

**BIBLE STUDY SERIES:**

# **TRUSTING THE FATHER**

**STORMS OF LIFE**

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## **STORMS OF LIFE**

### **INTENTION:**

We will all have literal and figurative storms come in our life. Some we avoid, others we calm, and others we go through. The Lord says we will have persecutions (personal storms) in this world—in all the situations we face, let's stay focused on Him in those storms. He is the calm in the storm!

### I. TOPIC:

We want to look at the Storms of Life.

These storms can be literal, personal, or inner (in the soul realm). What is the “storm” you are facing right now?

I believe many of us can relate to the Apostle Paul in the struggles he faced in life—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. As a Christian, he kept seeking to understand and know more about the nature and character of God the Father, Christ Jesus, and Holy Spirit. He did his utmost to follow the Lord’s lead in all he did. But, at the same time, knew he would not (could not) always do that—facing the ever-present battle of Spirit and flesh ([Galatians 5:17](#)).

Part of his flesh remnant was his heart for his fellow kind (Jews) ([Romans 9](#)). But though this was his “heart” to do, it was not of his instruction from the Lord. *This is a good reminder that just because it is from the “heart”, does not mean it is from the Lord.*

With Paul’s heart longing to bring the same salvation he tasted and experienced to his Jewish brethren, he chose to go to Jerusalem against the Holy Spirit ([Acts 21](#)); the Lord actually needed him to go to Rome ([Acts 19](#)).

God cannot violate our free will to choose; so, Paul did as he did. And Paul’s disobedience had its consequences—“reaping what you sow” ([Galatians 6:7-8](#)). But even in those consequences, Paul was never abandoned by the Lord.

We will see that the Lord never left him to his own doing. Instead, the Lord still protected Paul and orchestrated for him to go to Rome. This is something the Lord can do for us as well; because, although He gives us choices to make, He knows what choice we will make (and the choices others will make that affect us personally).

Furthermore, because He also knows the ends from the beginning ([Isaiah 46:9-11](#)), He plans around each person’s choices and mistakes to bring good from it all—both for yourself and for others ([Romans 8:28](#)).

Thus, “reaping what you sow” is not about accountability, but an observation of how our reality is—the Lord never faults us!

For Paul, though he was imprisoned in Jerusalem, he was rescued from the Jews out to murder him. And though he went through a major literal storm (in part too, from the decisions of others), the Lord rescued him through it as well. And though he was shipwrecked on Malta, Paul became a testimony of the Lord to that island of people.

Sadly, storms are a reality of this life as part of this world’s persecution ([Mark 10:29-30](#)). Yet, the Lord will always be with us and help us through all variations of persecutions. Remember, the Lord is the one who only brings “good and perfect gifts as a Father of Lights”—the Lord is NOT the one that is testing / trying / tempting us ([James 1:12-17](#)); and we must never confuse that somehow “trials, testings, and temptations” are a “good and perfect gift”; they are NOT.

For it is this world that is who bringing the storms / persecutions / trails / testings / temptations.

When we look at Jesus, it is the Father guided His life through many types of storms, not brought the storms. It just happened to be that as Jesus existed in this world, He ran into the storms coming against Him—whether from the persecution of people, or literal storms. And it was in these literal storms, that Jesus calmed them for His disciples.

As such, though we do have Christ’s power and authority to calm the storms, we are not required to (or always can). Moreso, we have to “do as we see God the Father do” ([John 5:19](#)) in response to storms. And in that, He will not always instruct us to calm the storm (is not a requirement of God to calm storms)—whether literal, personal, or inner storms.

We will first read about the storm-journey (Mediterranean hurricane) Paul endured while being escorted to Rome as a prisoner. Paul had the authority to calm the storm he was in, but the Lord did not instruct him to—only that (via an angel) they would all survive. This was God’s promise that, storm or not, Paul would make it to Rome as instructed.

Following that, we will look at the times Jesus calmed the storms, the different storms we will face, and end with how the Lord even uses our personal disobediences to still bring good (in the storm and after the storm).

