

# HEAR MINISTRIES

**Sermon for Sunday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

Text: Job 38:4-18, Romans 10:5-17, Matthew 14:22-33

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***Prayer:** Lord, we desire to know the Truth of Your Word this morning. Clear our thoughts, minds and hearts of anything that is distracting us, and help us to listen to what You would have us hear this morning – it may be different for each of us. Teach us, Lord, for we want to trust and obey You. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing in Your sight, our Savior and Redeemer. In Jesus name. Amen.*

When I was growing up I remember a few times when there was a severe storm warning or a tornado warning. My dad had made a long table from wood that was pretty low to the ground, and whenever there was a storm warning my sisters and I would have to go into the basement, crawl under that table and stay there until the storm passed. I was actually thinking of that table recently when straight-line winds hit our place, splitting several trees and blowing siding off our house. In both cases I remember feeling a certain amount of anxiety about what damage the storm might cause.

Have you ever felt battered by nature's storms? Or maybe other kinds of "storms"?

Life is full of storms...unexpected challenges, trials and difficulties that shake our faith and test our endurance. We heard from our Scripture readings this morning that Job, Paul and Peter experienced physical storms as well as storms of life.

Many people experience storms in different areas of life: financial struggles, health crises, family conflicts, spiritual battles or emotional distress. These storms can create fear, doubt and anxiety, making us feel abandoned. However, God's Word assures us that He is always with us, even in the midst of the storm. He says through Isaiah, *"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you cross rivers, you will not drown. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned, nor will the flames hurt you."* (Isaiah 43:2)

**This morning we will look at three men in the Bible who faced storms, how they responded and, most importantly, how God, who is the sovereign authority over creation, calls us to trust Him even when His ways and purposes are beyond human understanding.**

Storms are inevitable, but they do serve a purpose in our spiritual journey. Trials test our faith, but they also strengthen our trust in God. No matter how fierce, every storm has an end.

Turn to the back of your bulletin and look at the Old Testament Reading. In the book of Job we see suffering, faith and the sovereignty of God. Here in v. 4-18, we get to witness a powerful moment where God responds to Job out of a whirlwind, challenging Job's understanding of the universe and his place within it. This passage reminds us of God's authority over everything and the limitations of human understanding.

This passage in Job is what he and his friends had actually been waiting for! They have been hoping the Lord will break His silence and set things straight, answer their questions, and reveal the "why" of what is going on in Job's miserable life. However, it is important to see how the Lord does NOT answer the questions Job and his friends have been wrestling with. He ignores Job's complaints and claims of innocence and refuses to support the accusations of Job's friends!

Job is often the book people turn to in the hope of finding an answer to suffering, and to understand the Lord's role in all those struggles we have in life. What is God doing? What can God do? When will He do something? What is He trying to do? Why does God allow/put up with/bring suffering? These are all very difficult questions.

The first place we as humans go is toward the idea that "good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people." This is the argument of Job's three friends. They figured Job must have done some terrible thing to be in the midst of such terrible suffering! Job even falls into the trap of this thinking briefly. Human nature turns us in this direction, but God turns us back, just as He did with Job in v.4-18.

Truthfully, Job doesn't really answer any of our questions and neither does the Lord in His address to Job. The fact that the Lord answers Job is a great gift of love and mercy, but He does NOT provide the answer Job seeks. Rather, God teaches Job about the relationship between God and man; who God is and who man is in relationship to Him. In the verses right before our Old Testament Reading, God essentially says (and I am paraphrasing), *"You want to question me, Job? Stand up, be strong like a man, I have some questions for you!" (Job. 38:1-3)* I don't think this is quite the direction Job thought things would go!

The Lord begins His questioning concerning the creation of the world. God had a plan and implemented it, but no man, certainly not Job, was there to witness it. The inference is clear: How can you question the Lord when you have no knowledge? You weren't even

there! The Lord continues questioning Job later in chapter 40:2, so here He is just warming up! And, Job has no answers.

Why does God even bother to show up and question Job? God is teaching Job concerning who he is and who the Lord is and what their relationship to one another is. This is the important thing for Job (and us) to grasp, not the nature of the suffering. Job isn't given the answer he sought but he IS given the perspective he needed. We need to have this perspective as well when we face trials, suffering and the storms of life. This passage challenges us to trust God's purposes even when we cannot see the "why" of our circumstances. If God has authority over all of creation and everything in it, we can certainly have the confidence in Him to trust that He keeps His promises and will protect us and help us to weather any storm that comes along. It is about our relationship of trusting in Him, not questioning Him and demanding an answer for WHY we are suffering.

How we react to life's difficulties many times determines the outcome. If we panic, we tend to create more chaos. Fear paralyzes faith, but trusting in God brings peace. (*Psalms 56:3*) Trying to handle things ourselves often brings more difficulty but prayer invites God's intervention and fills our hearts with peace. (*Philippians 4:6-7*) Holding onto God's promises assures us of His presence and deliverance. Even in the midst of the storms, we can praise the Lord. (*Like Paul and Silas in Acts 16:25-26*)

Paul emphasizes this in Romans 10:13, where he says, "*For whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*" This extends to all who seek Him, emphasizing the universal nature of God's grace. Think of the story of someone finding faith in a moment of crisis by calling out to God, experiencing immediate comfort, and beginning a journey of recovery and faith. An individual struggling with addiction may have reached a breaking point, and finding comfort, begins a journey of recovery and faith. The simplicity of confession and belief provides hope and a clear path to establishing a relationship with God. Paul says, "*Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*" (*Romans 10:17*)

In fact, Paul himself had a crisis of faith when God intervened in his life on the Damascus Road. Paul knew he didn't deserve any goodness or grace from God as he had been killing and persecuting the Christians – in a sense, working against God. But, the Holy Spirit showed Paul that God is a gracious and compassionate God, showing grace to all who, by faith, believe in His Son.

