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Kingdom Ministries & Counseling Center

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April 2014

Riding It Out (A Tale of Two Storms* Part 2)

In our last issue we presented the idea that there are essentially two types of metaphorical storms we face in life. One type of storm is the kind that must be stilled, while the other is one we must endure. The first storm we discussed is the one Jesus spoke to and stilled (Mark 4). Unlike the disciples, Jesus recognized that this particular storm was setting itself up as a barrier to the will and purpose of God. It was a storm or hindrance that needed to be addressed and removed in order to fulfill God's purpose on the opposite shore. The disciples' cry for help, "Lord, don't you care if we drown?" was neither an effective prayer nor one of faith. In fact their "prayer" had no effect on the storm or the threatening circumstances. Jesus demonstrates that this type of storm and others like it must be addressed directly and spoken to with His authority and power because it represents something contrary to His Word and will.

But what happens when you speak to a storm and it doesn't stop? What then? It may be time to batten down the hatches, hold on, and get ready for a rough ride. This kind of storm may be one you have to endure. As we begin, let me encourage you to take some time to read this passage and allow yourself to ride along with Paul and engage with the text by thinking and

feeling what it might have been like to go through this bad to worse experience. Secondly, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you as you observe the lessons in this difficult and seemingly hopeless situation. Let's see how the Apostle Paul dealt with this type of storm in the account recorded in Acts 27 & 28.

The Apostle Paul, now a prisoner accompanied by a personal Roman guard boards a ship, along with a group of other prisoners to sail from Caesarea to Rome, Italy, where he was to stand trial. By the second day, after leaving the city of Sidon, they began to encounter heavy winds. They continued north but stayed on the eastern and then northern side of the island of Cyprus for protection until they reached the city of Myra where they changed ships.

The second ship they boarded was heading for Italy but the wind was so heavy it would not allow them to hold their course so they landed on the southern side of the Island of Crete. Instead of waiting it out or sailing the northern route along the Asian coast, the ship's captain and the centurion decide to continue on, despite Paul's prophetic warning of disaster (27:10). By now they had lost a lot of time and the sailing had become dangerous.

While they waited it out, a gentle south wind began to blow. Thinking there

was a change in weather, they set sail again along the shore of Crete toward their destination. Not long after they were underway, a wind of hurricane force swept down from the island. Their efforts to stay on course were futile and they were forced to surrender control of the ship to the prevailing northeastern wind and were driven along toward the southern side of the small island of Cauda, just off the coast of Crete, where they had come from.

If you've ever tried to hold down a rubber raft in the wind or while bouncing across a lake in a fast-moving ski boat you may be able to understand how difficult things were starting to get for these sailors. But this storm was just warming up! The high winds and rough sea created a struggle to keep their lifeboat aboard. After they secured it back on the ship, they proceeded to use heavy ropes to surround the hull—the main of the ship in order to *keep it from coming apart*. At the same time they were concerned about running aground on the shallow sandbars in the area so they lowered an anchor to drag behind them in order to slow down and minimize the potential impact. Even with an anchor in the water they continued to be driven along by the wind.

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Kingdom Ministries 2014 Event Calendar

Schedule of Local Training Events

Track Two: Kingdom Power & Prayer

April 12 — Equipping 204: Citizens & Soldiers: Corporate Prayer & Spiritual Warfare

Track Three: Free to Free

May 17 — Equipping 301: In and Out of Bondage: Inroads to Captivity & the Path to Freedom

June 21 — Equipping 302: Leading Others to Freedom, Healing & Restoration

July 19 — Equipping 303: A Team Approach to Personal Ministry & Discipleship

August 16 — Equipping 304: Mental Illness & Atypical Responses to Personal Prayer Ministry

September 6 — Equipping 305: Understanding & Helping Those with Dissociative Abilities

November 15 — Prayer & Ministry Support Team Training for Churches, Ministries & Small Groups

Other Dates to Remember

September — Vision 20/20 Annual Gathering Event

October — TREK, Canada

Register Now...



