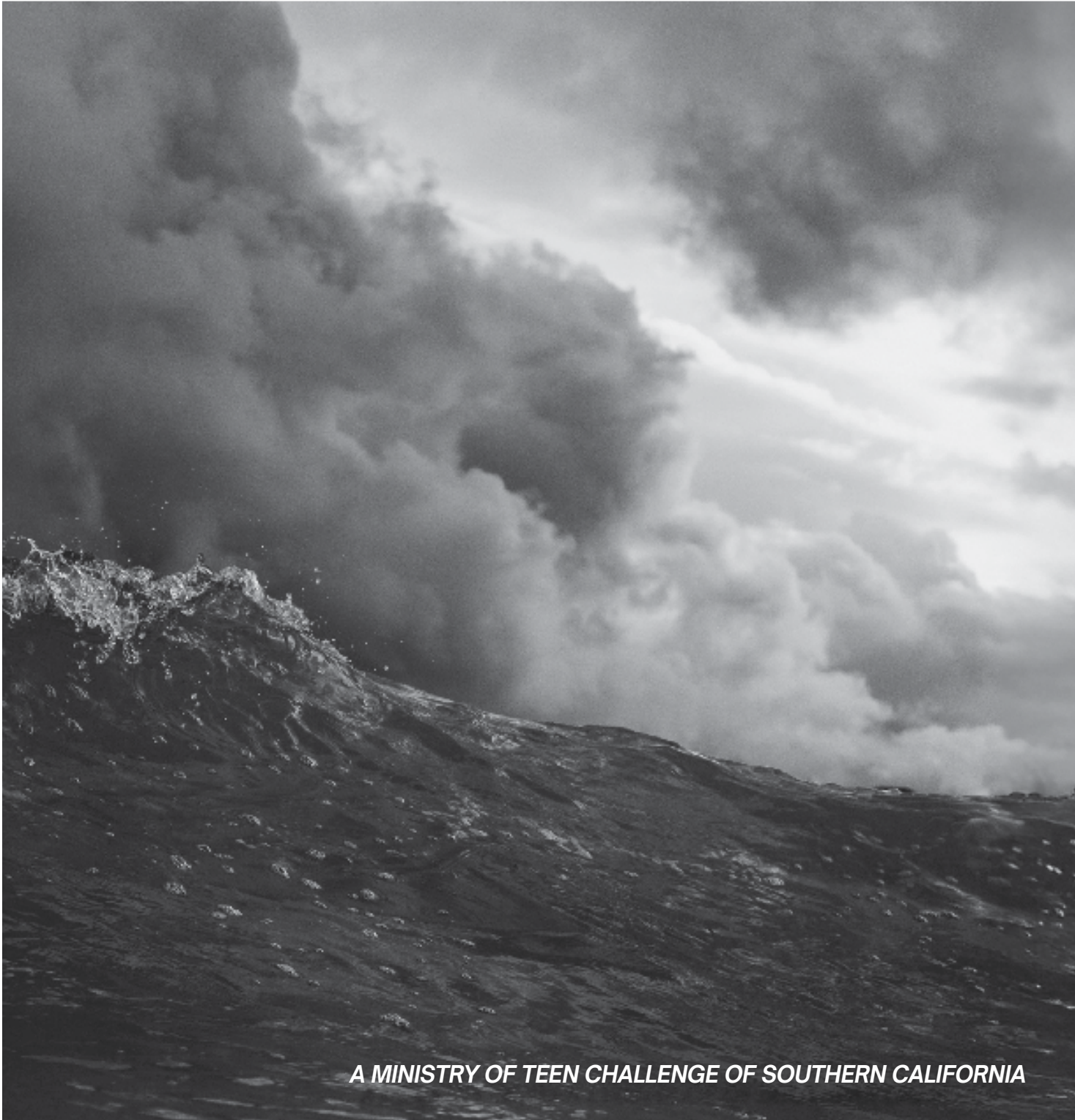


# *Chapter 7:*

## **WHEN THE STORM RAGES: WAITING FOR THE WHISPER OF GOD**



A NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CURRICULUM SERIES



A MINISTRY OF TEEN CHALLENGE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