- Refer also: <http://cbadenhorst.blogspot.com/2020/04/paul-doesnt-calm-storm.html>

### II. **READING:** [Acts 27:1-44](#) (VOICE)

The date was set for us to depart for Rome, and Paul and some other prisoners were transferred to the custody of a Roman officer named Julius, a member of the Augustan Division. 2 I, Luke, was permitted to join Paul for his journey to Rome, along with Aristarchus, a Macedonian brother from Thessalonica. We boarded a ship from Adramyttium that was stopping in ports along the coast of Asia. 3 We stopped the next day at Sidon, and Julius kindly allowed Paul to visit friends and be taken care of by them. 4 We sailed from there north of Cyprus because the winds were unfavourable. 5 We passed Cilicia and Pamphylia on our right and then came to Myra in Lycia. 6 There Julius found a ship from Alexandria heading directly to Italy, to which we transferred. 7 The winds were still contrary, so we made slow progress for a number of days and with difficulty passed Cnidus and sailed south toward Crete and past Cape Salmone on its eastern end. 8 Sailing conditions were adverse to say the least. Finally we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea on the south coast of Crete. 9 We had lost a lot of time already—it was late in the year for sailing—following the Day of Atonement, and conditions had deteriorated from adverse to dangerous. Paul tried to warn those in charge.

Paul: 10 Sirs, if we proceed, I can see that our voyage will be dangerous and will involve heavy loss, not only of cargo, but of the ship itself; not only of the ship, but also of our lives.

11 But the officer ignored Paul and instead trusted the ship's pilot and owner who felt they could proceed.

12 We had two choices. We could anchor in the harbour at Fair Havens and spend the winter, or we could proceed west along the coastline, hoping to reach Phoenix and wait there for calmer spring weather. Fair Havens was not a good option, though, being vulnerable to winter storms; so most of us agreed we should try to reach Phoenix, whose harbour was more protected. 13 One day a moderate south wind began to blow, which made an attempt possible. We weighed anchor and sailed west, staying near shore. 14 Then things got scary. A violent northeaster, the Euraquilo, blew down across Crete. 15 We were caught. We couldn't turn and sail into this fierce wind, so we had no choice but to let it drive us. 16 We briefly found a bit of shelter from the wind near the island of Clauda. We had been having trouble securing the ship's lifeboat; 17 but we were able there to hoist it up and send down cables to brace the hull, which was in danger of breaking apart under the strain of the storm. The wind was relentless, and soon we were again being driven southwest at the mercy of the storm. We feared it would drive us all the way to the Syrtis Banks, down near the North African coast, so we threw out the sea anchor to slow us down. 18 All through the night, the storm pounded us violently. The next day, the crew threw the ship's cargo overboard; 19 and the day after that, they discarded any of the ship's equipment they could do without. 20 Days passed without relief from the furious winds, without a single break in the clouds to see sun or stars, even for a moment. Despair set in, as if all hope of rescue had been cast overboard as well. 21 On top of all of this, the crew had been unable to eat anything because of the turmoil. Paul saw the crew had reached a critical moment. He gathered them.

Paul: Men, if you had listened to my warning, we would still be safe in Crete and would have avoided this damage and loss. 22 I was correct in my warning, so I urge you to believe me now: none of you will die. We will lose the ship, but we will not lose one life. So keep up your courage, men! 23 The God I belong to, the God I worship, sent a heavenly messenger to me this night. 24 He said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. I'm not finished with you yet. You are going to stand before the emperor! You can be certain that God has granted safety to you and all your companions." 25 So listen, men: you must not give up hope! Keep up your courage! I have faith in God that things will turn out exactly as I was told last night. 26 Here's what I foresee: we will run aground on some island.

27-28 Imagine what happened: It's the 14th night of our nightmare voyage; we're being driven by the storm somewhere in the Adriatic Sea. It's about midnight, and the sailors are taking soundings, fearing we might run aground. "Twenty fathoms," somebody calls out in the darkness, then a little later, "Fifteen fathoms." We're nearing land! 29 But hope quickly gives way to a new fear. At any moment in this darkness, they realize, we could be smashed onto unseen rocks. So they drop four anchors from the stern and pray for first light.

30 Then some of the crew decide to make a run for it on their own. They say they need to let out more anchors from the bow, and this will require lowering the ship's lifeboat. They actually plan to abandon us; we realize what's going on.

31 Paul quickly speaks to the officer and soldiers.

Paul: Unless these men stay on board, you won't survive.

32 So the soldiers intervene, cut away the lifeboat, and let it drift away. 33, 37 We wait. Just before dawn, Paul again gathers everyone on the ship—all 276 of us. He urges everyone to eat and encourages us not to lose hope.