In our Romans reading today, Paul contrasts the "old way" of following the Law with the "new way" of faith in Christ. He explains that the Law was a guide to life, but true righteousness comes through faith in Jesus, who is the "seed and "Messiah" promised in the Scriptures. Here we see that God's plan for salvation is accomplished through His

chosen means, and that human effort alone cannot achieve it. Paul realizes that TRUST in God's redemptive work is the main thing, even though what is happening may not make sense to human reasoning.

Then we have Peter in our Gospel Reading. He certainly experienced the physical storm as well as a crisis of faith. (Matthew 14:22-33) Take a look at the Gospel Reading with me on the back of your bulletin.

It had been a busy day for Jesus and His disciples. They had ministered to the crowds of people all day long as Jesus taught them the Word of God. Then they witnessed the feeding of the 5,000 with just five small loaves of bread and two fish. When evening approached, Jesus sent His disciples away by boat to the other side of the lake

Why would Jesus do that? Well, the first reason might have to do with the crowds Jesus had just fed. In John 6:15 we learn that the people were so excited by the miracle of the bread and fish that they tried to take Jesus and make Him their King. Jesus knew His time had not come yet, so He sent the disciples away to remove them from that kind of thinking. Also, Jesus did not want them to get caught up in the frenzy over miracles. It seems the people only wanted to make Jesus a King because He gave them bread. (John 6:26) It seems like people today are the same. I mean, think of the masses of people who will vote for the person that offers them the most money or benefits or good things.

Even more importantly, Jesus sent the disciples away so He could spend some time alone with His Father in prayer. He needed to seek His Father in prayer for strength, refreshment and because He and the Father were one in their relationship. What a wonderful example this is for us!! We, too, should be people of prayer, seeking the Lord at every turn in the road of life.

Additionally, Jesus knew His disciples were still filled with doubts and unbelief, despite the miracles they had seen Him do. Jesus uses this storm that came up on the lake to reveal to His disciples His deity and power one more time. I think Jesus was also praying for the disciples struggling with the boat in the storm on the lake below Him. Jesus didn't abandon His disciples and He won't abandon us.

How do I know this? Well, notice how Jesus ministered to His disciples on that stormy sea. First, He offered them His Presence. They were not left to struggle alone. Jesus came to them using the very waves they feared as His way of reaching them. (Matthew 14:25). Secondly, He offered them His Peace. Even though the disciples thought He was a ghost and were terrified, Jesus walked on the water close to the boat so they could see it was Him. Isn't it true of us, that when we encounter storms in our lives, Jesus is probably right

there by us but we don't even recognize Him because we fear the storm and don't see Jesus in it! Jesus whispered to His disciples, *"Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid."* (Matthew 14:27) In essence, He is saying, *"Don't worry.....I'm here.....take a deep breath and calm yourselves."*

Finally, Jesus offers the disciples (and us!) His Power. He just walks up to the boat on the waves and gets in! When He does, the waves instantly cease. One moment they are in the midst of a raging sea and the next they are on a calm sea at their destination! That is the power of our Lord Jesus Christ!

If you are in a storm today in your life, you need to know that the Lord can calm the winds and waves. He can still your storm.....OR He can still YOU in the midst of your storm.

A man named John Ortberg wrote a book entitled, "If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat." In it, he poses this question: If you were in Peter's place, or any of the other disciples, what would you have chosen to do? Stay in the boat or walk on water?

It's a great question. Would we choose to remain in the relatively safe and secure confines of the boat, or would we step out in faith to be where Jesus is? The disciples' story is our story. The struggles and storms we face are essentially the struggle between fear and faith.

Another question John Ortberg proposes is this: What is the "boat" you are choosing to stay in? If you want to know what your "boat" is (meaning the "safe" place you hang out so you don't have to trust God and step out in faith), take a look at what you are trusting in for safety and security. What is it that you are afraid of? It could be money, people, failure.....the list is endless really. Asking ourselves, "What is it that most produces fear in me, especially when I think of leaving it behind and stepping out in faith to something new?" is the beginning of a journey to conquer our fears and, like Peter, get out of the boat and put our FAITH in Jesus.

Did you notice that Peter was able to walk on the water, conquer his fear, as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus? As soon as he looked down and saw the waves and the wind and the storm, he started to sink. Taking our eyes off Jesus will have that effect in our storms as well. Faith falters when we fix our eyes on circumstances rather than on Christ.

This morning we have seen three men in the Bible who faced storms, how they responded and, most importantly, how God called them (and us!) to trust Him even when they did not understand His ways and purposes. We have seen how Jesus TRUSTED in God the

Father's direction and He OBEYED His Father's commands. He modeled for us how to respond to the storms in nature and in life.

What should our response be to the Word of God for this morning? In Jesus' words from *Luke 10:37*, "*Go and do likewise.*"

**Amen.**