*Chapter 7:*  
**WHEN THE STORM RAGES:  
WAITING FOR THE WHISPER OF GOD**

**BY: RON BROWN, NOLAN CROOKS, LAUREN KERN,  
MICHAEL MERICLE, AND ALEX DELGADO**

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# Chapter 7:

## When the Storm Rages: Waiting for the Whisper of God

*“Be still, and know that I am God.”*

*Psalm 46:10*

Life is full of storms. For those of us battling addiction, these storms can feel particularly overwhelming, threatening to sweep away hard-won progress and hope. But it's in these very storms and the waiting that follows that God can do a work within us. He begins to undo the lies that addiction has cemented and invites us to trust Him for a freedom we haven't yet fully experienced.

In these moments, learning to wait on Him and listen for His voice is key to surviving the storm and emerging stronger on the other side. In this chapter, we'll explore how to face life's storms with faith, develop a heart posture of waiting on God, and tune our ears to hear His whisper even in the midst of chaos. Through it all, we'll see how God uses these challenging seasons to break the chains of addiction and transform us into beacons of hope for others.

### The Anatomy of a Storm

To understand how to weather life's storms, let's look at an example from Scripture. In Mark 4:35-41, we see Jesus and His disciples encounter a furious storm on the Sea of Galilee:

#### The Invitation (Mark 4:35-36)

*“That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, ‘Let us go over to the other side.’ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.”*

It's important to note that this journey was originally Jesus' idea. He invited the disciples into the boat, knowing what lay ahead. Sometimes, the storms in our lives directly result from following God's lead. This doesn't mean He's abandoned us or that we've made a mistake. But He may use the storm to teach, strengthen, or prepare us for what's ahead.

#### The Sudden Squall (Mark 4:37)

*“A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.”*

Life's storms often come without warning. One moment, everything seems calm, and the next, you're fighting to stay afloat. This might look like an unexpected trigger or a moment of intense craving that threatens to undo your progress. The key is to remember that sudden storms don't mean you've failed or that God has forgotten you.

## The Sleeping Savior (Mark 4:38a)

*“Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.”*

In the midst of the chaos, Jesus was asleep in the boat. This might seem strange at first, but it demonstrates His complete trust in the Father's care. When we're in the middle of a storm, it can sometimes feel like God is distant or unconcerned with our struggles. But just as Jesus was present in the boat, God is always with us, even when we can't sense His active involvement.

## The Desperate Cry (Mark 4:38b)

*“The disciples woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, don't you care if we drown?’”*

The disciples' reaction is deeply human. In their fear, they cry out to Jesus, questioning whether He cares about their plight. It's okay to be honest with God about our fears and doubts. In fact, even in their desperation, the disciples demonstrated faith by turning to Jesus for help.

## The Powerful Word (Mark 4:39)

*“He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.”*

With a simple command, Jesus calms the storm, showing His authority over all creation. No matter how fierce the storm is in our lives, God has the power to bring peace and stillness.

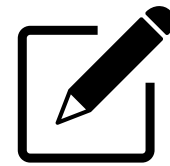
## The Gentle Rebuke (Mark 4:40-41)

*“He said to his disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?’ They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’”*

Storms have a way of uncovering the true condition of our faith. When life is smooth, it's easy to feel confident in God, but when chaos hits, we quickly discover where our trust in Him stands strong—and where it falters. These moments act like a spiritual check and show us the areas where we need to grow.

The disciples had been with Jesus for some time, yet they were still growing in their understanding and trust of Him. Developing faith is a lifelong process, with each storm giving us a new opportunity to deepen our relationship with God and walk with him through deeper waters.

God doesn't let these storms go to waste. Just as the disciples grew closer to Jesus by experiencing His power in the storm, our challenges can deepen our relationship with Him. Through hardships, we understand God's presence and character in ways we wouldn't have otherwise.



## Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- In Mark 4:35-41, Jesus invites the disciples into a storm. How does knowing that God sometimes leads us into challenging situations change the way you view your own struggles, especially with addiction or personal battles?
  - Follow-up: How might embracing this perspective help you trust God more during difficult times?
- The disciples' desperate cry, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" reflects the fear and uncertainty that often arise during life's storms. When have you experienced a time when God felt distant in your struggle? How did you see His presence or intervention later on?
  - Follow-up: How can moments of perceived silence from God teach us about patience and trust in His timing?
- Think about a "storm" you're currently facing in your life. Which stage of Mark 4:35-41 do you most relate to right now?
- Have you ever felt like God was "asleep" during a difficult time in your life? How did you respond?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus invites us into the boat, knowing storms may come?

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# Pastor Woody Robinson's Story

During life's storms, when it feels like the wind and waves are overwhelming, it's easy to believe that our past mistakes and wrong choices define our future. Yet, it's precisely in these moments of uncertainty and fear that God's whisper cuts through the noise, reminding us of His unchanging love. As Woody Robinson, a Teen Challenge alumnus, now an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God and a pastor in Southern California, says,



*There's a God in heaven that loves you, even though you've made a lot of mistakes and even though you've made some bad choices, it's not over. God still has a plan for your life.*

Woody's story of transformation is a testament to this truth. He once did drugs, sold drugs, and lived amidst the dangers of street violence, but God's whisper of hope reached him in the darkest places. That same whisper is there for us when the storm rages—reminding us that God has not given up on us, even when we feel most lost. His whispers come not just to calm the storm around us but to remind us of the purpose He still holds for our lives. When the waves rage, His voice urges us to give our hearts to Him, to trust that *"He's got so much more that He wants to do in and through you."*

Waiting for the whisper of God means holding onto hope, knowing that His love remains steadfast even when everything else feels uncertain. Just as Woody encourages, in the middle of the storm, we're invited to give our lives back to the One who calms the seas, trusting that *"It's not over."* The storm may rage, but God's whisper speaks of a future and a purpose beyond what we can imagine.

## Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- After hearing Pastor Woody Robinson's miraculous story, what resonated with you most about God's work in his life?
- Woody shared how God's whisper of love reached him in the darkest places. When life feels overwhelming, what "whispers" from God give you hope and remind you that He hasn't given up on you?
- Woody said, "Even though you've made mistakes and bad choices, it's not over. God still has a plan for your life." How does this truth speak to your own story? What does it mean for you to believe that God still has a plan, even after failure?

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# Waiting on God in the Storm

When life feels chaotic, our first instinct is often to take matters into our own hands. Yet, Scripture invites us to approach these moments differently—through trust and patient waiting on God. This isn't passive resignation but an active choice to rely on His faithfulness while continuing to live with purpose.

Psalm 37:3-7 paints this picture: *“Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.”* It reminds us to slow down, stay grounded, and wait with expectation for God's work to unfold.

Psalm 40:1-3 offers hope for what comes from waiting. The psalmist testifies that God heard his cry, lifted him from the depths, and gave him a new foundation to stand on—a transformation so profound it filled him with praise. Similarly, Psalm 84 speaks of the “valley of Baca,” a place of weeping that becomes a place of refreshment. **We'll need to pass through our own valleys of weeping, but as we wait on God and trust in Him, He can transform even these painful places into sources of strength and hope.**

Waiting on God can cultivate several essential qualities in our lives:

- **Patience:** In a world of instant gratification, addiction often seeks quick fixes. Waiting on God teaches us to delay gratification and trust in His timing.
- **Trust:** As we wait, we learn to trust God's character even when we can't see His hand at work.
- **Surrender:** Waiting requires us to let go of our need for control and surrender our will to God.
- **Renewal:** In the waiting, God renews our strength and prepares us for what's ahead.

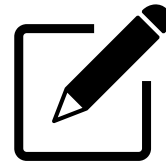
Waiting on God is crucial. It's in these times of waiting that God begins to undo the lies that addiction has cemented in our minds, inviting us to trust Him for a life of freedom we have yet to experience.

Consider the story of King Saul in 1 Samuel 13:5-14. Faced with a daunting enemy, Saul was instructed to wait for the prophet Samuel's arrival before taking action. But as the days passed and his army began to scatter, Saul grew impatient. He took matters into his own hands, offering sacrifices that were not his to give. This act of impatience and disobedience cost Saul his kingdom.

