

Storms Don't Last Always, Thank GOD!!

So have a Fresh S.T.A.R.T.

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"Storms Don't Last Always!"

There is a young woman, whom I will call Patty and while I was learning about her life, I had a combination of emotions. As a parent,

1. Hurt, because, as a child, she went through so much,
2. Exhilarated, because she didn't allow her storms to keep her down,
3. Excited and inspired, because she used her storms as stepping stones to get to where she is today.

Patty, is one of three children, all older than she is. Her mother, a single mother, was an alcoholic and seldom worked. They ate wherever and whenever they could find food. Patty says, after her siblings left home, she and her mother lived from place to place, and often on park benches or, if they were lucky, in homeless shelters. She dropped out of school at the age of 15, and when she was barely 16, her mother told her she had to leave, that she didn't want her anymore. Homeless, alone, hurt, devastated, Patty lived on the streets, protecting herself the best way she could.

A middle aged woman came to the park every day, bringing sandwiches, chips and water. At first, she didn't seem to notice Patty, probably because she was one among so many needing food and water. But one day, the woman asked Patty if she would like to come home with her. She lived on a huge farm, and the excuse she used to get Patty to come, was that she needed help cleaning her house, grooming the horses, and feeding the other animals.

At first, Patty was suspicious and turned her down. She had been through so much on the streets, and she had built a shield around herself for protection. We work with the homeless, and I've heard stories of the dangers, the homeless face, often ending in death. We can understand Patty's hesitation and concern.

Finally, she figured she had nothing to lose, so she went home with the lady. From that day on, her life changed. It didn't happen overnight, of course, it took time. The woman enrolled Patty in high school and she took her to church. Patty

graduated high school with honors, even went to college and graduated there with honors, also.

Patty was saved; she received Jesus Christ as her personal Savior, was baptized in Jesus' name, and filled with the Holy Ghost!

She's a prominent figure in the community now, at the age of 34. She wrote the book called, "Storms Don't Last Always", a story about her life. She used her suffering as stepping stones, and did not allow the hurt to make her bitter.

As we look at our text today, we will learn that storms are temporary, and we can use the storms in our life to make us better, as testimonies to help others who may be going thru a storm. Let's look at two types of storms today. There are others, but we will focus on only two.

Natural Storms: I've been thru many natural storms in both Mexico City and here. I've even been in my automobile and I've walked in the middle of hurricane Juliette. I've heard rain pelting on the roof, large hail pounding against the window panes, lightning opening up the sky, winds so strong that I was afraid that the trees would be uprooted, and the roof would come down, but no matter how tremendous the storms, they did not last always. There's always an ending. When the storms end, the air is cleaner than ever, and it looked like the sun was never so brilliant. Listen: It seemed like the storms purified and cleansed the air. They don't last always.

Physical Storms: Then we have physical storms. Storms of sickness, storms of joblessness, storms of financial bind, and storms of losing loved ones. Mighty storms. Tremendous storms. Storms that will knock you to your knees. Listen: When you are in the midst of one of these storms, it seems as if the bottom is going to fall out, it's relentless, and that the storm will never end. Have you ever felt like you're in one of these storms by yourself? You felt all alone...and Listen: Like nobody is there for you? When you are going thru one of these storms, I want you to remember that: "...Jesus will never leave you, nor forsake you." Jesus will be with you in and throughout your storms! Go ahead and cry. It's alright to weep and moan. But when it comes morning, get up, wash your face, brush your teeth, comb your hair. Remember: "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." When the storms are over, the

songwriter says, "When the storms of life are raging, stand by me!" When you're going thru your storms, tell Jesus to stand by you!

Let's go to our text, to the Scriptures.

Mark 4:35-41.

"On the same day, when evening had come, he said to them, Let us cross over to the other side. 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him, and said to Him, Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing? 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Jesus had been teaching the Word all day long, and when it was evening, Jesus told the disciples it was time to go to the other side. If we go to Mark 5th chapter, we learn that Jesus had work to do. We procrastinate and put off until 'tomorrow' the things that we need to do today. We shouldn't allow nothing hinder us from serving and working for the Lord.

