

Well, good morning. Got the same amount of breakfast casserole in my gut as you do. So if I can do this, you can do it too. Alright? Hey, listen, we had a storm here a couple of weeks ago that got real exciting on my front porch.

Now, generally, my front porch is the ideal place to experience a storm. It's got these big stone columns on either side that the, the roof reaches way out over. You feel very sheltered, very protected. It's the best place when there's a rain coming down. If you got a little lightning, got a little thunder going on.

Oh, the best place to have a cup of coffee and enjoy it is right there on my front porch. Y' all are welcome to come over anytime there's a storm. If you're a storm person. I'm a storm person. I love them.

How many of you guys are more basement people when it comes to storms? It's all right, it's all right, it's all right. I know, I know. I think you're all scaredy cats, but I'm not judging you. We had one several months ago.

Andrea brought her dogs over. My aunt Patty came over. They went straight to the basement and hung out there. It was like three hours. The boys and I were on the front porch just loving it.

I mean, the wind's blowing and whipping around. It's like, oh, this is great. But there was one moment where I'm sitting there and I'm looking up and down 15th street and I see like, have you ever been in a storm where you can see the storm moving? It's not just wind that is invisible, but you see the leaves. I saw the actual storm coming down 15th Street.

And in that moment, all the delight of enjoying a storm was over. And I got up and I said, okay, I'm out now. And I walked in the house. Well, I'm walking in and the boys are walking out and they're saying, what's going on? What's going on?

I said, it's getting bad out there. Well, that just makes them want to. They just want. They're eager. Well, I can't let the boys go out there and me be a scaredy cat in the living room.

So I got to go back out there. Thankfully, that was a short term squall that passed down 15th street and we were all right. But oh my word, in that moment, my porch did not feel nearly as, as safe and secure as it had just a few moments earlier. For many of us, we have managed, we have learned to manage the periodic storms in our Life with some degree of. The word is equanimity.

And it means just, okay, breathe, just take deep breaths, we'll get through this. But periodically one comes along that just seems to take all our breath away. It challenges every bit of our composure. And the

porch, whatever that is in our lives is no longer the safe and secure place that we want it to be and we expected it to be. I want to work with this microphone just a little bit.

And the question is, how do we handle those moments? Where do we run, how fast do we run and what do we run to? So we're going to continue our journey through the life of Christ and the mountains and the, the shoreline of Israel. Today we're going to be in chapter eight of Matthew and if you want to turn there, I'm going to pray and then we will jump right in. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word which instructs us and gives us especially today.

I find today's lesson from your life and what you, what you taught the disciples in this moment to be incredibly powerful in my own life. So as we open your word, keep us engaged with it. Thank you for these little kids. They're doing great so far. Help me to speak in a way that engages them too.

In Jesus name, Amen. Okay, Matthew, chapter eight. How many of you guys are there? If you open your Bibles, I'm going to move quick, I'm moving quick through chapter eight because I want to get to the part I really want to get to. But the part that leads up to it is really good too.

We finished last week. We were on the mountainside and Jesus is teaching his disciples and he. He has just wrapped up the most famous sermon in the world. If you were here, you know that it's known as the Sermon on the Mount. It's the big sermon.

It's the biggie. Now I'm telling you, I spend about 23 minutes preaching on Sunday afternoons. I'm exhausted. That's even without breakfast casserole, I still need about an eight hour nap after Sunday morning. Jesus has just wrapped up this epic sermon and he has determined that he's going to go across the sea.

Now the scriptures, I'm using some creative imagination here, so just work with me a little bit this. But Jesus has a plan. He knows where he's going. The disciples have the route mapped out. They're going to go across the sea, but he's starting down and they're saying, okay, Jesus, we got this much time.

Like last night when the storm was rolling in, we were down there watching the weather apps, trying to figure out, are we going to get a window for the fireworks, are we not? We're trying to track it, figure out where it's going. Well, these guys, they know the weather. There's fishermen, they know the skies and the look, and they go, okay, something's blowing in. So if we're going to get where we need to get to, we need to go.

Jesus has taken his sweet time. It feels like getting down the side of

the mountain. When I was a kid, after church, I mean, as church was over, I was ready to get in the car, go home. Mom had chicken or roast or something. Let's go home and let's.

Let's eat. My dad loved to use the time after church to do all his relational business for the week. And I remember being in the car and mom would say, tim, go in and see what your dad's doing. And you'd go in and he'd go, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah. And you turn around going, okay.

I think he's behind me. You get back in the car and you look around and go, where is he? Well, he's found more people. You know, we finished up service here at 11 the other day. Someone was asking the boys, you know, and they said, well, we're done at 11, but we never get out of there till 1.