How often do we, like Saul, rush ahead of God's timing because we're afraid or impatient? In recovery, this might look like trying to skip steps in the healing process or refusing to deal with underlying issues because it's uncomfortable. But true transformation happens in God's timing, not ours.

Psalm 37:7 encourages us: *“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.”*

This stillness before God is an active choice to trust Him even when everything around us seems to be falling apart. In this stillness, we begin to hear God's voice more clearly.



## Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- Psalm 40:1-3 describes how God lifts us from difficult places and gives us a new foundation. How have you seen God bring transformation or renewal during a season of waiting in your life?
  - Follow-up: What practices can help you remain hopeful and expectant during those times of waiting?
- Waiting on God requires patience, trust, and surrender. Which of these qualities do you find the hardest to develop, and why?
  - Follow-up: How might leaning into these qualities help change your perspective during a challenging season or a time of rebuilding?
- What does “waiting on God” look like practically in your life?
- Can you share a time when rushing ahead of God's timing caused problems in your life?
- How can we cultivate patience and trust in God's timing, especially when facing urgent challenges or strong temptations?

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# Listening for God's Whisper

Hearing God's voice can sometimes feel impossible in the cacophony of life's storms. Still, during these tumultuous times, we most need His guidance and comfort. Recognizing His whisper is essential to our spiritual walk, especially when everything around us feels loud and overwhelming.

After a great victory over the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 19, Elijah found himself running for his life, discouraged and afraid. God led him to Mount Horeb, where He passed by:

*“Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”*

*(1 Kings 19:11-12)*

God chose to speak not in the dramatic displays of power but in a gentle whisper. This teaches us some important lessons about hearing God's voice:

**You'll need to quiet the noise around you.** We need to create space in our lives to listen, free from the world's noise and distractions.

**God often speaks softly.** His voice isn't always loud or dramatic. We need to tune our ears to hear His gentle whisper.

**Don't give up.** Elijah had to wait through the wind, earthquake, and fire before hearing God's voice.

**Listen first, then act.** Once Elijah heard God's voice, he was given specific instructions to follow.

God's voice will guide us away from temptation, comfort us in moments of weakness, and lead us into the freedom He has for us. If you haven't tried listening to His voice before, or don't feel confident that it's God speaking to you, here are some practical steps for hearing God's voice:

1. Create daily quiet time: Set aside time each day to be still before God, free from distractions.
2. Meditate on Scripture: God often speaks through His Word. As you read, ask Him to reveal His truth to you.
3. Practice awareness: Throughout your day, pause to acknowledge God's presence and listen for His guidance.
4. Join a Godly community: Sometimes God speaks through others. Being part of a community of faith can help us discern God's voice.
5. Journal: Write down what you sense God is saying. Over time, you may see patterns or gain clarity.

Jesus said in John 10:27, *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."* As we consistently seek to hear God's voice, we become more attuned to His leading in our lives.

## Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- Describe a time when you felt you clearly heard God's voice. How did you know it was Him?
- What are some "loud" voices in your life that might be drowning out God's whisper?
- How can we distinguish between God's voice and our own thoughts or desires?

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Break in the Journey

# Elizabeth Goodban's Story

Elizabeth's story is a powerful testament to the struggle of waiting on God in the middle of life's most turbulent storms. Like many, she faced a season of brokenness, searching for meaning and stability amid chaos. Reflecting on her journey, she shares,

*"I had about a year of just doing what I wanted, and then I met someone... Three months later, I was pregnant with my son at 19 ... But soon after his birth, I was just back at it again. And I felt like I was a good mom, but I wasn't really there how I should have been."*



Elizabeth's storm deepened as she found herself in and out of jail, struggling with addiction and unable to care for her children. In her own words, "I knew at this point that I couldn't take care of my kids any longer... my dad and my stepmom stepped in... but such a blessing in that, that they weren't taken from me." Her identity as a mother felt stripped away, and she was left wrestling with the label of being "just a drug addict." This is the heart of the storm, where every limit she had once set for herself had been broken, and she found herself in a room full of strangers, feeling like she no longer belonged there.