In verse 37, we find that, **"And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling"** The disciples had spent lives fishing, and it would seem that they would be used to storms, but when the storm arose, they panicked. They didn't know what to do. They were helpless in the midst of this fierce storm. Why were these men afraid? They thought they were going to die, and they thought that Jesus wasn't aware of the storm.

I can imagine that the ship was tossing and turning, and the rain was beating down upon it. I can imagine that it probably looked like it would surely capsize. Think about the storms in your life: The bills past due, the unemployment check just about to run out, and you haven't found a job. Think about the loss of a loved one. These are terrific storms. Your ship is tossing and turning...the waves are beating upon your boat, and it seems like it is just about ready to capsize. That's the way the disciples probably felt. Listen: If your ship has Jesus in it, it

cannot go under. You have to hold on to Jesus and don't let go. Remember: Storms don't last always."

And this year, 2009, spared us from natural storms in La Paz but brought lots of storms like the world financial crisis, the swine flu, the war on drugs and many more but it's about to end.

Comfort yourself in the Lord!

FRESH START

Colossians 3:12 - 17

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Now, there should be no misunderstanding in that.

Believe it or not the following announcements actually appeared in various church bulletins. They highlight misunderstanding and will undoubtedly give you a chuckle.

- 1. Don't let worry kill you—let the church help.**
- 2. Thursday night—Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.**
- 3. Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.**
- 4. For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.**
- 5. The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.**
- 6. This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the**

church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

7. This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the alter.

8. The service will close with "Little Drops of Water." One of the ladies will start quietly and the rest if the congregation will join in.

9. Next Sunday a special collection will be taken to defray the cost of the new carpet. All those wishing to do something on the new carpet will come forward and do so.

10. The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the church basement Saturday.

11. A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

12. At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Those are misunderstandings.....

But what did Paul mean when he said: **"as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."**

To answer that, let me ask you this.

What happens when you put on old clothes?

They just feel the same don't they?

"What are you wearing?" "Oh, just the same old clothes!"

But what happens when you put on new clothes?

You feel good....you hold your head a little higher.

People notice too....."Oh you have new clothes, nice shirt, nice pants...."

That's what Paul meant when he said: clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

To have a fresh start, you have to be a new person, you have to put on new clothes, you have to walk the walk and talk the talk.

If we are going to enjoy the kind of relationships Jesus wants us to experience, then we need to re-clothe ourselves with virtues that come from a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 43:18-19

**18 Do not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.**

**19 Behold, I will do a new thing,
Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.**

18 “Do not remember the former things”

how do you get a fresh start?

I want to share with you a formula for starting over.

S.T.A.R.T.

S – Stop making excuses.

If I want a fresh start in life, I have to stop making excuses for my failures. I've got to stop blaming other people. I've got to stop seeing myself as the victim of my circumstances.

Proverbs 28:13

**“He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”**

T - Take An Inventory Of Life

You need to take an inventory of your life. That means I need to evaluate all my experiences. I need to look at what I have left after the failure. I need to take an inventory of my life's experiences and learn from them.

Galatians 3:4

"Have you suffered so many things in vain---if indeed it was in vain?"

I hope not. I hope you'll remember this and pass it along.

A - Act in faith

You have to venture into new territory.

The Bible says that the key to changing anything is faith.

If you want to change your circumstance, it takes faith.

If you want to change your personality, anything in your life, you have to have some faith.

Matthew 9:29b

"According to your faith let it be to you."

That is a very simple but powerful statement.

That means we tend to get out of life what we expect.

"According to your faith let it be to you."

If we expect things to always be grey & dull, they always will be.

"I wish that hadn't happened! I wish I could change that. If only I could go back, reverse the clock and redo history," and you're rehearsing and regretting, you'll not only make yourself miserable right now, you're setting yourself up for more of the same thing in the future.

The way you set yourself up for more failure is by focusing on past failures.

Whatever you focus on you tend to reproduce in your life. "According to your faith it will be done unto you."

R - Refocus

I need to refocus my thoughts if I want to change my life.