Because Tim talks all as soon as for hours after church is over. It's not quite that bad, but Jesus is doing the same thing because there's people coming up to him. If you look in chapter eight, the first person that comes up to Jesus, as he's wrapped up the sermon, the final amen is said. He's walking out the door and a leper comes up and says, jesus, I don't want to bother you. Would it be all right to ask you to heal me?

Would you be willing to heal me? And Jesus says, of course I'm willing to heal you. And he heals him. Okay, that didn't take long, but then they've got the trek down the mountain. So now they're walking down the hill and they're.

And the path they're taking is going to take them through the little town called Capernaum. Now remember, this is where Jesus has set up his home base for a while. He grew up in Nazareth. He moved couple of about a day and a half walk away to this little town on the coast called Capernaum. This is his town.

So he's going to walk through town, probably check on a few people. How you doing? How you doing? How you doing? When he gets through the gate, a soldier meets him there at the gate.

The soldier says this, Listen, my servant, way back in another town is home. But he's in physical agony. He's in a lot of distress. He's had some major health issues. Could you, could you.

And Jesus says, do you want me to come and heal him? This, the soldier says, listen, oh, I'm not worthy to have you come to my home. Listen, I love my servant and I know you can heal him, but you don't have to make a special trip. You just speak the word and my servant will be healed. And Jesus is like astounded at this level of faith.

And he drops in a little hint about his overarching global mission. He

says, listen, it's amazing. You're representative of people from all over the world who will come to me by faith. Says people within the household of God right now, the Israelites themselves, many of them will not experience it, but you represent so many more who will come. That's a side note right there.

So he finishes there and the disciples, okay, let's go. Look, the boat is right there. Let's just get in. He goes, oh, I want to check in on Peter's mother in law real quick. She was sick.

Peter, how's your mother in law doing? He goes, I don't know. So they go in and Peter, mother, Peter's mother in law is sick. She's got this fever going on, who knows what else. And so Jesus checks in her, Agatha, how you doing?

I don't know what her name is. Agnes. Let's call her Agnes. Agnes, how you doing? And she goes.

So he lays. Scripture says he just lays his hand on her hand and she is healed. And then something. Oh, that's great. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Let's get to the boat. And Agatha says, agnes. What did we decide her name was?

Agnes. Agnes says, hold on. No, no, no, I'm going to make some. I'm going to make some beef and noodles for you. Doesn't that sound good right now?

No, not right now.

Okay. So she's making them. He's making dinner for him. It's. That's, that's great.

That's great. That's great. Think it's done? They walk out the door and there's a crowd of people, demon possessed people. And the sick are there.

And Jesus is like, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, let's. Let's deal with all of this. Let's do it all. Let's do it all. And again, they're watching the sky as they see the storm coming in.

Jesus finishes up the last healing, the last demon possession. Someone's released. They're going off and they're getting. They're touching the shoreline. And then there's one, two more conversations here.

If you read your scriptures, there's two more guys that approach him about what it means to follow Jesus. And he spends a little time talking to them. And finally, finally they get to the boat. Now, it's been an exhausting day. Jesus has just delivered the most famous

sermon ever preached.

Everyone agrees it was a mountaintop experience, literally. But at the base of the mountain, on the way down, the very real and present needs of the world waited. Which points us to something of a paradox. It is very clear in scriptures that we receive new life in Christ through faith. Through faith, that is the gospel.

The good news of Jesus is that Jesus has done the work and it's no longer on us to provide for our own salvation. Jesus has done it, but. But meeting the very human needs around us. Good works is also a powerful demonstration of the gospel of Jesus. Now, some people may say that faith and works are at odds with each other, but in the book of Titus, Paul connects the dots, connects the line between these two, I think, really well, and I'm going to read this to you.

So in Titus chapter three, he says this. He goes, you know, we used to be foolish, disobedient, deceived. We were enslaved by all kinds of sin and passions and pleasures. We lived at odds with each other. We were hated and we hated each other.

But here's what he says in chapter three, verse four. When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us not because of all the righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that having been justified by grace, we become heirs, having the hope of eternal life. We didn't have to do anything to receive this. We just said, I want it.

And Jesus says, it's yours. But then Paul says this to Titus. But listen, here's a trustworthy saying, and I want you to stress this so that those who have trusted in God for their salvation may not neglect important things. He says, be careful to devote themselves to doing good, because these things are excellent and profitable for everything. And if you notice what Paul says this, he says, God's goodness helped you.