But it's in this very place of brokenness, at a Teen Challenge event in Riverside, that God's whisper broke through. She recalls a moment of worship, with her hands raised high in surrender.

*"I remember... I just had my hands raised high, just praising God. And I heard him tell me, 'Open your eyes.' And I looked up and all three of us [my two brothers and I] just had our hands raised to the sky, just praising the Lord. And he told me, 'These hands that you used to use for the enemy are now raised for me.'"*

In that moment, Elizabeth experienced the whisper of God that brought hope and direction, transforming her from the inside out. "I think just the obedience and listening, listening to him, didn't just change my life. It changed my family's life as well." Amid her storm, she discovered that God had never abandoned her, that He had been waiting to speak words of restoration and promise. **Her story shows us that even when everything feels lost, God's whisper can bring a new identity and a new future, inviting us to trust Him with what lies ahead.**



## Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- Elizabeth wrestled with the label of being “just a drug addict” and feeling stripped of her identity as a mother. What false labels or identities have you struggled with? How does God’s truth about who you are challenge those labels?
- In a moment of surrender, Elizabeth heard God say, “These hands that you used to use for the enemy are now raised for me.” What does this show us about God’s ability to redeem our past? How has He transformed something broken in your life for His glory?
- Elizabeth said obedience to God didn’t just change her life but her family’s life too. How can your obedience to God influence and bring healing to the people closest to you?
- God’s whisper gave Elizabeth a new identity and a new future. What new identity is God speaking over you right now? What future do you sense He is inviting you to trust Him with?

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# Transformation in the Waiting

As we learn to face storms with faith, wait on God's timing, and listen for His voice, we open ourselves up to deep, lasting transformation. Isaiah 43:18-19 reminds us, *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."*

God is always at work, even when we can't see it. In the waiting, He's doing a new thing in us. He's breaking old patterns, healing deep wounds, and preparing us for a future beyond our wildest imagination. This transformation often happens in stages.

It begins with surrender as we come to the end of ourselves and yield our will to God. From there, God begins the renewal process, changing how we think and perceive the world. As we wait on Him, He heals wounds from our past that may have contributed to our addictive behaviors. We start to develop new, healthy patterns of living and thinking, growing into the people He's created us to be. Eventually, God reveals His purpose for our lives, often using our past struggles to help others who are still in the midst of their own storms.

As you can see, transformation is a process. It doesn't happen overnight, but as we consistently turn to God, wait on Him, and listen for His voice, He faithfully works in us, making us more like Christ.

Ephesians 4:22-24 encourages us, *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."*

As we allow God to transform us, we become beacons of hope for others still caught in the storm. Our lives become living testimonies to God's power to calm the tempest and bring beauty from ashes.

## Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- In what areas of your life do you most need God's transforming work right now?
- How has God used your past struggles or addictions for good in your life or the lives of others?
- What does it mean to you to be a "beacon of hope" for others? How can you live this out practically?

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# Living Out Our New Life

In Matthew 14:22-33, we find Jesus inviting Peter to step out of the boat and walk on water.

Picture the scene: The disciples are in a boat, battling against wind and waves. Suddenly, they see Jesus walking on the water towards them. Peter, in a moment of both doubt and faith, calls out, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water." Jesus' response is simple yet profound: "Come."

This invitation from Jesus is the essence of our faith journey. In the midst of our storms, when fear and doubt threaten to overwhelm us, Jesus calls us to come to Him. He's inviting us to trust Him more deeply than we ever imagined possible—to walk on the waters of impossibility and meet Him there.

Reflecting on this passage, David Wilkerson said,

*“God reminded me of the countless miracles I have seen. I could fill pages with stories of how God has answered my prayers when I have believed him and trusted him. Then a crisis comes, and suddenly I wipe out that whole history of witnessing miracles.”*

How often do we do the same? We forget God's faithfulness in the face of new challenges.

But here's the beautiful truth: Despite our moments of unbelief, Jesus still says, "Come." That is the heart of the gospel. In your trials, in your storms, in your moments of deepest doubt, the Lord is saying, "Just come to me."

