

This is the story of Christmas. God sent His one and only son, Jesus as the Christ, Messiah, and savior to our broken world. God became flesh and dwelt with us.

**Matthew 1:23 NLT “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”**

This Christmas season, we have learned that God is with us always, in the good times and in the bad times.

- God is With Us Through the Valley. We May Enjoy God on the Mountaintops, But We Get to Know Him Intimately in the Valleys.
- God is With Us In the Wilderness. We Experience God in the Wilderness and Discover Our Deepest Need Becomes A Gift When It Drives Us To Depend On God.
- Today let’s talk about **God With Us In The Storm.**

I don’t know about you, but I’ve had my full share of storms. I wouldn’t care if we never had another hurricane again. I hate the loss of life, the property damage, the displacement of families, and I personally don’t like living without electricity.

But we really can’t complain when we see what happened to West Louisiana and East Texas this year. My family in Orange and Bridge Texas have seen two storms this year that took almost identical paths inland.

We get a lot of warnings when there is a tropical storm or hurricane coming, but the tornado’s often times take us by surprise. When we lived in Norman, Oklahoma it was common to hear the tornado sirens telling us to take shelter.

**Not matter what type of storm, it’s always amazing how quickly they can blow in.**

So, it is with life. Some days it’s sunny. Some days fair and partly cloudy. And then without warning a storm blows in. Storms of betrayal—Divorce—Depression—Addiction—Cancer!

*Some of you may have even experienced an unexpected storm on your way to church today!*

Storms in life cause a lot more damage than just property damage. It’s very easy during these storms to wonder, “Where is God? And why would He allow this storm to come into my life?

Why doesn’t he do something about it?” But here is a storm principle for us today:

### **Never Let The Presence Of A Storm Cause You To Doubt The Presence Of God**

An inland storm is bad enough, but a storm at sea has to be worse. This is what the Apostle Paul experienced in **Acts 27**. Paul, being a citizen of Rome, had appealed to Caesar upon his arrest. He was taken as a prisoner on a ship to Rome that experienced great difficulty and storms on the journey.

**Acts 27:9-20 Paul warned them, 10 “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.” 11 But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. 12 Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.**

**13 When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14 Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. 15 The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16 As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, 17 so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. 18 We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to**

**throw the cargo overboard. 19 On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.**

**20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.**

### **We Gave Up All Hope!**

- Maybe you are here today and you have given up all hope that your marriage can be saved.
- Maybe you've given up all hope that you will ever get married, "Single the rest of my life!"
- Maybe you've given up all hope and even quit praying that your children will be saved.
- Maybe you've given up all hope on even being able to have a child.
- Maybe you've given up all hope that you will ever get out of debt.
- Maybe you've given up all hope on ever graduating or getting a job.

And the storms continue to rage!

**Next Step To Make A Difference: This week ask yourself, "What have you given up all hope on and why did you give up?"**

**Acts 27:21 After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss.**

As spiritual as Paul was—He's wasn't above saying, "I told you so. If you had listened to me—You wouldn't be here."

When storms hit our lives, we like to blame everything on the devil—The devil caused this storm.

**But can we just admit that a lot of the storms that we face in life are just because of a stupid decision!**

- I'm in a storm because I spent too much money. I mouthed off. I wasn't considerate. I procrastinated. I didn't listen and dated an unbeliever.
- Mama told you, your best friend told you, and your Pastor told you, but you did it anyway! You made a bad decision that resulted in some storms that make you want to give up.

Maybe this is why they gave up all hope. They were in the storm because of the decision they made!

*It is easier to believe God will get you out of a storm —if God allowed you in.*

*It's more difficult when you got yourself into it!*

For others here today, maybe you are in a storm, that's not your fault or caused by your bad decisions.

For some of the crew on the boat in storm with Paul, it wasn't their fault! Some crew might not have wanted to keep sailing into a storm, but that decision was made by someone else! The pilot and the owner of the ship decided for them. (v.11) Verse 12 says, "**the majority decided that we should sail on.**"

**You may be going through a storm today because of someone else's dumb decision.**

- How many of you have been in a storm because of someone else?
- Careful—awkward with person sitting next to you.! Your parents got a divorce. Your company made bad decisions. Your spouse walked out on you. You trusted someone and they led you into a stormy situation.

### **Take Courage in The Storm; Have Faith In God**

**Acts 27:22-26 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'**

**25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.**

**26 Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."**

In more ways than you can imagine—God is with you in the storm!  
Angels surround you—Paul said an angel stood beside him! God’s Holy Spirit dwells within you!  
The Holy Spirit is always with you comforting and guiding you. God hears your prayer, your cries for rescue! Don’t forget that. **Never let the presence of a storm cause you to doubt the presence of God.**

### **The Lord Will Stand By Your Side and Give You Strength**

In a letter to Timothy, Paul talked about a storm that hit his life when his gospel message was strongly opposed. At first it appeared that Paul was totally alone, but he wasn’t.

**2 Timothy 4:16-18 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.**

**17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth.**

**18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

It’s often hard to see in a storm. But if you don’t see anyone else with you, always see Jesus.

**Psalms 16:8 I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.**

### **Who Is With You In Your Boat?**

**Matthew 8:23-26**

**23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.** (If you follow Jesus, you will never have any storms in your life... wrong.)

**24 Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”**

**26 He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?”**

**Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.**

***Peace is not the absence of a storm. Peace is found in the presence Jesus.***

**Acts 27:23-24 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’**

- Church, you can’t go down in the battle because you have another battle to fight.!
- God is not finished with you yet!
- You have more people to bless, more opportunities to give, more people to point to Christ Jesus!

David said in **Psalms 118:17 I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done.**

Janet Life Group Winter Quarter 2021, **“The Girl’s Still Got It”!** Because “Girl, Jesus is still with you!”

### **God Will Use What You Learn in a Storm to Help Someone Through Theirs.**

I love how our community pulls together in storms. How much more should we be doing that to one another in the storms of life?

**God will use what you learn in this storm to help someone through theirs.**

- You’ve survived cancer—Help someone else fight it with faith.
- You’ve overcome unfaithfulness in your marriage—You help others forgive.
- You climbed out of debt—Tell others it can be done.
- You’re 178 days sober—Tell others Jesus will set you free!

## Faith In The Storm

**Acts 27:25** So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

***Faith is not in what I see—Faith is in what God says!***

You can't control your situation, can't control when the storm starts, how it hits, the path it takes, or how long it lasts.

You **CAN'T** control what people do—What people think.  
You **CAN** control who you listen to—What you say.!

Where are you going to place your faith?    What God says will happen!

**Psalms 46:1-3** God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.  
**2** Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, **3** though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

So, what's the weather going to be tomorrow?

What, where, when and how will the next storm hit us?    We have no idea. But this we know:

God is With Us In the Storms.

He is what I need. He is what you need. He is our safety, our strength, comforter, and source. Jesus is our redeemer, sustainer, and provider. He is our assurance and our salvation!

**Never let the presence of a storm cause you to doubt the presence of God!**

**Next Step To Make A Difference: This week I will memorize and encourage myself, and others, with this truth. "Peace isn't the found in the absence of a storm. Peace is found in the presence of a good God."**