Is it just me or does it seem like there is a lot of hatred, anger and division in our world today?

And if that weren’t difficult enough, many of God’s people have or are facing “storms” of some sort…

* Surgery
* Relationship issues
* Financial problems, etc…
* We sure faced a weather storm yesterday!

Jesus is well aquatinted with the “storms/troubles” in life…

And it is from that knowledge that He is able to encourage us today… Matthew 6:34.

Just think about how much more could get accomplished if we did what Jesus said and did not spend our time on worrying about what “might happen”?

Worry & fear are enemies of “Biblical Christian” living.

They have a crippling/paralyzing effect, don’t they…? Which keeps us from obeying God’s Word… thereby keeping us from God’s best…

Trouble sure has a tendency to come upon us suddenly… doesn’t it…? The Truth is “life is filled with “storm zones”…

The cause of these storms are too numerous to try to address today… Suffice it to say, they come in all sorts of shapes and sizes.

My wife was having a dumpster fire of a day at work one day last week…

Then she stopped by Sister Linda’s and had forgotten that Linda has the most ferocious guard dog’s on planet earth!

The Dachshund (AKA lovable, adorable, Hot Dog) She was caught off guard and almost had a “wet clean up in aisle 2”…

Please understand this… If you’re facing a difficult storm right now, I’m not down playing or minimizing what you’re going through.

Storms are:

* Very real
* Very intense and
* They can be very painful and troubling.

Is there a way to “calm even the most difficult storms” we face? I believe so… yes…

By living a “Biblical Christian” life of faith, rather than a “cultural Christian”.

If you weren’t here for that message last week, I encourage you to watch it later on Facebook.

A life transformed by the Word and the Holy Spirit of God (rather than the ever changing culture) will greatly minimize the amount of “self-inflicted” trouble & storms there are to face.

It is clear to me that God, the Father’s goal, is to reduce and even eliminate the storms we have or will face…

When a storm pops up quickly what do we do?

We cry out to God to “calm our storm”, we even cry out to God to calm the storms happening to others that we know and love… Amen?

Let’s open your Bibles to Matthew 8:23-27

Where we find Jesus, out for a boat ride with His disciples out on the Sea of Galilee…

Let’s pray…

Read - Matthew 8:23-27

Several hours earlier…

As soon as Jesus came down from the mountainside, having delivered the greatest sermon of all time in Matthew 5-7…

Where He taught His followers what Heaven will look like when they allow it to shine thru them on earth.

Then in chapter 8, before the event we just read about on the lake… Jesus also “calmed the storm” in the life of others:

In V18-22, Jesus cautions some “wannabe” followers that He is not the pathway to worldly success or a life of leisure, but the way to Heaven.

Yet… isn’t it the disturbance of comfort, ease, and worldly success that cause “storms to begin brewing” for some followers of Jesus today?

Some begin gathering “storm clouds” and “throwing lightening bolts” as soon as:

* They sense things are not going to go their way, or
* Something happens that they disagree with

What might Jesus say to such people who possess such faith? Matthew 8:26 “You of little faith…”

Chapter 8 reveals Jesus’ response to many levels of faith…

* Jesus PRAISED the “kneeling faith” of the poor leper.
* He was ASTONISHED at the great “asking” faith of the wealthy Centurion (he did have a servant).
* But He was less than impressed with the faith of His own crew… those who rode with Him…

Caution! Storm warning! In Matthew 8:11-12 Jesus said there will be many air quote “religious people” who believe they are hanging with Jesus…

They appear in the kingdom of Heaven (because they have believed in obeying the letter of the “Law” (10 Commandments)…

But remember what Jesus said to the rich young ruler who boasted about his performance? Great! Now go sell everything you own and give the money to the poor…

“Keeping the Law” as a means to Salvation, devalues Jesus…

It nullifies the need for the Messiah, that God sent to die for our sin… so we could allow the Law that Jesus came to fulfill, to be visible in our life through a love relationship with God Son, Jesus.

When one’s conflict with God has ended thru a love, “faith” based relationship with Jesus, the Son… it is possible to maintain peace and joy in the midst of life’s most difficult storms.

Love is really the whole point that Jesus is driving home here in Matthew 8.

The Greek word for “faith” is “pistis” and it means:

* Reliance upon Christ for Salvation
* Constant/steadfast/trustworthiness (unwavering)
* Belief/fidelity/loyalty

That sounds like love to me… That is what faith is rooted in… “love”.

But when we get to…

* The disciples “little faith” (Matthew 8:26) and
* The “trembling faith” of the demons (Matthew 8:29)

We don’t experience love… we experience a faith that has been rooted less in Jesus and more in something else… and that “something else” has failed the disciples.

We all know folks like that, don’t we? Who just use God as a “last resort”. When life gets too out of control… and all else fails… PRAY!

Jesus didn’t live that example…

Jesus was sleeping in the midst of the storm…, how?

I believe we find that same “calm faith” in Abraham in Genesis 22:7-8 as he hiked his only Son Isaac up Mount Moriah to lay him on the altar of sacrifice as God instructed...

Abraham loved and respected God enough to trust Him and do what God said, no matter how difficult…

Then in Genesis 22:12… God provided! Jehovah Jireh!

We need to put His name (Jehovah Jireh) on every square inch of this building and grounds…

There have been storms in this little churches 30 year history… But God…

We trust and believe that Jehovah Jireh will always find a way.

Therefore, we can maintain joy and peace in the face of whatever “storms” may come our way. Both individually and collectively.

The “storms” of life are both a;

* Temptation from the enemy: Tempting us to let go of faith and obedience to God’s Word… To try everything and everyone else first to try and stop the storm).
* It is a test from God. To remain obedient to God’s Word. Making us more obedient and ready to “calm” the next “storm”.

And to INSPIRE others to faith and helping them remain calm in the midst of the storms they face.

James 1:2-4 – “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

Sounds like Jesus in the boat…

Let’s stand as the praise team comes up for our closing song!

* Jesus is a “winner”!
* He was possessed by the “winning Spirit” of God!
* The winning mission of God had ahold on Him!

How about you? What would Jesus say about your faith today?

* Kneeling faith?
* Trusting/believing faith?
* Little faith?
* Trembling faith?

Does your faith show you remaining strong/calm during the storm you face, and reproducing that loving/calm/caring faith in others?

Or does your faith “panic” and “cry out” because everyone and everything you’ve tried has let you down…?

Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea and it became calm (Matthew 8:26) – the disciples were amazed; “even the winds and the sea obey Him” (Matthew 8:27)

Jesus is strong enough to “calm your storm” today…

Turn to Him now as we sing: Turn your eyes upon Jesus