**When Jesus comes into our situation, everything can change.** Throughout the Gospels, we see lives transformed by His presence:

- The man born blind receives his sight.
- The woman with the issue of blood is healed after 12 years of suffering.
- The paralytic walks, the leper is cleansed, and the demoniac is set free.
- Even death itself is overcome, as Jairus' daughter and Lazarus are brought back to life.

No matter what obstacles you're facing today, when Jesus comes, everything can change. The power of God is enough to transform any circumstance.

But how do we respond to this invitation? Do we stay in the boat, paralyzed by fear? Or do we step out in faith, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus?

As we mature in our faith, we're called to trust God with the simple, unwavering faith of a child. This doesn't mean blind faith but rather a deep trust in God's goodness and love, even when life is hard. It means surrendering our doubts and fears and believing God has a plan for our lives.

Even when we find ourselves in the valley of the shadow—whether it's the loss of a relationship, illness, unanswered prayer, or betrayed trust—we can take heart. Shadows are not cast in the absence of light; they remind us that light is present. Jesus, the Light of the World, walks with us even in our darkest valleys.

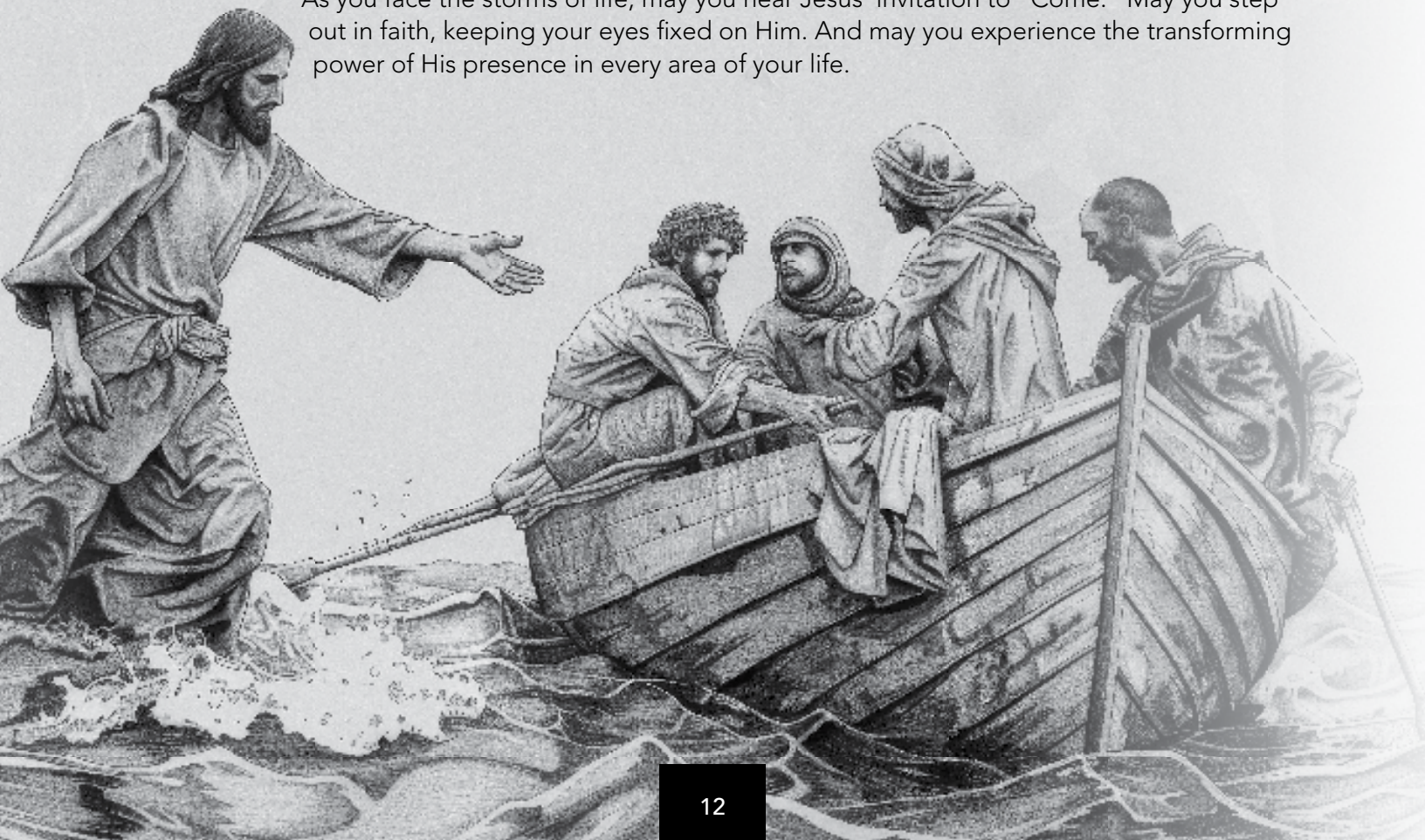
As we wait on the Lord, we incline our ears to hear His voice and seek to know more about who He is and who He wants us to be. In this waiting, He renews our strength and becomes our portion, our help, and our shield.

