

A dramatic landscape featuring dark, stormy mountains under a heavy, dark sky. Several bright lightning bolts are striking the peaks and valleys, illuminating the scene. The foreground shows rugged, rocky terrain with some sparse vegetation.

**TITLE:**

**“ FACING THE GREATEST TEMPEST OF OUR L**

## Scripture Reading : Matthew 8:23-26

And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

**24** And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, in so much that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

**25** And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

**26** And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Likewise, in our own personal lives, we face storm surges, sometimes, even the most powerful storm of our lives.

Jesus said that we would all face the storms of life. Life is not easy. Storms of our lives are many and varied.

What must we know when we are facing storms of life?

# 1. Know who you are

**Matthew 16:15-19**, 'He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

When we declare, 'thou are the Christ,' we are like Andrew who said to Peter, 'we have found the Messiah'; Philip who found Nathanael and said, 'We have found him of whom Moses wrote,' and Peter who said to Jesus, 'you have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.'

**Firstly,** we need to totally believe or know that Christ is the Savior of the World, savior of my life.

**Secondly,** the idea is the exercise of stewardship and authority in the household.

Jesus said to Peter, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.' We must recognize the distinction between πέτρα and πέτρος. The distinction is well known; the former meaning "a rock," the latter "a piece of rock," or "a stone. Christ is the cornerstone, the ROCK. We are a piece of rock or a stone.' The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ. But we are the living stones that made up the church. We are not just given stewardship but authority over the church that Christ has entrusted us.

The ancient Greek word ekklesia was not primarily a religious word at all. It just meant a 'group' or 'called-out group'.

**Thirdly** the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. Hades is from the word, 'to see' and therefore invisible. It equals the Old Testament word 'Sheol'. The 'gates of Hades' can refer to:



- A. The idea of a city of death from which no one escapes
- B. A city council meeting held at the gate
- C. An active scheme of evil against the Church.

**Deuteronomy 32:8-9** which says, 'When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.'

'The gates of hell' is the machinations and powers of the invisible world. In ancient times the gates of fortified cities were used to hold councils in, and were usually places of great strength. Jesus' expression of the phrase 'gates of hell' means that neither the plots, stratagems, nor strength of Satan and his angels, should ever so far prevail as to destroy the sacred truths in the above confession. Jesus said, 'they will not overpower the church.' Their active assault to gain control will not succeed.

**Fourthly,** we are given the keys. The keys are the proclamation of the Gospel

**Fifthly** we can bind and loose. In the TEV version, it is translated as prohibit and permit. These are rabbinical terms used for legal decisions of permitting or not permitting something. It actually means what we human, led by the Holy Spirit decide on earth about spiritual matters will have already been decided in heaven.

## 2. Take up the shield of faith

The first thing that Jesus addressed when the disciples faced the greatest tempest of their lives was, **'And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?'**

**Ephesians 6:16** says, 'Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.'

The term 'shield' is related to the Greek word for 'door'. It refers to a large 4" by 2" full-body shield. It was made of wood with leather coverings surrounded by metal. It was soaked in water before battle so as to extinguish the fire-tipped arrows. It was symbol of full protection. It had hooks on the side to link up with other shields. Faith is represented as a shield, protecting us from the fiery darts of the wicked one, those persistent efforts of demonic foes to weaken us through fear and unbelief.

This faith is faith in God as our Father, in Christ our Redeemer, in the Spirit our sanctifier and strengthener. Is there sin in your life? The Holy Spirit is your sanctifier. Is there weakness in your life? The Holy Spirit is your strengthener.

David said in **Psalms 7:10**, 'My shield is God Most High.' There are two kinds of Christians in the church. Those whose shield of faith is God the Most High. Those who has no shield at all and easily fall out of favor with God and into temptations. The second group is very dangerous. If we fall for temptations and start to enjoy and nurture the temptation, David warns, 'whoever is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble give birth to disillusionment

### 3. Trust in Jesus the Savior

**Matthew 8:24-25**, 'And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.'

Sometimes the storms in our lives appear without warning. Yet Jesus was in the boat with his disciples sleeping when 'without warning, a furious storm come up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat.

If you continue reading on the passage in **Matthew 8**, having shown his authority over the elements (the tempest), he goes on to demonstrate his authority over evil powers by freeing the two demon possessed men. Jesus was far more concerned about people than possessions.

When Jesus is in the boat, it only means a few truths.



**A. Jesus will be with you in the storm**

**B. Eventually, Jesus will calm the storm**

**C. Faith is developed in the storm, not during the calm**

**D. If Jesus is in your boat, you have nothing to fear**

**E. Only in the storm do we truly understand who Jesus is**

In conclusion, many of us complain, lose our faith, forsake God, go back to our old lifestyles and quit church altogether. But Jesus showed he is concerned for us, demonstrated by His coming to earth, 2000 years ago. And he said it so clearly: It is not the well but the sick that needed help. He has come to seek and save that which was lost. We are in that category. Then he went through the greatest storm of our lives, for us, by going to the cross of Calvary which was also the greatest storm of his life. And he did not come out defeated but victorious for our sake. Therefore we can be victorious.

Because he has conquered the storm of our lives for us. And he said so clearly, 'all power is given unto me', 'lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the end. You can be rest assured that you are not going through this life alone and going through the greatest storm of your life alone. But more than that, he said that you will come out of this greatest storm of your life, victorious as just he came out of the cross, victorious. So he says to you, 'Peace, be still. Know that I am God. And I am with you.' Just come to him and surrender your storm to Him.