If I want to get going again, if I want a fresh start, I need to rethink the way that I think.

I need to change my mind about a number of issues.

Proverbs 4:23

"Be careful how you think. Your life is shaped by your thoughts."

Start thinking things like...: "I may not get that job promotion I want, but that only means that God has something better for me."

My kids may be hard to control right now, but one day soon, they will learn, God will bring em back."

I know right now we're just barley making ends meet, but God said he wants me to have a more abundant life...and I believe him.

Romans 12:2

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

T – Trust

Trust God to help you succeed.

Depend on Him.

Not on others or yourself.

God will put others that can help you in your path.

We've already proven that we can't do it on our own. That's why we've failed. do not dwell on the past.

19 "...I will do a new thing"

All of us have made mistakes in our lives. We have done things that should not have done.

The fact of the matter is, we can't turn back time, we can't go back a year, a day or even one second that has already passed.

Listen to what God is saying to you.....He says "I want you to have a fresh start in life, I want you to have a new beginning, I want to do something new in your life."

Here's proof:

John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Jesus says "I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly."

What does that mean?

A bunch...Jesus said because of me, because my father loves you so much, he wants you to have the best of the best.

He wants you to have more.

More love for one another, more kindness to you and from you.

He's also speaking financially, more at work, more in relationships, more from your kinds, from your parents, every part of life.

Then Jesus says to watch out,...because there is someone out there who wants you to fail and will stop at nothing to make sure that happens...

He goes on to tell us that there is an adversary, called the Devil, that seeks to steal, kill and destroy that life.

The Devil will remind us of our past in order to keep us from enjoying the life that God gave us to live.

The Devil does not want you to have a fresh start in life.

John 10:11- 12

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them."

Aren't you glad that God wants to do something new in your life?

Doesn't it make you excited to know that God desires to give you a fresh start, a new beginning in life.

What all of us here need this morning is a Fresh Start, a New Beginning with God.

According to **Isaiah 43:18a** The Lord says, "**Do not remember the former things**" Do not think about the past. Instead, look at the new things I'm going to do.

Listen to what God is saying in this verse.

Forget about what's happened before. He says don't think about the past. It's over. The book's closed on it.

When you bring up what he said or she said, it opens up an old hurtful wound that is harder to heal.

We are in the time of season to where all old things are going away and the new things are coming.

The year is ending, the weather is getting colder, and holidays are coming up.

Our lives, your life is like a year.

At first we are born, (New Year)

Then we experience love (Valentines Day)

Then we feel a tug from God in our life and realize that one man died for us, took on the world gave his life for us that we could live forever and escape the wrath of God. And we are saved, born again. (Good Friday & Easter)

Then, this is where the enemy steps in, once Satan hears of this he tries to change our life and get us to lose our focus on God...
(Halloween, celebrating the dead)

Then as we realize that we are going through a backslide, we become thankful and get more of a loving spirit in our hearts. (Thanksgiving)

Then at last we celebrate the birth of the one who saved us. (Christmas)

So, back to the original question,
Success in the Christian life is not trying harder, but living smarter.

Giving God control of your life.

Zechariah 4:6b
“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,
Says the Lord of hosts.”

Regardless of what kind of failure you had in the past.

You may have had a financial failure, or maybe a relational failure You may have had a moral failure.

Maybe you just plain and simple Blew It...and you may have made some decisions you're so ashamed of and hope nobody ever finds out about.

Regardless of the failure you've had in your life, here's how you start over.

Stop making excuse
Take an inventory of your life
Act in faith
Refocus your thoughts
Trust God

With the most important being the last. **Trust God.**

There's no misunderstanding what God wants for you.

What are you going to do for him?

Lets pray,

Father, we pray to you for wisdom, understanding guidance and courage so that we can have a fresh start in this new year, where we can use each and every past experience and suffering as stepping stones. Help us know and act upon the intelligence that we can be and should be comforted by You, only. Also we pray to you, Father, for your protection and blessing in the week we are starting and wisdom and love to be closer each day, among us and with you, our God. We ask all of this in the name of our Lord Jesus, amen

GOD bless you all!!