

Remnant Life Church

July 14, 2024

Islands of Joy

Mark 4:35-41

We respond to these times in our lives in several different ways.

- Why me?
- Fight despair or hopelessness
- Some are pulled into dark places of depression and feeling overwhelmed
- Should not a Christian, one who believes in the power of God to sustain, encourage, and uphold, not ask a different question?
- What does God want me to learn during this time?
 - What is His will for me?
 - How can I grow in my walk with Him even in the midst of the storm?

READ – Mark 4:35-41

Storms and intense times of trial are inevitable in everyone's life

- While the storms may look similar in nature, how a person responds can look very different
 - People will do one of two things when faced with these times
 - They will run away from it
 - Or they will run toward it
 - In **I Sam 17** we read the account of a young shepherd named David facing off against a giant named Goliath
 - This was an inevitable encounter that David could not avoid once he entered the battlefield
 - In verse **11** we read that the men of Saul's armor were dismayed and terrified at the presence of the giant
 - But in verse **48** we read these words: *As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.*
 - That is without question one of my favorite and most inspiring visual pictures in all the Bible
 - It presents a way to deal with the giants situations in our life in a way that is not often the first way we determine we are going to act
 - But I believe in these times we must learn what it means to run toward the battle line
- And so I want to answer the question for you this morning of what have I been learning?
 - My prayer is that during the inevitable times of battle ahead in your life, you will remember the truth of God's presence, love and power available to you
 - Perhaps you will recall something that is said this morning

His will is not always easy

- That may sound like an obvious statement but how many of us still cry out in surprise when those times are upon us?
- **John 16:32-33** – *A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*
 - What does that mean He has overcome the world?
 - It does not mean that the troubles are not longer present
 - Jesus said in this world, you WILL have trouble
 - Overcome
 - To conquer or carry off in victory
 - In the times of biblical military campaigns when one army defeated another it was said to overcome them
 - That is what Jesus did through His ministry, His life, death and resurrection
 - To know that these times are not easy is to avoid the paralyzing shock and disbelief that can often lead our minds into thinking things that are not true
 - You will have trouble in this world but take heart – He has overcome the world

Resist living with expectations

- Expectations are responsible for more damaged relationships than perhaps almost anything else
 - Dangers
 - Unfair to all those around us
- It is also unwise to live with expectations of God
 - We know His nature and we can always be assured of His steadfast love
 - In **Heb 13:8** we read that *Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever*
 - As Jesus is so is the Father
- But we should never live believing that we know the mind or the Will of God the Father until He reveals it so us
 - Don't we often say how disappointed we are that something has or has not happened
 - Especially when we are in prayer regarding that
- What do we know of faith?
 - **Heb 11:1** - *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

Seek the Islands of Joy in the Storm

- What was the island for the disciples in the passage we read earlier?
 - It was the presence of Jesus
 - They suffered for their lack of faith by being terrified and believing they were going to drown

- But Jesus was their safe haven
- Their place of comfort and protection
- And so He is the same for us
 - And because of His love and knowing who we are, I firmly believe God provides these small oasis places for us to take a breath
 - An island of joy
 - What I tell couples at weddings - the value of laughter
 - Joy in the Lord is what becomes our strength to endure
 - Mom's humor
 - Laughing through the pain and the tears
 - Sharing a light moment that may seem at times inappropriate but is so very necessary to keep the right perspective in focus

God is the source of our islands of joy

- He loves us unconditionally even though there will be many times that are very difficult
- Because of your faith in Him do not to allow your mind and heart to try and set the parameters or expectations on God
- Keep your eyes, ears, and heart alert for those moments of rest, laughter and joy even in the midst of the raging storm

My mother is living these final months without fear

- She is at peace
- She trusts God wholly
- And she only wants God's will to be done
- She has witnessed to every doctor and nurse she has come in contact with
- And she is going to be a shining example of what it means to demonstrate Jesus in her life from the beginning to the very end
- That is a legacy I pray God will allow me to carry on after she is gone and that each of you will desire to show that same faithfulness to your family and loved ones when the storms come.