Paul: Listen, men, we've all been under incredible stress for 14 days. You haven't eaten anything during this whole time. 34 I urge you to take some food now because it will help you survive what we're about to face. And I want to assure you—not one of you will lose a single hair from your head. We're all going to make it—all 276 of us!

35 Then Paul takes a loaf of bread and gives thanks to God in front of all of them. He breaks it, takes a piece, and begins to eat. 36 A fresh surge of courage seems to fill their hearts as they also begin to eat. 38 After satisfying their hunger, the crew lightens the ship by throwing the remaining wheat overboard. 39 Day finally breaks. They survey the coastline and don't recognize it, but they do notice a bay with a beach—the best place to try to run ashore.

40 So they cut the anchor ropes, untie the steering oars, hoist the foresail to the wind, and make for the beach. 41 But then there's a horrible sound, and we realize we've struck a reef; the bow is jammed solid, and the waves are smashing the stern to pieces. 42 The soldiers start talking about killing the prisoners so they won't swim away and escape; 43 but the officer wants to save Paul, so he stops them. He tells those who can swim to jump overboard and swim to the shore, 44 and those who can't, he tells to hold on to planks and other pieces of the ship when it breaks apart. Some hours later, we reassemble on the beach, each one safe and sound.

### III. RELATED VERSES AND QUESTIONS:

- A. Though Jesus had the Spiritual Gift of foreknowledge, we do not read that the Holy Spirit told Him of the storm or that His Father say He must calm it. Instead, Jesus climbed in the boat and fell asleep. Then the storm hit. Jesus was not planning on waking up to calm the storm; Jesus was calm in the storm. And this is the key! *Storms will always come, but it is our reaction to them that matters the most*. It was only because of the fear of the crew that Jesus actually calmed the storm. The boat was never going to sink. Jesus said let's climb in and "go to the other side"—He did not say, let's climb in and "drown in the middle of the sea". Jesus was assured in His own words that they would get to the other side—so much so, that even though the boat was already full of water, it was not sinking (to me, proof that God's Word was keeping it afloat to get them safely to the other side).

[Mark 4:35-41](#) (VOICE) {PoG}

The same evening, Jesus {commanded them} to cross over to the other side of the lake. 36 With Jesus already in the boat, they left the crowd behind and set sail along with a few other boats that followed. 37 As they sailed, a storm formed. The winds whipped up huge waves that broke over the bow, filling the boat with so much water that even the experienced sailors among them were sure they were going to sink.

38 Jesus was back in the stern of the boat, sound asleep on a cushion, when the disciples shook Him awake.

Disciples (shouting over the storm): Jesus, Master, don't You care that we're going to die?

39 He got up, {rebuked} the wind, and commanded the waves.

Jesus: That's enough! Be still!

And immediately the wind died down to nothing, the waves stopped.

Jesus: 40 How can you be so afraid? After all you've seen, where is your faith?

41 The disciples were still afraid, slowly coming to grips with what they had seen.

Disciples (to one another): Who is this Jesus? How can it be that He has power over even the wind and the waves?

Question: Have you doubted, while in the storm, that you would get through it?

Response:

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- B. This second time a storm at sea occurred, Jesus sent the disciples ahead without Him. In doing so, Jesus had to compel them—perhaps, as being experienced on the sea, they already sensed a storm coming. But, for Jesus again, it was an expectation that He would meet them on the other side. By this time too, the disciples saw what Jesus did before and had the same authority to calm any storm as well. Jesus even demonstrated this authority—reality to them, through their hands, in the feeding of the five thousand (not including women and children) right before getting into the boat. And when the disciples were in the middle of the storm not making any headway, along walks Jesus to meet them on the other side. Jesus didn't plan on getting into the boat ([Mark 6:48](#)), He was doing what He said about meeting them on the other side. It was only after the disciples called Him (again like the previous time) that Jesus turned and went to them. But Jesus didn't calm the storm when they called Him or when He saw them. The storm kept raging even as Peter stepped out of the boat. There was plenty of time for Jesus to calm the storm, but once again, *Jesus was calm in the storm*. And it was only after Jesus got in the boat that the storm vanished, and they found themselves transported to the other side of the lake ([John 6:21](#)).

