

GROWTHguide

FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 22, 2016

“Calming the Storm”



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Habakkuk 1:5; Luke 8:22-25, Psalm 22:1-5, Philippians 4:13, James 5:14-16, Psalm 23

REFLECTION AND STUDY

DAY 1

What do you do when you need a miracle? Maybe your rent is due and payday can't come soon enough or someone you love has a devastating diagnosis. Sometimes we pray for a miracle, but nothing seems to happen. How about when you pray and pray for a miracle, and it comes and you begin to question whether it was a miracle or just "luck." In **Habakkuk 1:5** the prophet writes, **"Expect a miracle!"** Maybe the reason why so many of us question the validity of miracles is we aren't expecting the miracle to come.

- When you pray do you expect a miracle?
- How has God answered your prayers in the past. Reflect on your answered prayers.

Praise God for answered prayers. Ask forgiveness for when you took answered prayers for granted.

DAY 2

Read Luke 8:22-25. Jesus instructs the disciples to push off from the shoreline and move the boat to the other side. As the journey begins, he decides it's time to take a nap. Sudden squalls on the Sea of Galilee were not uncommon. As seasoned fishermen it is likely the disciples had encountered storms on the sea before and yet this one created the greatest depth of fear. Their faith was weak but they did the right thing by turning to Jesus. Jesus' call to faith is also a call of reassurance that God is aware of the storms we are going through and is watching over us. During the storms of life we wonder if God has left us to fend for ourselves.

- Do you ever think God has left you to fend for yourself?
- How much faith does it take to turn to Jesus?

Pray that you would turn to Jesus in your weakest moments. Thank God for watching over you through the storms of life.

DAY 3

At the foundation of this miracle story in Luke 8 is trusting God. God never promised our lives would be empty of pain, disappointment or storms. What God does promise are the resources to journey through the raging waters. We have a choice in life. We either choose to allow God to be God, or we try to usurp His role and be the ones in control. If we try to assume God's role we will fail. We don't help God, God helps us! Some of you are sick and tired of being sick and tired. When you say, "Lord, I give up. I'm tired of trying." The Lord says, "Great! Now I can get something done. As long as you're out there trying to solve it on your own, I'm going to just sit back and watch."

- How often do you try to do things on your own?
- When was the last time you were sick and tired of being sick and tired. What happened?

Thank God for His power and resources. Ask Him for help with whatever you're facing in your life right now.

DAY 4

Read Psalm 22:1-5. What do you do when your life gets so crazy find yourself asking, “Why? Why me Lord?” The answer to this question lies in your ability to have *faith* that God will most assuredly help you get through your situations. It’s easy to be faithful as long as life is moving in the direction we want. It’s those times when you are in the darkness, the deepest hurt, discomfort and disappointment that tests what faith one really has. True Christianity is to know Jesus and trust in Him, to rely on Him, to admit that all of our strength comes from Him. That kind of faith pleases God, and is the only channel through which the power of God flows into our lives. It is what Paul meant when he wrote, **“I can do all things through Him [Christ] who gives me strength.”**

- Do you ever ask, “Why me Lord?”
- Why is it more difficult to trust God during difficult seasons?

Pray and ask forgiveness for times when you have not trusted God. Commit to trust and rely on Him even when things don’t go “your” way.

DAY 5

Read James 5:14. James says that the prayers offered in faith will make the sick well again. And yet, sometimes that doesn’t happen. On Sunday Pastor Bob talked about his experiences over the last 16 years praying for the sick and suffering. Out of thousands of people he has prayed for, only three of them were miraculously healed. But about 95% of the time the prayers were answered just exactly as he asked. Sometimes we are afraid to pray boldly and ask for a miracle. Sometimes we pray and when things go just as we asked, we forget God was the solution. We wonder if it was really our prayers that made any difference. Sometimes we think we just got lucky. About 5% of the people Pastor Bob prayed for didn’t get better at all; they got divorced, were unable to have children, died or suffered the loss of a loved one. Sometimes our prayers seem to go unanswered. It’s that 5% that really bothers us, isn’t it? Is that fear of an unanswered prayer the reason we are afraid to ask for miracles?

- When God answers your prayers to routine requests do you remember to thank Him?
- Do you ever wonder if your prayers are making a difference?
- What do we do with the 5% of prayer that doesn’t go as we asked?

Thank God that we can come to the throne with our prayers and petitions. Ask God to help you trust Him with your prayers and to give you the faith to pray boldly, expecting a miracle.

DAY 6

As human beings, we are susceptible to illness. We live in a world filled with disease; our bodies are fragile and not made to last forever. God gives us doctors, nurses and people to surround us when we are ill. We have the Holy Spirit living inside of us and we always have hope but the truth is, people are going to die. Some die sooner, some later. It’s not that God doesn’t love us, but that He also created a world where He isn’t always going to intervene miraculously and stop the natural course of things—that’s not His promise. But, what He does say is, “I’m never going to leave you...even though you are going to walk through the valley of the shadow of death I’ll never forsake you.” He doesn’t promise you won’t walk through the valley, He says, **“I’ll walk with you always, until the end of time.”** Read **Psalm 23.**

Pour out your praise that you will never be forsaken, not even in death.

DAY 7

Today is your "Sabbath" and a time for reflection. How has God been speaking to you over the week? Use what the Lord has said to you to remold and reshape your life. If you are having trouble hearing God’s voice, slow down or even stop what you are doing so that the busyness of life’s demands do not squelch the whispers of God’s language of love upon your heart.