

Encounter Church
Sunday December 10, 2023

God With Us
God in the Storms

Matthew 1:23 “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.”

YES!!!!, God is with us, no problems, no struggles no difficult times, no storms!

God is with us equals not storms in life!

HERE’S THE BIG PROBLEM WITH THINKING THIS WAY!

When there’s a difficult times that blows up out of nowhere. A STORM of betrayal, divorce, sudden death, depression, addiction, cancer, financial struggles, raising your kids, loss of job, adultery, bad report from the doctor.

If I think, God is with me, no storms in life! Then when there is a storm, God is not with me!

Where is God? Why did He allow this? Why doesn’t He do something?

Never let the presence of a storm cause you to doubt the presence of God!

John 16:33- “In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I’ve conquered the world.”

Matthew 7:24-25- “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock.”

The Bible never teaches that you’ll never have a storm in life!

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN THE PRESENCE OF A STORM?

On June 26th 1986 around 5:00am Hurricane Bonnie made landfall in Port Arthur, Tx. At the time I was a rookie Police Officer with the Beaumont Police Department.

A man in the Bible named Paul was also in a literal storm while aboard a ship. I can’t imagine because it was a really bad storm with strong winds.

I believe there are some spiritual things we can glean from the experience of Paul.

IF YOU'RE IN A STORM OR YOU SENSE A STORM IS BREWING.

1. Don't Lose Hope

Acts 27:20- "When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved."

THEY GAVE UP ALL HOPE!

Your marriage isn't going to make it. I'll always be single. I'm never going to get out of debt. **ALL HOPE LOST!**

I'm never going to have a child! No way I'll ever graduate! I'm always going to be depressed! **ALL HOPE LOST!**

The relationship between me and my son or daughter will never be healed. My kids will never be saved. I'll always live paycheck to paycheck. **ALL HOPE LOST!**

AND THE STORM RAGES ON AND ON!

AND THEN YOU HEAR THESE WORDS: "I TOLD YOU SO!"

Acts 27:21- "No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, "Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss."

Paul is saying, "I told you so!"

We want to blame the storm on the devil when we made a bad decision.

Your best friend tried to tell you. Your daddy tried to tell you. Mama tried to tell you. Your fortune cookie tried to tell you. Your Pastor tried to tell you not to depend on those fortune cookies!

Maybe that's why they gave up hope. Because it was a decision they made!

But there were some on that boat that it was not their decision to be on that boat. Yet they were going through the same storm!

How many of you have been in a storm because of someone else's decisions?

Your parents got a divorce. Your spouse committed adultery. Your child got addicted to drugs or alcohol. The company you worked for made a bad decision.

DON'T LOSE HOPE!!!

2. God is with you in the Storm

Acts 27:22-23- “But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me,”

Paul said, “I told you so.....BUT.....an angel stood beside last night!”

In the storm friend, angels are around you and God’s Holy Spirit is within you and goes before you!

Never let the presence of a storm cause you to doubt the presence of God!

Psalms 16:8- “I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.”

It’s all about who is with you in the boat! Sometimes we’re like the disciples and don’t recognize this.

Jesus is sleeping in the same boat the disciples are in when a violent storm arises on the Sea of Galilee.

The disciples are screaming while Jesus is dreaming....in the storm!

Don’t lose hope friend, God is with you in the storm!

**PEACE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF A STORM.
PEACE IS FOUND IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS.**

And Jesus had said, “Let us go to the other said.”

3. Trust what God is saying and has said.

Acts 27:25- “So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.”

Faith is not in what I see. Faith is in what God says!

**You can’t control when the storm hits. How the storm hits and how long it last.
But you can control where you place your faith!**

You can’t control what people say and do.

But you can control who you listen to and what you say!

WHAT GOD SAYS WILL HAPPEN!

Never let the presence of a storm cause you to doubt the presence of God!

Psalm 46:1-3- "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging."

CONCLUSION: He is what I need! He is my safety! My strength! My comforter! My Source! My redeemer! My Sustainer! My Provider! My Assurance! My Salvation!

Peace isn't found in the absence of the storm! Peace is found in the presence of a good God!

"Immanuel, God with us!"

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message?