Your goodness can help others. Paul says, good works Are good. Why? Because of the right and righteous thing to do. Why give food to the hungry?

Because they're hungry and we help feed them. Why help someone who's sick? Because that person needs help. We can help them. This isn't rocket science.

Jesus says, do what needs to be done. The boat will wait. I'm with you. Do what needs to be done because it's the right thing to do. It gives glory to God.

Last week on the Sermon on the Mount, we didn't land on this verse, but it's here in Matthew, chapter 5:16. He says, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works. The noticeable stuff. But what happens is when they see you doing the things that God tells you to do, they glorify God heaven. So I think about our mobile food pantry out here, our folks who serve.

I mean, I'm telling you, it's hot. It is hot. Those of you who do this, you know, can you testify just by saying amen? It is hot out there. Amen.

Amen. These guys show up every time to serve the elderly and the poor in our community. Jesus is proud of that. I think about those who volunteer bring food into the men's warming shelter. Jesus is so proud of us for serving those who are needful of our good work.

I think those who serve at Hope Resource center, who assist them, who donate to that. I think about this past Thursday. Ron Thompson met me up and goes, hey, I want to go visit a friend out in the nursing home. You want to go with me? I go, I'd love to.

It's always nice to have company. We checked in on Corky. We checked on Jerome. We checked in on Carl, his friend, and Nate's uncle. We ended up spending time with Denny Godsey, who lives right down here and is in bad physical condition.

We got a chance to meet with him. We got a chance to pray with him, spend some time with him. It was great to have Ron with me because he's a talker and sometimes I run out of things to say and Ron doesn't. So that's amazing. He was a delight to share that with.

But I left that day going, it has been so good and right to be involved in what Jesus is involved in. Here's the deal. All those right and righteous things brings glory to our Father in heaven, and people see it. So a month ago, IU Health reached out to me. They've noticed the way this church cares and serves the community around us, and they've asked us to partner with them in an endeavor that they're doing in a few other counties, but this will be the start of it in Lawrence County.

And they. They checked in, they said, do you think this is something you guys would be interested in helping us with? And it aligns so well with who we are as a church. I said, well, I think. I think we would be interested.

We're still researching this. It's going to require some volunteer hours, some time on the phone. It's going to require some prayer, people who don't mind meeting and praying with people. But it will be an opportunity to bring glory to God as we love people the way Jesus loves them and let our light shine as Jesus works through us. And

we'll get more information to you in the coming weeks, but just start praying and preparing yourself to say yes when Jesus calls you to do it.

Okay. Will you promise to just pray that you'll be ready to say yes? Okay. Now let's go back. Jesus is on the journey.

The sands right there. And finally, after this last conversation about the cost of what it means to follow Jesus, he's finally getting ready to get into the boat. And this is where we pick up in verse 23, Matthew, chapter 8, he gets into the boat and the disciples follow him. And they're not. They're not.

They're not. 15 minutes out and it all comes down. The storm breaks loose, and the disciples are like, oh, my word. We knew. We knew it was going to happen this way.

Now, look, we're out here and we got a long way to go to the other side. But. But you know what? We're fishermen. We've dealt with storms.

We got this. Let's. We know our boat, we know its capabilities. We're. We're good.

And then it gets stronger. They're like, oh, okay, this is interesting. My dad used to say, well, this is going to be fun, when he meant exactly the opposite. This is okay. This is going to be fun.

And they're tightening things down and tighten things, getting things ready, and then before you know it, the waves. The scriptures say the waves are over the boat. And now. And now they're not just trying to keep the boat upright. They're trying to get the water out of the boat.

It is scary, kids. It's scary. If you've ever been in a boat that's sinking, it's scary. I hope you never have to be in that situation. When I was a kid, we had a little canoe and the pond back in the back, it was a copy of.

You can imagine what a Cow pond is. And what is in a cow pond? What's floating on top of a cow pond? But there was a little boat, a little dinghy that somehow found its way to the side. And we decided as stupid idiot kids, we were going to sail that little dinghy across the 20ft of this mud hole pond.

And we get. I don't know that we got anywhere at all. And of course, the bilge water is just coming up and the. And the dinghy's going down, and before we know it, we're standing this high in nasty, nasty water. Don't, don't repeat that experience, kids.

But here's what happens. Disciples are getting scared. The waves are coming on the boat and they look around and Jesus is sleeping. So the disciples went and woke him, saying, lord, save us, we're going to drown. Jesus, like, what?

What's going on? He goes, oh, you of little faith. Why are you. Why are you so afraid? And he got up and he rebuked the winds and the waves.

