

# Sometimes

**Introduction.** Do you like watching old movies? They take people back to a time that was more innocent. Hollywood's numerous portrayals of life all seemed to have a common theme: a happy ending. The good guy always won and the bad guy always ran home with his tail between his legs. Truth triumphed over falsehood; good triumphed over evil; justice triumphed over injustice.

Back in those days, Hollywood seemed more in the business of portraying a perfect world. As we grow older, we realize that our world is far from perfect. In fact, it is so imperfect, it is frustrating. The frustration comes from acting in a certain way and expecting certain results, but seeing those results fall by the wayside. Now where is our happy ending?

The question arises as to how to live in a contrary or hostile world. How do we deal with that? A simple story in Matthew 14:22-33 helps metaphorically explain some of the difficulties in life and also offers some hope as to how to deal with a hostile world.

## I. ***Sometimes We Feel Tossed By The Storm***

- A. Life is not always pleasant, even when someone dedicates their life to the Lord. Each one of us has a "war story" about the problems with which we have had to deal. Some of us have had to deal with incredible difficulties: financial troubles, sickness and death.
  - 1. The word for "tossed" is translated elsewhere in the New Testament as "suffering, harassed, tormented and tortured."
  - 2. This was not a calm sea; the wind was blowing full force against them and the heavy waves were boisterous.
- B. You can certainly see this aspect in the life of the apostles. We have accounts of them being persecuted and even dying. Consider how Paul describes his ministry to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 6:4-10).
- C. No one is immune from the emotional scars which come from a constant battle with the world. It is inevitable that each of us will face battles. Ecclesiastes catalogs all of the storms which a human will deal with: the futility of life, human wisdom, pleasure, wealth, materialism, the judgment, the uncertainty of life, the aging process in life, etc.
  - 1. When someone becomes a Christian, I wish I could promise them a carefree life with no concern of being battered by the storms, but I simply cannot.
  - 2. Each one of us must learn that part of being a human being is enduring things which we do not like and we cannot control.

- D. When we are trying to fight all of these battles, where in the world are we going to get any assurance of a happy ending? Is it too much to ask for?

## II. ***Sometimes We Feel The Darkness Has Won***

- A. At that point, it was the fourth watch of the night. That would have been between 3 and 6 a.m. At that time of the night, there would have very little light.
1. Jesus had been with them when the storm had threatened to sink their boat before (Matthew 8:18, 23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25).
  2. When they awakened Him, He had instantly stilled the storm and the tempest of waves. But now they were alone.
- B. Have you ever watched television and thought to yourself that the devil is winning? It can a very depressing world because it seems that all we hear about is evil and death, and they sprinkle in just enough good news to keep us from thinking all is lost (Genesis 6:5).
- C. Wickedness is enough to depress anyone (Proverbs 4:19). The Bible frequently characterizes the struggle between good and evil and as struggle between light and darkness.
1. When Jesus was teaching Nicodemus about light and darkness, He told a sad commentary on the world (John 3:19). The word "loved" is the noblest form of the word.
  2. Jesus was saying that men cared very deeply for evil. It was more than a superficial "liking." They deeply loved evil.
- D. As I watch the news, where is my happy ending? Where is the assurance that all the wrongs will be made right? As I see the story of a rapist who gets a slap on the wrist, where is justice? Where is my happy ending?

## III. ***Sometimes We Feel Our Best Efforts Are To No Avail***

- A. Peter gave it his enthusiastic best, but sometimes all our trying and enthusiasm is not enough.
1. Peter was a brave man. He was a born leader of men; impulsive, but courageous. To disembark from a boat at night in such a storm was no small undertaking.
  2. If there is one frustration that harder to bear than others, it is the frustration that comes from knowing that you lost no matter how hard you tried.
- B. Can you distinctly remember someone that you may have tried to convert for years, and then see them die without ever obeying? Anyone who has cared for someone else's soul knows the heartbreak of seeing a closed mind and a condemned soul.

