

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Storms of Life

Introduction

The Bible frequently refers to the tempests that fall upon nature. God's word also describes the storms of life that fall upon the righteous, and the crashing waves that overwhelm the wicked.

Fall Upon Nature

The Song of Deborah and Barak, celebrating Israel's victory over the Canaanites, says, "The stars fought from heaven, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The torrent of Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent Kishon. O my soul, march on with strength" (Judg. 4:15-16; cf. 5:19-21). Elihu, the friend of Job, affirmed that God stands behind the storm (Job 37:5-13). Demonstrating his supremacy over the forces of nature, Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves, saying, "Peace, be still!" Immediately, the wind died down and it became perfectly calm (Mark 4:35-41).

Fall Upon the Righteous

Job decried his present state of humiliation, saying, "You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride; and You dissolve me in a storm" (Job 30:20-22). Near the end of the book, God answered Job out of the storm, rebuking the afflicted patriarch for his ignorant accusations (Job 40:6-9). Nevertheless, if not in time, then in eternity, he delivers men from manifold storms of life (Job 42:10-17; cf. Ps. 107:23-32).

Fall Upon the Wicked

God will deal with the wicked: they as straw before the wind, and like chaff which the storm carries away (Job 21:17-18). In his judgment upon his enemies, God is like a whirlwind, a fire and a tempestuous storm (Ps. 83:13-18). The consequences of rebellion are likened to a dreadful storm and a calamitous whirlwind (Prov. 1:24-31). God's judgment upon proud sinners is like a storm of hail and a tempest of destruction (Isa. 28:1-2). Jehovah's greatness is seen in his creative acts and his catastrophic judgments (Isa. 40:21-24).

Conclusion

God offers defense for the helpless and needy, a refuge from the storm and a shade from the heat (Isa. 25:4-5). The Lord comforts the storm-tossed (Isa. 54:11-13).

Jesus Christ, the Lord's Branch, offers shelter, refuge, and protection (Isa. 4:2-6). In Israel's glorious future, her king would reign righteously and her princes rule justly, each serving as a refuge from the wind and a shelter from the storm (Isa. 32:1-2). Christ is the foreshadowed King (John 1:49). The princes prefigure those who faithfully oversee the flock (1 Pet. 5:1-2).

Jesus said, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Heaven is a place of perfect tranquility. God's throne is surrounded by a sea of glass (Rev. 4:5-6; 15:2). No evil disturbance will enter that glorious realm (Rev. 21:25-27).

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life (Heb. 6:13-20)? Do you know the peace of God that passes understanding (Phil. 4:6-7)? Obey God so you can enjoy his protection as you face the storms of life. Submit to his will so that you may escape the storm of eternal torment.

- Mark Mayberry
Via *Truth Magazine*, April 20, 2005

Their Tongue, A Sharp Sword

So said David of his enemies: "My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword" (Psa. 57:4). "Swords are in their lips" (Psa. 59:6). He further said, they sharpen "their tongue like a sword" (Psa. 64:3). You may see Psalm 35 to learn how they cut and slashed David with their lashing lips and tart tongues. Job, too, experienced the same (Job 30).

Part of the ploy and plot of the Pharisees against Jesus was performed with the slanderous swords of wounding words (Luke 20:20; 23:2). John said that Diotrefes unjustly and unfairly accused him "with malicious words" (3 John 9). Nothing has changed. Enemies of the Son of God continue to torment and torture with their tongues, just as the Just One said they would (Matt. 5:11, 12; John 15:18-21; 16:1-3).

When evil men arise in a congregation to defile, divide, and destroy, their first weapon is a burning tongue dipped in poison. It is a fiery dart from an inflamed heart. The "poison of a serpent" is "under their lips" (Psa. 58:4; Rom. 3:13). Friends of a lifetime, yea, of a generation, are alienated. Bitterness breeds and brethren bleed. Glaring eyes and cold,

sharp, harsh features take over faces which once glowed with the warmth of love, the soft sweetness of kindness, and the gentleness of friendship. Alas, though, that countenance is fallen and in its place is the mask of Nabal and the cosmetics of Jezebel, doing their best to do their worst.