And it was completely calm. And the men, the disciples, were amazed. And they asked, what kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him. Life comes with storms.

Some of them are small. We go, we got this, we got this. Tighten things up. We're good. We'll be just fine.

You push through them. But some of them are scary. And some storms keep you up at night worrying. Maybe, maybe it's issues related to your children, maybe your adult children, you know, I go, I wish I could help them. Maybe it's issues with your adult parents, things they're going through that you're like, what are we going to do?

Maybe it's issues concerning your job that throws your whole future into uncertainty. Maybe there's some family turmoil and you're not really sure what the next steps should be. And in those moments, you look back on the weeks prior when life seemed to be almost boring, you're like, oh, I would give anything to be back to my boring life. Anyone been there? Yeah.

Last week was a stormy one for me. A couple of interactions I had with some folks made me question my calling. It certainly made me question my fitness. Like, am I competent? Because I don't feel confident when I feel that way.

I tell you, I don't like it. I was back and forth, tossed to and fro. A couple of sleepless nights where you just like, what are we going to do about that? It was a pretty intense storm. Now, here's the thing.

I knew Jesus was in the boat with me. Never questioned for a Moment that Jesus was right there with me, I was talking to him about it. I was praying a lot, but I was still feeling anxious and afraid. Now, if that describes some of the storms you've been through, you don't have to say amen, but I get it. We know Jesus is with us, but we're still a little anxious.

The uncertainty makes us feel a little shaky. Many of us have walked with Jesus long enough to know what he's able to do. Like the disciples, we've seen him cast out demons, we've seen him heal the sick. We know he has the power and authority to address the storms in everyone else's life. Just trust Jesus, we say.

You see, to pray about it. Trust Jesus. He's got this. And then when the storm rolls up on your front porch, it's a little different story, isn't it? It's alright, you can say amen if it's true.

When the storm came into their lives, those disciples, they got afraid when the winds crashed against their boat. They got real nervous. When it's your storm, your boat, your porch, storms hit a little bit different. What do you do and what should you do? I don't know that I always feel a little bit guilty, like I really should be beyond this.

Jesus, I trust you. I do trust you. But I want to trust you. I believe. But help me with my unbelief because it's scary right now.

I think one of the first things you need to do is just don't beat yourself up for being scared. Because these storms that come into our lives, this bit of turmoil, it is scary. And to deny that is to sort of keep God from working. To refuse to acknowledge the scarediness that you're feeling right now is to keep God from being able to intervene and do something miraculous in your life. So don't beat yourself up for being scared, because storms are just scary.

But here's the big thing. Don't overreact. Instead, just react well, stay in the boat.

Whenever storms, big storms roll in, there's always the public service announcements. Shelter, seek shelter. Shelter in place. If that's a good place, stay. In this instance, the disciples didn't have a lot of other options.

It was either stay in the boat or just throw themselves in the water. Now, there are times where the storms are so scary, you're like, you know what? I don't. I'm just gonna jump out of the boat. But don't do that.

Seek shelter. But shelter in place. Stay in the boat. Now here's the deal. I Briefly left the porch because it wasn't a great shelter, and I ran inside.

Inside. Inside was a safe place to be. I wasn't going to beat and lashed by wind and rain inside.

But staying on the porch in that essence was not the option. Going inside where shelter was is a good option. If you're not in the boat with Jesus, go where Jesus is. You say, well, what about, what about Peter? God called Peter to get out of the boat.

Yes, he did. Why did he call Peter to get out of the boat? Well, he called Peter to be where he was, and Jesus was out on the water. And so when, when Jesus, when Peter says, what am I going to do about this

scary place I'm in right now? Jesus says, come to me.

So you go where Jesus is. And if Jesus is in the boat, stay in the boat. If Jesus is on the waves, step out on the waves. There have been many times where in the middle of my ministry, storms, I felt like writing a resignation letter and saying, I'm out, I'm out, I'm done. I'm gonna go sell carpet.

I don't care. I'm doing something different with my life. And a good friend of mine, Roger, he said, listen, write your resignation letter, put it in your desk, leave it for 24 hours. We'll talk about it tomorrow. So you do.

You put it in the. You put it in the desk and what? It's amazing. Within 24 hours you realize, oh, wait, Jesus is in this boat with me. It's all right, it's all right.

I found one of those resignation letters not too long ago. I'm glad I didn't turn it in. Don't run away, don't jump out of the boat because the storm will just follow you out of the boat. Instead, stay in the boat and take a deep breath and look to Jesus. The disciples first looked at each other.