As we close this chapter, let these declarations of faith resonate in your heart:

Faith says...

- I will go wherever You call me to go.
- I surrender all of myself to You.
- There is no chain You cannot break.
- I trust You completely, at all times, with everything.
- Even when my circumstances say hope is lost, You are always good.
- Your heart beats continually to redeem and restore.
- You are always calling me deeper.
- Sometimes, You lead me into storms, but You are always in the boat.
- With man, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.
- My Good Shepherd will lead and guide me to green pastures, where I can rest and be restored.
- Your resurrection didn't happen on the first day or the second, but You rose from the grave—and so will I.
- Because I love You and am called according to Your purpose, You will work everything out for my good.
- You will make everything right in the end.
- You are worthy of it all, now and forever more.

As you face the storms of life, may you hear Jesus' invitation to "Come." May you step out in faith, keeping your eyes fixed on Him. And may you experience the transforming power of His presence in every area of your life.





## Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- **Sometimes, the storm we face is the storm of regret or rejection.** What regrets or feelings of rejection do you find yourself struggling with today? How does acknowledging these struggles open the door for God's healing work in your life?
  - Follow-up: How can you invite God into your regret or rejection, trusting Him to speak to you even when the pain feels overwhelming?
- **The storms of recovery and healing can be long and difficult.** Where have you seen progress, and where do you feel the waves are still high?
  - Follow-up: How might God be inviting you to trust His timing in your healing process, even when you don't see immediate results?
- **For family members, the storm can often be someone else's struggles that you are caught up in.** What has it been like for you to weather the storm of a loved one's addiction or recovery?
  - Follow-up: How have you seen God's faithfulness, even when the situation felt out of your control?
- **Sometimes, we face storms of broken identity and self-worth.** Have you ever felt defined by your past mistakes or failures, and how has that shaped how you see yourself?
  - Follow-up: How can God's whisper of truth reshape your identity, even when the storms of the past try to define you?
- **Looking back at our storms, we often see how God was with us all along.** Think of a past struggle where you felt abandoned or forgotten by God. How do you see that situation differently now, with the perspective of time?
  - Follow-up: How can remembering God's past faithfulness strengthen you for the storm you're currently facing?
- Reflect on a time when you felt Jesus calling you to "step out of the boat" in faith. How did you respond?
- In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to trust God with childlike faith?
- How can you actively "wait on the Lord" in your current circumstances?
- Which of the "Faith says..." statements resonates most with you right now? Why?

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## Verses to Reflect on From This Chapter:



- "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10 (NIV)
- "Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:3-4 (NIV)
- "But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)
- "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10:27 (NIV)
- "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)
- "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2 (NIV)
- "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock." Matthew 7:24 (NIV)
- "Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." Psalm 27:14 (NIV)
- "We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield." Psalm 33:20 (NIV)
- "I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope." Psalm 130:5 (NIV)
- "The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." Lamentations 3:25-26 (NIV)
- "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV)

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Everyone who belongs to Christ  
will be given *new life*.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:22