[Matthew 14:22-33](#) (VOICE) {PoG}

Immediately Jesus made {compelled} the disciples get into the boat and go on to the other side of the sea while He dismissed the crowd. 23 Then, after the crowd had gone, Jesus went up to a mountaintop alone (as He had intended from the start). As evening descended, He stood alone on the mountain, praying.

24 The boat was in the water, some distance from land, buffeted and pushed around by waves and wind. 25 Deep in the night, when He had concluded His prayers, Jesus walked out on the water to His disciples in their boat. 26 The disciples saw a figure moving toward them and were terrified.

Disciple: It's a ghost!

Another Disciple: A ghost? What will we do?

Jesus: 27 Be still. It is I. You have nothing to fear.

Peter: 28 Lord, if it is really You, then command me to meet You on the water.

Jesus: 29 Indeed, come.

Peter stepped out of the boat onto the water and began walking toward Jesus. 30 But when he remembered how strong the wind was, his courage caught in his throat and he began to sink.

Peter: Master, save me!

31 Immediately Jesus reached for Peter and caught him.

Jesus: O you of little faith. Why did you doubt and dance back and forth between following Me and heeding fear?

32 Then Jesus and Peter climbed in the boat together, and the wind became still. 33 And the disciples worshiped Him.

Disciples: Truly You are the Son of God.

Question: Have you resisted going into a storm you've seen / sensed coming—not remembering you've been through storms before that the Lord saw you through?

Response:

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- C. Like Jesus and His disciples, we too may face these same storms throughout the world (hurricanes, earthquakes, and the like). But for many of the disciples and early followers, they also faced other literal storms in the form of political and religious persecution that many still face. Even Paul was the one bringing this storm:

[Acts 8:1-4](#) (VOICE)

1-2 Some devout men buried Stephen and mourned his passing with loud cries of grief. But Saul, this young man who seemed to be supervising the whole violent event, was pleased by Stephen's death. That very day, the whole church in Jerusalem began experiencing severe persecution. All of the followers of Jesus—except for the emissaries themselves—fled to the countryside of Judea and Samaria. 3 Young Saul went on a rampage—hunting the church, house after house, dragging both men and women to prison.

4 All those who had been scattered by the persecution moved from place to place; and wherever they went, they weren't afraid or silent. Instead, they spread the message of Jesus.

Question: Has the storm that chased you away from what you've known, become a blessing to someone else where you went to? Have you been the storm to someone else?

Response:

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- D. Sometimes we face personal storms in the form of a chronic illness or birth-defect. We always saw Jesus heal anyone and everyone He encountered. We, as with the disciples, demonstrate the same healing and miracles as Jesus commanded us ([Mark 16:15-20](#)). Facing a storm like this can be draining, devastating, and crippling. But we must never lose hope or trust in the Lord, knowing it is not Him keeping healing from us, nor Him being the one that made us sick or with imperfections. Sometimes, our storm includes the battle to overcome our own fleshly mindset, stronghold, or unbelief to get to that place of healing.

[Mark 9:17-29](#) (VOICE) {PoG}

Father (in the crowd): 17 Teacher, I have brought my son to You. He is filled with an unclean spirit. He cannot speak, 18 and when the spirit takes control of him, he is thrown to the ground to wail and moan, to foam at the mouth, to grind his teeth, and to stiffen up. I brought him to Your followers, but they could do nothing with him. Can You help us?

Jesus: 19 O {unbelieving} generation, how long must I be among you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to Me.

20 They brought the boy toward Jesus; but as soon as He drew near, the spirit took control of the boy and threw him on the ground, where he rolled, foaming at the mouth.

Jesus (to the father): 21 How long has he been like this?

Father: Since he was a baby. 22 This spirit has thrown him often into the fire and sometimes into the water, trying to destroy him. I have run out of options; I have tried everything. But if there's anything You can do, please, have pity on us and help us.

Jesus: 23 What do you mean, "If there's anything?" All things are possible, if you only believe.

Father (crying in desperation): 24 I believe, Lord. Help {my unbelief}!

25 Jesus noticed that a crowd had gathered around them now. He issued a command to the unclean spirit.

Jesus: Listen up, you no-talking, no-hearing demon. I Myself am ordering you to come out of him now. Come out, and don't ever come back!

26 The spirit shrieked and caused the boy to thrash about; then it came out of the boy and left him lying as still as death. Many of those in the crowd whispered that he was dead. 27 But Jesus took the boy by the hand and lifted him to his feet.