We got this. They said, we know storms. This is nothing. But then it got a little more serious. And the advice and encouragement they were giving to each other was just not enough.

Even Peter, who is a know it all, is getting that look in his eyes like, I don't know what we're supposed to do next. And Jesus is sleeping. They don't want to wake him. But in the end, where you turn to matters, disciples turn to Jesus. We can turn to other things.

We can turn to our own devices, our own security, harmful habits and hangups, people, friends that we turn to to get some sort of advice. And that's not necessarily bad. But the best place to turn to is Jesus. That's what they did. They turned to Jesus, said, Jesus, save us.

This storm is going to overwhelm us. We're going to all drown. So when the storms hit, who do we consult with first? Who are we drawn to? When life gets stormy, do we turn to the panickers, the sky is falling, or do we turn to Jesus, talk to Jesus.

Psalm 46:10 says, 46:1 and 2 say, this God is our refuge and strength. He's a very present help, trouble. Psalm 61 says it this way. When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

In the storms of our life, we need to make our way to our refuge and our strength and to our rock. Philippians tells us that if we do that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard our

hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Last week there were several moments where the future of the globe seemed more than just a little uncertain. And whose voice did you listen to? Did you listen to the pundits?

Because there were plenty of pundits out there giving their opinions about the state of the world. Did you listen to the pundits? Or did you listen to the Prince of Peace? And depending on whose voice you were listening to, whose voice you inclined your ear to, your response was either panic, which is what the pundits wanted you to do, because it draws ad revenue, or peace. Jesus says, peace to the wind and the waves, and says peace to me and to you.

He is the master of the storm. I made this point the last time we preached on this, and this is something that I cannot, I cannot forget. He is the master of the storm. He can command it to stop and he can command it to come. And there are times in our lives where the storm that's in your life has been brought there by God.

And he is not going to rebuke it. He is going to protect you in it. He's going to say, peace, be still. I'm here with you. So no matter what storm you're facing, health, marriage, job, kids, future, your past, your Future, future.

Hebrews 6:19 says this. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul. It is firm and secure. Christ is my firm foundation, the one in whom I trust. When everything around me shaken, we trust in Jesus.

When the storms of life threaten to overwhelm us, Jesus is our confidence. Jesus is our stability. In the midst of uncertainty, we find comfort in knowing that our anchor is is not our own strength. Our anchor is in God's love and God's Faithfulness. And he's the one who calms the storm.

He brings peace to the chaos. He holds us securely in his embrace. Isaiah says this beautiful, beautifully. He says, when you pass through the waters, I'll be with you. When you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

Those waves, don't be scared of them. If God is in the boat with you, if Jesus is in the boat with you, you're fine. You're not facing the storm alone. You're not alone in the boat. He's with you, offering his peace and presence, his unfailing promises and hope.

Now, we're going to do something a little bit different today because I know that we have some storms brewing and blowing in the world. They're still out there, by the way. Those storms are still brewing, they're still blowing, but they're also right here in the room. Our lives have a little chaos going on. So today we're going to spend just a little bit of time just praying.

We don't do a traditional altar call here.

You can talk to me about that, but that doesn't mean we don't pray. And so here's what I'm going to ask you to do today. If you are willing to pray with someone this morning, I want you to do something very courageous. This is your first step of boldness. I want you to get up and go stand against either wall.

Right now, if you're willing to pray for someone who's going through a storm, I want you to get up and stand and walk to the side of the side of the building and just hang out there. Either side, whatever wall you're closest to, you go to that side right there. Now, the second thing is this. If you're going through a particularly rough patch where you're like, I'm not sure what I need to do next. I'm not sure what's going on.

I'm feeling a little bit uneasy about my present. Then here's the deal. Look at these people on the side of the wall. These are all delightful people. I don't know of any one of them that I wouldn't want to pray with.

They're incredible, incredible people. Here's what you're gonna do. We're gonna sing a song.

It is well with my soul. I'm gonna have the band come up right now and do that with me. Unless you're praying with someone. And then stay right where you're at, because that's more important. We're going to sing it as well.

With my soul. We're going to stand. And while we're standing and everyone's standing, you can make your way to someone here on the walls and they're going to pray with you. It is not necessary when you're facing storms to face them alone. So pray with someone.

Now, if you don't feel comfortable praying with someone and you're not sure that you want to pray about your situation, something else, that's all right. That's all right. You. You don't have to do that. But I'm telling you, there's something powerful in being taken to where Jesus is.

And Jesus is in the middle of these prayers. So don't. Don't miss the opportunity to pray with something. Let's stand together. We're gonna.

We're gonna sing just a great, great old hymn.

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