- C. Everyone has a story to tell, and it is these stories which make us believe that God is not really there. Peter's failure was due to a lack of faith.
  1. God was there, but he did not fully believe. When Peter began to close his heart through doubt, he began to sink.
  2. It was not that he lost faith in himself, but that his faith in Jesus, strong enough to get him out of the boat and on the water, was not strong enough to stand up to the storm.
  3. A lot of our failures will be due to a lack of faith. Faith is such a critical part of our lives (Luke 17:5; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:5).
- D. Think about the life of Joseph. Do you remember how long he was a slave before God's plan finally started to work out? It lasted about thirteen years, but he had faith in God (Hebrews 11:39; Isaiah 41:10).
- E. Where is my happy ending? Can there be a happy ending out there when we give it our all and find that it is not good enough?

#### IV. ***Sometimes We Think The End Is Near***

- A. As Peter began to sink, he probably had the thought of death. The word there means to "drown." So many times we are put in the situation where we think the end is imminent. Poor health or depression makes people consider taking their own life.
- B. One of the worst fears of man is that of death. It can scare people into doing some pretty outlandish things. Have you ever realized how hard we fight death?
  1. We are willing to medicate ourselves, to change our dietary habits, to change our habits of exercise and even change our spiritual condition all because of a fear of death.
  2. Perhaps our zeal in fighting it really reflects our incredible fear of death. Joyce Cary said, "I look upon life as a gift from God. I did nothing to earn it. Now that the time is coming to give it back, I have no right to complain."
- C. Why is it that we do not fear spiritual death? As some of us sit within the confines of spiritual death, we do not let it concern us (Ephesians 2:1-3). We sweep it under the rug, never to let it bother us again. Are you a slave to sin (Romans 6:16)?
- D. How can there ever be a happy ending when death is involved? Is it possible to have a happy ending when we or someone we care very deeply for is fighting their physical death; staring it in the face? Is it possible to have a happy ending when we or someone we care very deeply for is fighting their spiritual death?

## V. ***But We Always Feel The Rescuing Hand Of Jesus***

- A. The happy ending will only come from the Lord (Psalm 18:16; 69:1-3; 144:7). He helped Peter get himself out of that mess, and He will help us make sense out of our messes too. In order to do this, Jesus implied that we must have faith (Matthew 14:31).
- B. When it comes to being battered by the storms, we need courage to continue (James 1:2-4). We are battered by evil and by ourselves (Ephesians 6:12; Romans 7:23). Paul strove to prepare Timothy for the battle (1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:4).
- C. When it comes to darkness, we must remember the true source of light (Psalm 27:1). When we think the darkness has won, always remember that God is light and He is ready to rescue us if we are willing to let Him (1 John 1:5).
- D. When it comes to enthusiasm, we must put on the full armor of God and remember that life is not fought in a moment, but over a long stretch of faithful service to God (Ephesians 6:10-17). Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we will fail. However, those who persist and overcome will be blessed (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7).
- E. When it comes to death, I sometimes wonder if we have the correct emphasis. Why is it that we fear death? To me, if we should fear anything, it should be life. When we experience life, we are experiencing the one thing that can get us in so much trouble. The reason a sinner fears death is because they did not fear life enough (James 4:14)!

**Conclusion.** The climax of the story is not the stilling of the storm but the confession of the disciples: "Truly you are the Son of God." This is the first time Jesus has been addressed by the disciples with this full title. There can be happy endings, but only when you take hold of the rescuing hand of Jesus. Why won't you surrender to the fact that you need God in your life? Hasn't enough happened to you to show you how much you need God?

Jesus made the statement in John 3:18 that we judge ourselves. There is no reason for hostility toward God concerning judgment when we are the ones who have made the decision. Why don't you take hold of the rescuing hand of Jesus? He told the disciples in Matthew 14:27, "Be of good cheer, it is I; do not be afraid." He will help you if you want to help yourself (Hebrews 4:16). "I was sinking deep in sin ..."