

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

August 20, 2023 "How to Survive a Storm. At some point you have to get up, brush yourself off, and get back at it."

I Intro.

Well summer is unofficially over but we still have the heat. Things are cranking back up and we want you to be a part of this great community. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

II Recap.

We're in our third Sunday of our "*How to survive a storm*" series. And just like when we have to recover from a major weather storm (like we're doing at NCC) when a storm of life rips through our world, there are some translatable truths that can help us both survive and recover from the storms of life. We're looking at the life of characters in the Old Testament to see how they handled their storms, and pulling truths that we can specifically apply to our lives. The first week we looked at the life of Elijah, a prophet of God, and how he had to weather his own storm. In those first few days of the storm, it's finding a safe place to hunker down and take care of yourself. Time will come later to do the work that needs to be done. But when the storm hits, and in those early days, it's just taking care of yourself. Last week we dove into the difficult story of Hagar. It's a tough story that really has no upside at the end. Hagar was hit with several storms caused by others. She began already in a position of powerlessness and at the mercy of others. The one primary truth that came from that story is that even though Hagar's life went in a very difficult direction, she was not a chosen one, God heard her cries, saw her situation, and intervened on her behalf. God was with her.

III Sunday.

Sunday we hit a difficult topic in this ongoing conversation about storms. That is our role and responsibility in our storms, and pivoting to moving forward. Some questions first.

Where do you see your and God's role in your storms?

How do storms affect your relationship with God?

Where have you had struggles and victories in moving forward in your storms?

We'll talk in a bit about the difference between '*moving forward*' and '*moving on*' after the storms of our life, but first let's read the passage and we'll go from there. Read **2 Samuel 12:15-25** first.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

What did you learn from David about the movement towards recovery from storms?

How do you see the role of God in what happened to David AND Bathsheba?

A couple of things before we get to the truth about moving forward from our own storm. First, we have to deal with the passage that *“The Lord sent a deadly illness to the child.”* I don’t know where you stand on God’s sovereignty and control over everything. I’m not making a case for interpreting this in any specific way. What I’m hopefully going to do is create an interpretation for people who struggle with the idea of God actually striking this baby dead. If your belief about God is that EVERYTHING comes from God, good and bad, then allow yourself to interpret this passage in that way. However, if you struggle and just can’t worship a God who would actually strike an innocent child dead, then you trust that some very good scholars have interpreted *“The Lord sent”* as *“The Lord allowed”*. This may feel like a technicality. If God was all powerful why would he allow us. But scholars have understood that ancient people credited God for everything that happened from how it felt, and not making some theological statement. We’re beginning to understand that there is just a brokenness in the world that isn’t directly from God but is just built into living on earth. Second, we have to do some serious work at times to determine if we bear any responsibility for the storms we find ourselves in. There are times in which we are legitimately innocent and aren’t responsible for what happened to us. But this belief about who is responsible for our personal storms should only come after some serious soul searching, and openness to the Holy Spirit to see if there was anything we could have done differently. Not to shame or condemn us. We probably did the best we could at the moment. But for us to learn some valuable lessons for the next time. David had Nathan in his life to help him see what he was unable to see.

B. Here are some specifics about finding the will and energy to move forward.

-How do you, after your own storm, **“Pick ourselves up, take a shower, put some lotion on, and change our clothes”**.

1. Admit loss and continually grieve well.

This is not about grieving the right way. There is no right way. There are healthy and unhealthy ways, but no right way. PLEASE don’t let anyone tell you how you’re supposed to feel or handle your grief. It’s your grief. With wise counsel, good friends, maybe a prophetic voice or two in your life, grieve like you need to grieve. This is about grieving well, which means fully. That means there’s **movement from the storm to the new reality in your process of grief**. David almost had to convince the people around him how he handled this tragedy. From the child’s sickness to his death. Grieve like you need to grieve...but fully grieve.

2. Ground yourself in the reality of your storm.

A part of this is the admission and confession we saw from David. Some storms are not of our doing. But we still need to do the work of deep introspection to see what responsibility we may own in our own storm, or how we handled the storm. There must be actual physical movement and response to the admission of what happened. This is the **feelings vs reality tension**. You’re going to have lots of hurt feelings. Then there is this reckoning with the reality of what actually happened. It’s seeing and embracing the reality of whatever storm you faced and using that in your healing.

3. Have good support around you.

David being king had his court to tend to him. But it’s important to have people who can say the hard truthful things. And to be there as you summon the courage and will to move forward. You need people in your life that care about you, have your best interest at heart, you trust them, and they have

permission to say the true things supportively. But if you've had storms in your life, my guess is in some way you might hold some responsibility for what happened. Doesn't mean you're the one who caused it. It may mean you might have been better prepared, or made some unwise choices in the middle of your storm. Best way to recover is to lean on others who can see things you don't.

4. Develop healthy, healing self-care practices/rituals.

There is a lot of conversation about what self-care is, and how we actually practice it. David had a very specific ritual that moved him from a period of mourning towards the next stage of becoming healthy again. ***"Pick ourselves up, take a shower, put some lotion on, and change our clothes"***. Rituals, new practices, recognizing milestones and marker moments are important in the process of moving forward. Coming up with specific rituals, practices, routines, that will help you take care of yourself, and help you to grieve well.

5. Embrace hope.

David and Bathsheba lost their child. There was nothing that could replace that loss. No additional child, or ANYTHING, could take the place of what they had lost. Hope wasn't; *"oh you can have another child."* **Hope is the belief that there is wholeness and a new reality on the other side that still holds the significance of the loss, but there is and will be a new life.** Hope is only found in really difficult times. In the middle or cleaning up after a storm. Hope is born in the same realization Hagar had. That our God is a ***"God who hears our cries and sees us."*** Hope that we are not alone, it is not all over, there is a new life out there for us. And with the help of God to do the work in that new direction.

IV Challenge.

Okay, this was a lot. And probably hard to take it all in. The one primary take away from the story of David, is at some point there will have to be this intentional pivot towards moving forward. Not moving on. You're not going to completely get over the storm you went through. But a conscious decision to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and begin to put one foot in front of the other. This is what David did after the death of his child. And this movement towards rebuilding is an act of resistance and a declaration of hope. That no matter how devastating and life changing the storm was, we can still move into a new reality. No final question. Just rest in the assurance that every storm is survivable. We just have to be willing to pick ourselves up.