28 Later He and His disciples gathered privately in a house.

Disciples (to Jesus): Why couldn't we cast out that unclean spirit?

Jesus: 29 That sort {of unbelief} can only be conquered with much prayer and fasting.

Question: What is your personal storm you are facing? Like the father, what unbelief do you need help overcoming?

Response:

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- E. Other times, our storm is internal (battling our soul). This can often be a stronghold we develop from how we are personally raised or how the world raises us up—being our "old self" and the flesh ([Romans 6:6;19](#)). But we do have the ability to overcome these strongholds by someone who is stronger: Christ Jesus. This can be Him personally intervening, or even us coming to recognise the stronghold in us from others. For me, the Lord has worked in me directly and through counsellors, medication, psychedelics, safe friends, and more to expose the stronghold in my life—to then be able to overcome it through changes in my thinking and acting / reacting. The change was a discerning of the 'spirits', having been unintentionally living from the flesh (unhealed), to naturally living from the Spirit (our healed "new man").

[Luke 11:21-23](#) (VOICE)

Jesus: 21 When a man of power with his full array of weapons guards his own palace, everything inside is secure. 22 But when a new man who is stronger and better armed attacks the palace, the old ruler will be overcome, his weapons and trusted defences will be removed, and his treasures will be plundered. 23 Can you see that I'm asking you to choose whose side you're on—working with Me or fighting against Me?

Question: Do you find a storm raging inside of you—one that you desire something (someone) stronger to go in and overcome it to remove that unwanted 'feeling'?

Response:

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- F. Not only do we have Jesus as our primary example of overcoming (learning obedience in tremendous suffering), we have the testimony of so many others in the Bible—including Abraham, Joseph, King David, Jehoshaphat, and Esther. All of them had storms to go through. Some struggled because of the choices they made in creating their own storms; some because others made choices that brought the storm in their lives. All these testimonies show that the Lord saw them through all their storms. Let's hold onto those proven promises of the Lord never abandoning nor forsaking us. And likewise, share your journey (past and present); listening to other's as well.

### [Hebrews 5:7-10](#) (VOICE)

When Jesus was on the earth, a man of flesh and blood, He offered up prayers and pleas, groans and tears to the One who could save Him from death. He was heard because He approached God with reverence. 8 Although He was a Son, Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered. 9 And once He was perfected through that suffering He became the way of eternal salvation for all those who hear and follow Him, 10 for God appointed Him to be a High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

### [Hebrews 6:9-20](#) (VOICE)

But listen, my friends—we don't mean to discourage you completely with such talk. We are convinced that you are made for better things, the things of salvation, 10 because God is not unjust or unfair. He won't overlook the work you have done or the love you have carried to each other in His name while doing His work, as you are still doing. 11 We want you all to continue working until the end so that you'll realize the certainty that comes with hope 12 and not grow lazy. We want you to walk in the footsteps of the faithful who came before you, from whom you can learn to be steadfast in pursuing the promises of God.

13 Remember when God made His promise to Abraham? He had to swear by Himself, there being no one greater: 14 "Surely I will bless you and multiply your descendants." 15 And after Abraham had endured with patience, he obtained the promise he had hoped for. 16 When swearing an oath to confirm what they are saying, humans swear by someone greater than themselves and so bring their arguments to an end. 17 In the same way, when God wanted to confirm His promise as true and unchangeable, He swore an oath to the heirs of that promise. 18 So God has given us two unchanging things: His promise and His oath. These prove that it is impossible for God to lie. As a result, we who come to God for refuge might be encouraged to seize that hope that is set before us. 19 That hope is real and true, an anchor to steady our restless souls, a hope that leads us back behind the curtain to where God is (as the high priests did in the days when reconciliation flowed from sacrifices in the temple) 20 and back into the place where Jesus, who went ahead on our behalf, has entered since He has become a High Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

Question: Jesus Christ is forever standing in our place (having proven Himself for us to know we can too)—what testimonies from the Bible or other people have helped you through your own storms?

Response:

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- G. These storms are battles we face daily, in a season, or over our entire life. We must then always be "dressed" for battle with God's Armour. So, when we hit that battle and do all we can do to persevere (in our own strength), we just remain standing (in His strength). Pray always as to help you through the battle; making sure our hearts and mind are trained (secure) in Him; taking note of all the good things around us; positively admonishing each other and praising the Lord—in doing so, it becomes difficult to dwell on the negative. And in it all, hold true to Love—not only to others, but especially to your own self; and in the truth that He truly and fully Loves us!