April 12 — Equipping 204
Citizens & Soldiers:
Corporate Prayer & Spiritual Warfare
Registration is \$35
Call: 559-226-2750, or go to:
www.kingdomministriesintl.org



Keith Martens, M.Div.
Executive Director

Need some help? If you're ministering to someone and would like some help in leading others to freedom in Christ, we're here to help! Schedule a free consultation and training session with the person you're praying for and ministering to. For more info please contact Carrie at 559.226.2750 or email us at kingdommail@kingdomministriesintl.org.

From Bad to Worse

The next day, things were so bad they began to throw the cargo (a means of income) overboard. While some may have been singing, "The sun will come out tomorrow," the next day's weather got so bad they were forced to throw the ships tackle and equipment overboard as well. *For many days* there was no sight of the sun or the stars to navigate by as *the storm continued raging*. At this point everyone was giving up hope of being saved. We all know how NOT encouraging it is when someone says, "I told you so" in a situation like this, but that's exactly what the Apostle Paul does! After his less-than-inspirational opener, he goes on to give a prophetic encouragement that was more than likely received with wholehearted skepticism: "I urge you to keep up your courage because not one of you will be lost, but only the ship will be destroyed." I can



“Faith is a confidence based on what God has said, desired, and willed, not on circumstances or in the ability to believe enough”

just hear the others saying, "Yeah, sounds good. But really?! How could he say such a thing at a time like this?" Or, "Who does this guy think he is and why should we listen to him?" Paul then goes on to explain that during the night an angel sent by his God appeared to him and told him so. I'm sure that went over well.

Paul describes how the Lord's spoke to him 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." Paul then adds, "Keep up your courage, ***for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.***" "Oh yeah, and by the way, we are going to crash near some island! Alrighty then,

carry on everyone!" Here Paul characterizes the very essence of faith (Hebrews 13). We can see that faith is a confidence based on what God has said, desired, and willed, not on circumstances or in the ability to believe enough. For the Apostle, his shipmates, and for us as well, this is the turning point in the outcome of the storms and circumstances we face even though things were or are about to get worse.

Up until this point, *they*, including Paul, had *lost all hope of being saved*. The *word of God* had come through an angelic messenger. It became the basis for Paul's hope and the certainty of things not yet seen. There was still a lot of travel and storm remaining to endure. Along with his confidence in the faithfulness of God and the reliability of His Word, the Apostle later writes to testify to *the importance of corporate prayer* for turning the tide that will result in his deliverance from continued trials and near death experiences (2 Cor. 1:8-11).

You would hope that things would change right after an angel appears to tell you that everything is going to be okay despite the warning of a few bumps and bruises along the way, however, the storm continues and things even get worse. It's now close to midnight on their 14th day at sea. Somehow, at this point, the sailors sensed that they were getting close to land and began to worry that the ship would be destroyed if it were to crash into the offshore rocks. They decided it best to lower their anchors and wait until morning. Meanwhile some of the prisoners tried to escape by pretending to lower an anchor but instead were lowering the lifeboat so they could get away. After Paul reports their activity to the commander, he gives them all a warning and encourages them to eat in order to survive. After reassuring them of God's promise of safety, he gives thanks, breaks bread and all 276 of them ate as much as they could and were encouraged.

At first light, they saw land but didn't recognize where they were. They spotted a sandy beach so they decided to cut loose the anchors and try to run aground on the shore. Instead they ran aground on a sandbar before making it to the beach. They were irretrievably stuck. The wind, rain, and pounding surf soon broke the ship to pieces, but at least they were close enough to swim to shore. Relief, it seemed, was close at hand. While ships, dreams, and plans are shattered, there

may yet be opportunities and hope. Like a lighthouse seen through the distant darkness, our hope turns to confidence with the assurance of God's word and the knowledge of His will.