No one is immune from this demonizing, bodily takeover. Preachers, elders, their wives, any and all may fall prey and be victimized by pride, envy, jealousy, and arrogance. When they are, their tongues clang and clank as metal, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit of God's people. It is a raging metamorphosis characterized by every evil work (Jas. 3:13-18).

Psalms 64 forecasts the doom and downfall of all such tongues and taunts. Unfortunately, the highway to heaven will be scarred with the scattered skeletons of those who fell by the wayside, having been cast aside by a "tongue like a sword."

- Larry Ray Hafley

Turn It Around

"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country!" This challenge, made famous during the Kennedy presidency, suggests a like principle which should guide every Christian's attitude toward the church. We should be less concerned about what is being done for US and more attentive to what we are doing for others.

Ask not, therefore ...

... whether this is a good congregation to be a member of, but ask whether I am a good member of the congregation.

... how much I am loved, but how much love have I shown.

... how many get well cards I received, but how many I have sent to others.

... who visited me, but who have I visited.

... how much I get out of classes, but how much I contribute to make the classes interesting and edifying.

... whether I was remembered in prayer, but whether I faithfully prayed for others.

... who did or did not speak to me, but how many others I greeted.

... whether my good work is recognized, but whether I have given honor to whom honor is due.

... how many of my prayer requests God has granted, but how grateful have I been for His innumerable blessings.

... to what extent my deeds have profited me now, but how my life will be remembered when I am gone.

“Look not every man on his own thing, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Phil. 2:4-5; Matt. 20:28).

- David Pharr

Who Should Teach?

As a faithful member of the church, you need to be impressed with the great opportunity and responsibility you have to teach another person the word of truth that you have learned. God wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of truth (1 Tim. 2:4). How will that happen? Since it is by the preaching and teaching of the gospel, God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), that people are saved (1 Cor. 1:21), Christ wants all of His disciples to be teaching it to others (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; 2 Tim. 2:2).

Why You Should Teach Others

- You are a Christian. You have been created in Christ Jesus for good works (Titus 2:14). As a matter of fact, you are to be "zealous" for them. If you are not accomplishing any of them, of what value are you to the Lord? Every Christian is expected to bear fruit (John 15:1-6).
- One of the greatest joys a Christian can have is that of teaching and converting another person (3 John 4).
- You will be following the example of Jesus. He loved people (John 15:13). One of the ways He showed that great love was by personally teaching men and women the truth (Luke 19:10).
- Christ commanded it in the great commission given in Matt. 28:18-20. Those who have been taught and baptized are, in turn, to teach others.
- You will be following the example of the first century Christians who "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Not even persecution stopped them from preaching the gospel of Christ.
- You will be considered a faithful Christian because faithful children of God are to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2).
- Self-preservation. Teaching others is vital to your growth and development as a child of God (Heb. 5:12-14). By constantly teaching others you maintain an interest in spiritual things.
- You can increase the teaching power of your local congregation. Though members might differ as to knowledge and/or ability, all should be actively teaching (1 Cor. 12:12-27). At the present time, though, you may feel your knowledge is too limited and that you cannot possibly teach someone else. If you knew enough to become a Christian, you know enough to tell others what you did and why you did it.

- It is the greatest work in the world-saving a soul (Matt. 16:26). Nothing else you can do lasts forever. Your efforts in teaching others can have an eternal impact on their lives and yours.

Who Can You Teach?

Prospects abound. They are all around you every day. You need to heed the instruction Jesus gave to His disciples in John 4:35 and "lift up your eyes." Here is a short list of some who need the gospel: your family, relatives, neighbors, fellow-workers, fellow-students, members of clubs or other organizations of which you belong, and anyone who is not a Christian!

Conclusion

Every one of God's children should be willing to share the precious gospel with others. If the lost are going to hear the truth, they must hear from those who know it. Let each of us resolve to do our part and reach out to those who need us. Let us all be sowers of the word.

- Gene Taylor

- > "There's a new and improved computer available. It combines a word processor and a food processor. It is really helpful for those times when you have to eat your words!"
 - > "Prejudice is being down on things you are not really up on!"
 - > "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel!"
 - > "You can't direct the wind, but you can adjust your sails!"
 - > "Those who love bring their children up. Others let theirs down!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: *"The Struggle for the Doctrine of Christ!"* (Text: John 5:39-44); Sunday evening: *"Plagues in Egypt!"* (Psa. 78:42-51).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)