### [Romans 8:31-39](#) (VOICE) {PoG}

So what should we say about all of this? If God is on our side, then tell me: whom should we fear? 32 If He did not spare His own Son, but handed Him over on our account, then don't you think that He will graciously give us all things with Him? 33 Can anyone be so bold as to level a charge against God's chosen? Especially since God's "not guilty" verdict is already declared. 34 Who has the authority to condemn? Jesus the Anointed who died, but more importantly, conquered death when He was raised to sit at the right hand of God where He pleads on our behalf. 35 So who can separate us? What can come between us and the love of God's Anointed? Can troubles, hardships, persecution, hunger, poverty, danger, or even death? The answer is, absolutely nothing. 36 As the psalm says,

On Your behalf, our lives are endangered constantly; we are like sheep awaiting slaughter.

37 {No, *we aren't as that anymore!* For} no matter what comes, we will always taste victory through Him who loved us. 38 For I have every confidence that nothing—not death, life, heavenly messengers, dark spirits, the present, the future, spiritual powers, 39 height, depth, nor any created thing—can come between us and the love of God revealed in the Anointed, Jesus our Lord.

### [Ephesians 6:10-18](#) (VOICE)

Finally, brothers and sisters, draw your strength and might from God. 11 Put on the full armour of God to protect yourselves from the devil and his evil schemes. 12 We're not waging war against enemies of flesh and blood alone. No, this fight is against tyrants, against authorities, against supernatural powers and demon princes that slither in the darkness of this world, and against wicked spiritual armies that lurk about in heavenly places.

13 And this is why you need to be head-to-toe in the full armour of God: so you can resist during these evil days and be fully prepared to hold your ground. 14 Yes, stand—truth banded around your waist, righteousness as your chest plate, 15 and feet protected in preparation to proclaim the good news of peace. 16 Don't forget to raise the shield of faith above all else, so you will be able to extinguish flaming spears hurled at you from the wicked one. 17 Take also the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 Pray always. Pray in the Spirit. Pray about everything in every way you know how! And keeping all this in mind, pray on behalf of God's people. Keep on praying feverishly, and be on the lookout until evil has been stayed.

### [Philippians 4:4-9](#) (VOICE)

Most of all, friends, always rejoice in the Lord! I never tire of saying it: Rejoice! 5 Keep your gentle nature so that all people will know what it looks like to walk in His footsteps. The Lord is ever present with us. 6 Don't be anxious about things; instead, pray. Pray about everything. He longs to hear your requests, so talk to God about your needs and be thankful for what has come. 7 And know that the peace of God (a peace that is beyond any and all of our human understanding) will stand watch over your hearts and minds in Jesus, the Anointed One.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, fill your minds with beauty and truth. Meditate on whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is good, whatever is virtuous and praiseworthy. 9 Keep to the script: whatever you learned and received and heard and saw in me—do it—and the God of peace will walk with you.

### [Colossians 3:12-17](#) (VOICE)

Since you are all set apart by God, made holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with a holy way of life: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Put up with one another. Forgive. Pardon any offenses against one another, as the Lord has pardoned you, because you should act in kind. 14 But above all these, put on love! Love is the perfect tie to bind these together. 15 Let your hearts fall under the rule of the Anointed's peace (the peace you were called to as one body), and be thankful.

16 Let the word of the Anointed One richly inhabit your lives. With all wisdom teach, counsel, and instruct one another. Sing the psalms, compose hymns and songs inspired by the Spirit, and keep on singing—sing to God from hearts full and spilling over with thankfulness. 17 Surely, no matter what you are doing (speaking, writing, or working), do it all in the name of Jesus our Master, sending thanks through Him to God our Father.

Question: Sometimes when in the storm, we do not “feel” like praying or praising or Loving—what are ways you can push into doing that (making the choice to do, even when you don’t feel like it)?

Response:

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#### IV. FURTHER THOUGHT:

##### A. [Acts 28:1-16](#) (VOICE)

We quickly learned that we were on the island of Malta. 2 The Maltese people found us and were extraordinarily kind to us. They kindled a bonfire and welcomed us around it, which we greatly appreciated because it was raining and cold. 3 Paul was gathering firewood and helping build the fire. A viper had been hiding in some of the wood, and as it tried to escape the heat, it bit Paul on the hand. It sank its fangs in and wouldn’t let go. 4 The natives saw it dangling from his hand.

