

Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

Lesson 66 – Storms of Life

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Storms (problems) of life are inevitable. Some come in with great intensity, while others are more measured. One thing is certain; there is no escape from storms. In reality, we would not want to escape them, even if we could. It is through problems and the *overcoming* of them that we grow spiritually and find our greatest challenge and fulfillment in life.

Jesus told His disciples,

Luke 6:47-49 (KJV) – Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

In the parable of “The Wise and Foolish Builders”, Jesus taught an important principle; God is not in the business of taking away our trials and problems. When the storms come, He uses them to help strengthen and build our character.

Many Christians think that because the man, in this parable, *digged deep and laid the foundation on a rock*, surely the Lord did not, nor would He, let the floods come in the first place. They believe they have the right as Christians, to expect God to take the storms (problems) away. Sadly, some become Christians with that false expectation. Freedom from problems is not what Jesus is teaching in this parable.

Check it out; Jesus said plainly that the stream *beat vehemently upon both houses*. Storms will come to those who have built their lives upon the Rock, the Word of God, as well as to those who have not done so. The difference is in the

outcome of the storm. The house built upon the rock was strong and therefore withstood the storm. The storm could not shake it. Jesus (the Word) is the only foundation that is *secure* and will help us withstand the storms of life. God tells us throughout the scriptures that we are not to fear in difficult times.

Isaiah 41:10 (NIV) – So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Fear of Storms, the Real Cause

When we get right down to it, is it really the storms or problems in life that we fear? If we were to stop and analyze the *cause* of our fear, we would have to conclude that it is not the storms that come against us that frighten us, but rather our supposed *inability* to cope with them. We just do not think *we* can handle the problems which life throws at us. In those situations, fear seizes us, because our roots are too shallow. If our roots were strong and went down deep like the Palm trees, for example, we would bend, not break when the violent storm comes.

Brothers and sisters, we grow and become strong when we face the trials and problems of life *with Christ*. With Christ on our side to strengthen us, the problems do not defeat, nor do they destroy us.

When we leave God out, *not hearing* His sayings or *doing* them, we are living on sandy ground, left to face life’s problems alone. Stubbornly trying to fend for ourselves, bitterness sets in, causing us to see injustices that we believe life has heaped upon us. From this vantage point, we step out of love and begin dealing cynically with other people, viewing them as enemies, not to be trusted. We doubt their goodness, as well as the goodness of God Himself.

When we give in to the pressures that arise, it is a clear sign that our strength is limited.

Proverbs 24:10 (KJV) – *If thou faint in the day of adversity, Thy strength is small.*

Parables, From the Natural to the Spiritual

As we further study the parable of, “*The Wise and Foolish Builders*”, keep in mind, Jesus did not just throw around parables to entertain the crowds. He never dealt in abstract, intellectual theories. His desire was to arouse their attention, to inspire them to move beyond the surface to dig deeper into His Sayings. Jesus came into the world with a mission; He took upon Himself a flesh body and lived among us, so we might become acquainted with His divine nature.

What was His method of instruction? He simply took the earthly things people were most familiar with, to *awaken* their inquiry, to lead them from the natural, physical world, to the spiritual kingdom of God. Jesus was adept (skillful) at revealing heavenly things through earthly examples. In His teaching He used every phase of nature to illustrate the truth of kingdom living. He used the powerful force of *storms*, a very familiar subject to His listeners, to illustrate the parable of “*The Wise and Foolish Builders*”. Through this parable, Jesus laid out the essential truth necessary for the spiritual development of our character. *Strength, in the midst of storms, comes through hearing the Sayings of Jesus and doing them!*

As we put into practice this awesome truth, it will enlarge our capacity for knowing God; equip us to stand strong during the storms of life, so that we might live for the glory of God. The parables of Jesus are timeless, and they continue to benefit us.

Matthew 13:34-35 (KJV) – *All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*

Jesus Lived What He Taught

Jesus did not avoid the problems of life. A dark *storm* was brewing and He knew it in His Spirit!

Staying in close communion with His Father in Heaven, He was intensely aware that the time was drawing near when He would soon be crucified.

Luke 9:51 (KJV) – *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.*

Jesus knew it was urgent that he get to Jerusalem to present Himself as the Messiah. Despite the looming storm awaiting Him, He trudged on. In the Garden of Gethsemane He struggled within Himself, knowing He must be ready for the sacrifice He was about to make.

Luke 22:41-43 (KJV) – *And he [Jesus] ... kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

Jesus demonstrated the course of action to take when confronted with a storm in life. He knelt down and prayed for *strength*, in the depth of the *storm*, to overcome the flesh and successfully carry out the Father’s Plan. Jesus calls us to share the task, to build on the rock, to be *wise* and face the storms of life in the Spirit of Christ. Amen.

Questions for Personal or Group Study (Please do not mail to CA for grading)

1. Do we have the right as Christians to expect God to take our problems (storms) away?
2. What foundation does Jesus teach us to build on, to ensure strength to endure the storms of life?
3. God tells us not to fear in difficult times. How does God use the storms of life to bless us?
See: Isaiah 41:10
4. When we leave God out, and fend for ourselves, bitterness often sets in. How does bitterness affect how we view other people and God Himself?
5. What essential truth did Jesus deem necessary for the spiritual development of our character?
6. How did Jesus confront the storms of life?
See: Luke 22:41-43