress in our life can become anxiety, did you know that? I'm going a little bit on a rabbits trail here, but when we live in a life, and you see this very often, you can see this with like the wealthy, with a number of celebrities and others, that the life without stress can turn into a life of anxiety. That what happens is when nothing bad happens in your life, you begin to try and like figure out bad things that are going to happen. Predict them and keep them from happening. And then what happens is the world begins to sort of shrink around you. You want the world around you to expand? Do things that are scary. Do things that worry you. Do them! Face them! Go on a roller coaster, if you're scared of roller coasters. Do something scary, and watch as that can actually relieve some of the anxiety that you feel in your life.

You know this happened to me recently, (talking about the beach), recently this last summer had the most painful experience of my life. Has anybody here ever been stung by a stingray? Okay, I had one person commiserate with me. Now I've played sports and had things happen to me. I had a piece of glass go through my forearm. I've had burns and cuts and bruises and breaks. Nothing in my life is as bad as the stingray thing I got this last summer. I was on Balboa Peninsula, I was swimming, it was during the summer, I'm coming in from Pier 30 and just as I'm almost out of the water and I'm stepping, I feel (BUMP) in my heel. And my first thought was my heel broke. Like I stepped on it weird and it just broke.

So I start to hobble out of the water like what just happened. I don't know. And then I'm like well maybe it was I got bit by something or it was a jellyfish, and I hobble up to the lifeguard and I look at the lifeguard, there's blood all over my foot and leg, and you guys probably don't want this story, but I'm sorry it's too late, I'm going to do it anyway.

And I look at the guy and I'm like something bit me or stung me, I don't know. He goes it's a stingray. It's really bad right now.. (CELLO PLAYS) what the heck was.. (CELLO PLAYS) that's funny. All right, all right, all right. Steve Velez, ladies and gentleman. Always taking a risk. Thank you, Steve. I know it's not a shark, okay! It hurt! It hurt! This guy!

So I look at the lifeguard, and I look at the lifeguard and I'm like something bit me. He's like that was a stingray. Your foot should be

hurting pretty bad. I'm like it hurts, but it's not that bad. I'm all right, you know, being a tough guy. It did hurt, but not that bad. It was like a six or a seven out of ten. And then I say, I just need to know, like do I need go to the hospital or anything? He's like no, but the venom is going to like get in your leg and it's going to start hurting. And he's like you should put it on hot water. And I was like well I'd like to just hang here. I haven't been here very long, I'd like to relax and maybe deal with it when I get home. He's like that's fine, he's like, but when it starts hurting, just get home and put it on hot water. And I was like well how hot? He said as hot as you can handle, you'll see.

I lay down, it's about two minutes later, I go back to my towel and I lay down for about five seconds, and I'm like ow, ow, oh, ow! And now it's like the place where.. so basically what happened is the stingray stinger can be two and a half inches long. It went through the back of my heel, through the skin, and tapped the heel bone. And then there was like purple veins all over my foot and leg, and so I start hobbling back to my car like this, and it's just someone in the pain center of my brain is just turning that knob all the way up to 11. I never thought something could be this painful or miserable in my life. It felt like someone was taking either bee stings, a mix of bee stings and a frying pan and just pressing it on random spots of my foot and leg, and then the heel part, it was like somebody was taking a screw and just like screwing it into the bone. And

I was literally in my car screaming. When I put it in hot water, by the way, it instantly went away, which was amazing.

But then it was like such a horrible, traumatic experience, I'm like I can't go back to the beach. It's just like when I was a kid. I'm done. And then I'm like no, I'll go back to the beach. I'm just going to do my research. And what I meant by my research was I'm going to find out where the most stingrays have been and I'm going to avoid those areas and go to beaches where there are fewer stingrays.

And then there was something in my heart through the, you know, Hannah and I have been through a lot of suffering. And one of the things you learn is you can't try and avoid suffering again. That's where you lose.

And so what I did, after a couple weeks of not going to the beach and beautiful days and really wanting to, I'm like I'm not going to avoid stingrays. I'm going to go right back to the beach where I got stung. So I went back, I went into the water at the same time of the day, the same beach, the same spot I got stung and I walked around and like did this. You're supposed to shuffle, and I just kind of did a lot of this. And I figured if I got stung again, I'd be less afraid. But you know after that, all of my fear of stingrays went away. But I'm not going to lie, walking into the water was scary.

You see that's the thing, that's what we don't learn about worry. The worry is trying to avoid. Worry is trying to avoid. It's trying to avoid.

We think of like this bad thing happened to me, I'm not going to get burned again, I'm not going to get hurt again, I'm going to avoid it. We need to go right back in. Right back into the water. Right back into the boat. We find that if we shrink away from life, if we try and hide and control the outcomes in our life, our world is just going to shrink. We're going to become more worried and more afraid. Do the things that worry you.

And here's my last thought. You need to face your fears. Well you don't need to face them alone. That's why church is so important. Church is about people supporting each other in scary stuff. Praying for one another, loving one another. That's why friends are important. That's why family is important. That's why bonding deeply with others is important. You're not meant to face your fears by yourself. You're meant to do it with people who love you and care about you and will hold your hand. People like my dad who will wrap their arm around you and go with you.

And that's the good news is that God doesn't just call us to the individual salvation, He calls us to a family that loves us and supports us when we're going through difficult things. I want you to know whatever storm you're going through God's going to get you through! You're going to come through stronger, happier, full of faith, full of joy, full of life. And you're going to become a leader because of it. People trust



others who have been through the storm and people are going to trust you.

Lord, we thank you and we love you, and we trust you with our storms and our struggles, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.