After the good news from the angel, a full stomach, a boost in morale, and the dawn of a new day offering a beautiful beach within swimming distance, things were beginning to look up. At this point, however, the soldiers on board thought it would be a good idea to kill all the prisoners (which included Paul) because they were afraid they would now try to escape. The centurion who was assigned to Paul and who wanted to spare his life kept the soldiers from carrying out their plan and ordered everyone to shore. Whether by swimming or floating on debris from their splintered ship all of them made it to shore safely just as Paul had prophesied. Things were looking good and even better when they discovered that the inhabitants of the island were friendly people. They even came out to welcome them and built them a fire to warm themselves and dry off since it was still cold and raining. Relief at last?

Just as Paul unloads an armful of firewood on the fire, a poisonous snake driven out by the fire's heat, fastens its fangs on the Apostle's hand and just hung there. At this point it seems the Hope Train is once again about to leave the station. Now the islanders have second thoughts, at least about Paul. Instead of offering any kind of assistance they back off and say something like, "This guy must be cursed, a murderer or something. He survived a storm, the sea, a shipwreck, a murder attempt, but Justice is not going to let him live." However, Paul, apparently unalarmed, walks over to the fire and shakes it off. When nothing seems to happen in the aftermath and Paul suffers no ill effects, the talk around the fire changes to considering Paul to be some kind of god.

My sense is that Paul not only took great confidence in what God revealed to him through the angel, but may have also recalled the words and promises of Jesus when He said, *"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy, nothing will harm you"* (Luke 10:19), and *"They will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well"* (Mark 16:18). He apparently understood both parts of this last passage and took the opportunity to heal the chief's father and all the others who were sick on the island. Certainly, God was working with and through this dismal situation to bring about good for the Apostle (Romans 8:28).

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What at first appeared to be a complete disaster and near-death experience led to victory, incredible hospitality, and a replacement of all the necessary supplies that were lost and necessary to complete their journey. Three days turned to three months before they were able to set sail again on another ship headed for Rome. After several stops along the way and one that included an encouraging visit from some Christian brothers who traveled from different cities more than 30 miles away, Paul finally reached his destination. After arriving in Rome, Paul, as a prisoner, was even allowed

to live by himself and host visitors in his own apartment while under guard and awaiting trial.

In our own lives, we often let our circumstances and emotional responses to them pollute the opportunity for faith—one that recalls, rehearses, and relies upon God's Word and His faithfulness to it. We sometimes face storms in our lives that seem to get worse even when we pray and believe. In the midst of such a storm, despite what we see and experience, we can continue

to take confidence in what God has said and to remain steadfast in prayer.

Do you feel like you're in a storm? For some practical help now, go to: www.kingdomministries-fresno.org Click on the link ***"7 Practical Tips for Storm Survival"***

*The title of this article refers to a summary of a longer article and forthcoming booklet entitled, ***A Tale of Two Storms***, by Keith Martens.

Kingdom Counseling Center



We are pleased to announce that Intern Counselor, Carrie Wood, has successfully passed her exams and completed the requirements to become a licensed counselor.

Congratulations Carrie!

Carrie Wood, M.S., L.M.F.T.



Kingdom Counseling Center provides professional, compassionate, Christ-centered counseling for psychological, emotional and spiritual issues to those seeking hope, direction, and improvement in the quality of their lives and relationships.

If you or a friend would like to pursue freedom and healing, please call us: 559.226.2750

Joan Martens, M.A., L.M.F.T., Director of Counseling Center



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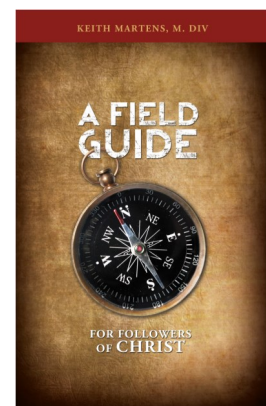
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