

Get Ready for Life's Storms (By Rev. Anthony Menzel, 11 April 2021)

It is a message that has been preached many times...

But it is what I felt that the Lord Jesus wanted for this week...

Philippians 3:1

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.

Just like I have mentioned in the past, the issue is that we can know many things with our intellect but not apply them in our lives...

Matthew 13:1-23

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. ² And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

³ Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵ Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁸ But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

¹¹ He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the ^[a]mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. ¹⁴ And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
¹⁵ For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I ^[b]should heal them.’

¹⁶ But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; ¹⁷ for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸ “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

What often happens is that we don’t apply the Word of God in our lives because we get distracted...

So it is really important some times to remember the basics...

These basics are important because the storms of life often come suddenly, and we don’t have a lot of time to prepare...

Matthew 25:1-13

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. ³ Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶“And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom ^[a]is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘*No*, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹“Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹² But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour ^[b]in which the Son of Man is coming.

The foolish virgins waited to the last minute to get ready...

Likewise, when we face illness or some other trial, it is important to already have God’s Word hidden in our hearts...

We have to build our lives on Jesus Christ so that we are ready when life’s storms come...

Luke 6:46-49

⁴⁶“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? ⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was ^[i]founded on the rock. ⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it ^[k]fell. And the ruin of that house was great.”

Digging deep takes time...

We have to invest time into our relationship with the Lord Jesus...

We have to ask Him to eliminate procrastination in our walk with Him and in the things He wants us to do...

One of the reasons we need to get rid of this procrastination is so that we will be ready for life’s storms...

Matthew 7:24-26

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

A parallel passage in Matthew indicates that there are different types of storms...

In Luke 6, we see a flood described...

In Matthew 7, there is rain, floods, and winds...

When we build on the rock, we are building on Christ Jesus...

***So how do we build our lives on the Rock that is Christ Jesus?

Again, these are things that many people, as Christians, have heard before...

But the question is, how well are we doing them?

James 1:22-25

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

1) Constant study of God's Word...

Joshua 1:8

⁸ This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you^[c] shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Whenever we have down time, we should focus on the Word...

Philippians 4:8

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

As I mentioned before, the Word should be hidden in our hearts...

Psalm 119:11

Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.

When you hide God's Word in your heart, then God's Word will flow out of you when trials come...

Luke 6:45

⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil ^[i]treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

What you put into you is what will come out of you...

Mark 13:9-11

⁹ “But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will ^[c]be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹ But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, ^[d]or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

If we fall into persecution, it is a lot easier for the Holy Spirit to speak through us when we have filled our hearts as much as possible with the Word of God...

2) Another activity that we should always be engaged in is prayer...

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Prayer can simply be defined as communication with God...

If you think of prayer as having to be alone on your knees, then praying without ceasing would seem impossible.

However, if you think of prayer as communicating with God, then praying all the time is a more attainable goal...

Every time we thank the Lord Jesus for something, for example, is communicating with Him...

Every time we tell Him we're sorry for thinking, feeling, saying, or doing something that He doesn't like, we are also praying...

We can pray silently, even if we are too sick to speak...

Singing praise songs, even if we are just mouthing the words, is also another way of praying...

Being involved in prayer with a humble heart that seeks to obey the Lord Jesus, like studying the Word of God, will make us stronger...

Nehemiah 8:8-10

⁸ So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

⁹ And Nehemiah, who *was* the ^[b]governor, Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day *is* holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."