

# *Sudden and Great Storms*

From Day 22 of  
Overcoming the Overwhelming<sup>1</sup>

Many overwhelming situations we face are long-term—something with which we've struggled for months and maybe even years. Thankfully, as we put our faith in Jesus, things gradually begin to improve. We start to relax and breathe easier thinking the circumstances are finally going to change for the good. Then suddenly, without warning, an unexpected and great storm arises in that area. A check we were expecting to cover certain expenses doesn't arrive—in fact, it's not coming at all. A relationship that was on the mend takes an ugly turn, and we feel devastated. We have a setback with our health which we thought was improving. When these types of storms arise, we wonder if we are making any progress at all. We are blinded to the successes we've seen by the winds and waves that beset us.

Other times, we are just innocently going about our business with no particular problem at all, and without any warning, we are struck by a storm we hadn't anticipated. These storms can sometimes be actual, like an earthquake, tornado, fire, or flood which can alter our future forever. Other times, the storms are more privately perceived. The doctor calls and is concerned about the results of one of your medical tests and it's one of those areas that could threaten not only your health but your life. Your mind begins to race, and your thoughts swirl with unanticipated emotions. Or perhaps your finances, which have always been in control, are put at risk by some whim of the financial market or a betrayal of trust. Others, thinking their marriage to be relatively solid discover that their spouse has been having an affair, maybe for a very long time—it seems to come out of nowhere.

All of these sudden storms are magnified by their abruptness and impertunity. Life is demanding enough—who has extra time and energy to deal with these types of problems? You want the world to slow down so you can have a chance to catch-up, but does it? No, it just keeps turning seemingly uncaring about the shock you are experiencing.

You might find yourself devastated by the realization that the battle you've been facing is still not over, or if the storm was completely surprising, you might feel numb and unable to process it all fast enough to meet the decisions you have to make.

Sudden storms can be shocking, horrifying, and devastating. They can render us seemingly powerless by their perplexity. At the moment they hit, however, we can tap into a power that is higher than every wind

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<sup>1</sup> © C. D. Hildebrand

or wave, one that will calm the storm within us and give us clarity to face any situation. We have a choice when the tempest arises. Will we have faith in Him or will we fear?

**Matthew 7:23-27**

*Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. <sup>24</sup>And **suddenly a great tempest arose** on the sea, so that the boat was **covered** with the waves. But He was asleep. <sup>25</sup>Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”*

*<sup>26</sup>But He said to them, “Why are you **fearful**, O you of little **faith**?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. <sup>27</sup>So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”*

Without a doubt, this event spoke to the disciples of Jesus’ deity. Indeed, He calmed the winds and the sea, and they obeyed Him. Yet, when we take a closer look, we see a parable to help us when a sudden tempest arises in our lives.

It might seem at first that Jesus was a bit harsh when He asked the disciples, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” However, taking into consideration what they had just witnessed, the question becomes reasonable. Just prior to this storm, the disciples had seen amazing things. Jesus had given what we call His sermon on the mount. What amazing truths had proceeded from His lips! After that, a leper was completely healed, a centurion’s servant was healed without Jesus even touching him. Peter’s mother-in-law was healed of a fever. Many demon-possessed were set free. He healed “all who were sick”.

Multitudes were following Him, so Jesus gave the command to go to the other side. Perhaps they were basking in the glory of all they witnessed. Maybe the boat ride even promised to be an enjoyable break from a very busy season of ministry. There likely wasn’t a cloud in the sky about which they were concerned. The waters were calm. Jesus lay down His head and fell asleep in the boat. Maybe a couple others followed His lead as the rest navigated to the other side. Sounds idyllic, doesn’t it—you and I, resting together in the boat of life obeying His command to go to the other side with not a care in the world except maybe to take a nap?

Then “suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea so that the boat was covered with the waves.” Does this sound familiar? You are minding your own business, maybe even in rest mode, pursuing what you believe to be God’s calling on your life, and enjoying His many blessings. Maybe you have also just recently witnessed His glorious miracles in your life, or you have been amazed by His great love for you. Then, whack! You are hit by a sudden and great storm. God didn’t send it. You did nothing to deserve it.

It just happened, and there you are being tossed by the wind and waves, and it looks like you are going under.

**Will we freak out and ask God why He is asleep when we need Him most or will we instead express our trust in Him?**

Recently, I had a sudden storm come into my life. When it hit, my world as I knew it began to come undone, my feelings were off kilter. I didn't know how to deal with it at all, but I saw at that moment **I had a choice to believe God or fold in despair.** I prayed, "God, I don't know how to process this. I don't know how to feel. How do I respond? What do I do?"

Now, it wasn't in words exactly that God immediately answered me, but if I could put it into words what came into my heart, it went something like this, **"It's OK to feel, but don't fear."** God understood how I felt. He wasn't in any way displeased with me for my immediate emotions. In fact, He was there to help and comfort me. It was perfectly normal for my whole being to respond to what had just happened, but **would I allow the winds and waves to overcome me or would I trust in God?**

Needing immediate encouragement, I printed out Day 9 of this book, the chapter I recommended that my readers bookmark to read when they might need some good news. With my personal storm raging, I began to preach good news to myself as I gave thanks to Him for His faithfulness.

"Father, I thank You that you are right here with me right now. I am one spirit with You. You see me in all this swirl of feelings that I don't know how to process. You hear my heart. You know I want to please you by my faith. You care about what I'm experiencing. You know the truth about my love for You, and You know exactly what the truth is about this situation. You are for me in this circumstance, not against me. Nothing is impossible for You, God, and nothing is impossible for me because I believe in You. You will take this awful situation and work it together for my good. You are not only able to help me but You are willing, and You will help me. You will not forsake me at my time of need. You love me, Father. I am your child. You see the faith I have in You, Lord, and it pleases You."

Then, I fell asleep and rested in my boat as the storm subsided and His love rested upon me. When I woke, even though the threat of more storms was on the horizon, I felt peace. **I knew deep in my heart that my faith in Him had brought Him joy,** and I sensed that He would give me the strength to continue pleasing Him through it all.

We can speak to the storms that rage in our lives. No, we are not God, but we can speak with His authority. "Wind and waves, I command you in the name of Jesus, to be still." Sometimes, we are surprised by how quickly the storm subsides. That "person" who suddenly brought us too much drama just calms down. That threat of financial ruin amazingly turns out for our good. The doctor's report that seemed to threaten our very life turns out to be nothing at all.

Yet even if the storm continues, we can rest in His great love for us. It is like the cartoon I saw of my husband; we ride the waves of the storm

instead of being pulled under by them. When we do this, He is pleased. He is proud of us as His child simply because we trust in Him. He isn't expecting us not to feel or "be brave" or not to respond when more wind and waves arise, rather He will be there for us when they do, and each time we choose faith over fear, we put a smile on His glorious face because our faith pleases Him.

***Psalm 46:1-5***

*God is our refuge and strength,*

*A very present help in trouble.*

***<sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear,***

*Even though the earth be removed,*

*And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*

***<sup>3</sup>Though its waters roar and be troubled,***

*Though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah*

***<sup>4</sup>There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,***

*The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.*

***<sup>5</sup>God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;***

*God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.*

***Psalm 5:11-12***

*Let all those who put their trust in You rejoice;*

*Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;*

*Let those also who love Your name*

*Be joyful in You.*

***<sup>12</sup>For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous;***

*With favor You will surround them as with a shield.*