Natives: This man must be a murderer. He escaped the sea, but now justice has caught up with him.

5 Paul simply shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no harm. 6 The natives knew what to expect—rapid swelling followed by death—but when they waited a long time and saw that Paul suffered no ill effects of the bite, they changed their minds and concluded that he was a god.

7 The leading man of the island, Publius, owned large amounts of land near this beach. Publius received us and hosted us for three days. 8 Publius’s father was sick, bedridden with fever and dysentery. Paul visited the invalid and prayed for him, placing his hands on Publius’s father. The man was cured. 9 Soon people from all over the island who had diseases came, and they were cured as well.

10-11 We stayed on Malta for the next three months and were treated with great honour. When spring arrived, we prepared to continue our journey on a ship that had wintered there—an Alexandrian vessel with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. The Maltese people showed us a final kindness as we departed: they came with all the provisions we needed for our journey and put them on board.

12 We set sail from Malta and stopped first at Syracuse. After three days, 13 we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. We waited there a day, and then a south wind sprang up and sped us to Puteoli. 14 We found some believers there, and they invited us to stay with them for seven days. Then we reached Rome. 15 The believers from Rome heard we were coming, so they travelled out to meet us at the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns. Paul thanked God and felt encouraged to see them. 16 Once inside the city, Paul lived under house arrest by himself, with only one soldier to guard him.

Thoughts: Paul’s disobedience led to him being a testimony of the Lord to the other people on his journey, to the people on the island of Malta, and so much more. This is God using our decisions, not to punish us nor withhold from us, but to demonstrate His Love for everyone! Even in our persecution (not because of it), He will bring about His Good! Again, it is not the Lord bringing the storms, but Him meeting us wherever we are in and from those storms—always bringing Life to what is trying to bring death.

The VOICE translation shares this from the conclusion of Stephen's speech in [Acts 7](#):

*Stephen's sermon weaves together the story of the Jews and the life of Jesus. The point of the message is that God pursues His children despite their constant failure. The crucifixion of Jesus is the greatest of all of these failures.*

*Stephen affirms that through circumcision they have made themselves look like Jews, but their hearts and ears need circumcising as well. Of course, telling the Jewish leaders to get their hearts and ears circumcised elicits a rather violent response. Stephen speaks the truth so that all might hear, including a man named Saul.*

And the VOICE translation shares this regarding the persecution from Paul (Saul) in [Acts 8](#):

*They flee to the very places where Jesus said His disciples would be His witnesses at the beginning of this book. As a result, the persecution spreads the message of Christ rather than hinders it.*

### B. [Galatians 6:5-8](#) (VOICE) {PoG}

Each person has his or her own burden to bear and story to write.

6 Remember to share what you have with your mentor in the Word.

7 Make no mistake: God can't be mocked. What you give is what you get. What you sow, you harvest. 8 Those who sow seeds into their flesh will only harvest destruction from their {fleshly} nature. But those who sow seeds into the Spirit shall harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

Thoughts: I can look at my life now, and in hindsight, and see all so many of the choices and mistakes I made along the way. Yet, in all of them, the Lord has done so much for me and those around me to overcome anything wrong I did. Using each and every opportunity to bring good to myself and others ([Romans 8:28](#)).

We often reap what other people have sown into our life (positive and negative / good and bad / life and death). So, we truly cannot say that "you" are at fault, or "I" am at fault. The blame and accountability are spread out across the eons of civilisation and this universe.

To hold yourself or someone else personally accountable, is to reject all that they (and the generations before them) had gone through to influence and define the things they do or don't do. This is why "Reaping what you sow" is not about accountability, but an observation of how our reality is—the Lord never faults us!

A person's actions (as a whole) are never just theirs (mine / yours), but the culmination of all that which came before—all the way to Creation. Both in what the Lord Created (Life), and what Adam and Eve seeded into this existence (Decay).

We can observe that if corruption happens, it is just a reaping of what the flesh has sown (whether yours or someone else's—in any time or place). And likewise, we can also observe that if something brings life, it is just a reaping of that the Lord (Spirit) has sown (whether yours or someone else's—in any time or place).

The Trauma I went through that ended in a divorce, revealed much of what my flesh was (my unhealed parts) that stemmed from my own upbringing and life situations. I still have a hard time not faulting myself, even though I know the Lord will bring good from it. Yet, the Lord shared with me that, as bad as the Trauma was, He would not let it be for naught (won't let it go to waste)—in that He will bring good from it for me and for others.

The more we let go of faulting ourself and others, the more we break free from the burdens of perfection and accountability. The Lord doesn't find fault with you, them, or me... so why do we?

- C. Read and study through the journeys of these following people in the Bible. Take note to put yourself in their life in what they felt, what they experienced, what choices they made, and what other people's choices / government rule did to them in their life. God was not the one making the persecution; nor could He violate a person's free-will to be the persecutor. Yet, in all their persecution, they persevered because the Lord was always with them.

- For Abraham ([Genesis 12](#)): He left a land he called home to find a new home the Lord called him to, kept family with him that he was to leave behind (Lot), tried his own way (a mistake) in having a “promised” child, and even had to make a choice to sacrifice his actual promised child. Yet God made a promise with Himself to see Abraham and all generations from him be blessed.
- For Joseph ([Genesis 37](#)): His dad (Jacob) showed favouritism over his brothers causing much family conflict, his brothers selling him as a slave, living a slave life for 17 years (even being falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife during that time), and not knowing any hope for a future beyond slavery. Yet God never left Joseph—using a slave to save a nation and kingdom.
- For King David ([1 Samuel 16](#)): He was born an illegitimate son (a different mother than his brothers), fought in wars / battles, faced depression, and made personal / family mistakes. Yet, through him, Solomon was born to build the Temple; and from David came Jesus.
- For Jehoshaphat ([2 Chronicles 20](#)): He faced an immeasurable battle that was to destroy him and the nation. Yet, God kept to God’s own promise, intervening for Jehoshaphat not to even face the danger.
- For Esther ([Esther 1](#)): She was raised under a government that oppressed women’s rights, kidnapped by government order (taken from her loving parental guardian), and as a child, was isolated / trained into a life of sexual servitude for the King. Yet, in all that, the Lord used her as the saviour of her nation.

D. For all of us (individually or collectively), it’s not about us making the storms of life go away—storms are a matter of life (they will always happen, both literally and personally). And I believe Paul understood this—as Paul was used to persecution and plenty of personal storms. Just as the Lord didn’t remove Paul’s horrible persecution by the silversmith (the silversmith being the thorn in Paul’s side), so does the Lord not have an obligation (ability) to remove the persecution (storms) in our lives. Nor does He command us to always remove the storm. We just have to acknowledge and accept that storms will come—however they come.

These storms we face can be a product of nature (parable of the lost sheep: [Luke 15:3-7](#)), circumstances (parable of the lost coin: [Luke 15:8-10](#)), and choices (parable of the lost brother: [Luke 15:11-32](#)):

- What is your literal storm: *war, gangs, violence, plague, drought, flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, typhoons, tornados, wildfires, corruption, dictatorship / political oppression, governmental laws, religion?*
- What is your personal storm: *sickness / disease / birth-defect, accident, handicap, abandonment, loss, divorce, slavery, rejection, finances, work, home, school, food, clothing, family, friends, enemies, persecution, abuse, homelessness, addiction, hardship, generational iniquities, criminal mistakes, prison, injustice / unfairness, inequality, discrimination?*
- What is your inner (soul) storm: *emotional distress / dysregulation, mental anguish, anxiety, depression, fear / paranoia, heartache, trauma / Trauma, PTSD / C-PTSD, people-pleasing, worthlessness, guilt, shame, identity, labels, strongholds, spiritual warfare, escapism, Fight / Flight / Freeze / Fawn?*

Whatever you are facing, just listen to the Lord and adhere (be obedient) to His instruction. There will be times when He tells you to speak against the storm, but it is down to a matter of personal relationship through hearing what the Spirit says. If He says, “Be calm in the storm”, then do so. And if He says, “Calm the storm”, then do so too. Listen to the Holy Ghost about the storm. Sometimes you will go around it, sometimes through it, and other times defeat it. But in ALL cases, the Lord is with you.

And even if you are disobedient toward God (which we all are religiously every day), you don’t have to worry about not hearing Him or not using His Gifts (which He will never remove from you). For even “if we don’t believe (our unbelief), He remains Faithful” ([2 Timothy 2:13](#)).

[illegible]