

Sermon: Jesus the great I AM takes us from fear to faith in the storm.
Mark 6:45-52
Allen Mercer

(Slide 0)

INTRO:

Good morning. It's great to be back with all of you. Coming into this sanctuary brings back so many memories for Sharon and I. We were married right here in 1998. And two years later in 2000, we began our journey together following Jesus as missionaries in Hungary.

I wanted to begin by thanking all of you who have supported us in bringing the Gospel from Delaware to Hungary. We feel loved by this congregation and blessed by your partnership over these past 22 years.

Because of your support, you will meet Hungarians when we all join together in the new heaven and new earth. Now, I'm not sure what language we will be using in that amazing day as we worship Jesus together in resurrected bodies, but Hungarians will say that Hungarian is the language of heaven... Because it takes an eternity to learn.

Well, it's been five years since we've been in the US and since that time the church here and the church abroad has been through some vicious storms in a rapidly changing world.

Physical challenges with Covid, political strife, cultural strife, challenges with isolation which have brought many through times of depression or increased the burden of anxiety.

And in our passage today, we find the disciples struggling in a boat against a violent storm as they follow the last thing that Jesus told them to do.

Are you there today?

Are you on that journey of following the last thing Jesus told you to do, and yet experiencing more and more difficulty?

Now boats are fun when you feel safe, but a boat would be the last place you would want to be in the middle of a violent storm.

(Raised hand) How many of you have ever tried standing in a boat? You are constantly moving to catch yourself from falling. There is no sense of stability. And maybe today, more than ever, you are realizing that your life feels like it has no firm foundation.

You may feel like you're anxiously trying to keep your footing, to keep from tipping over and being swept away. The wind is getting stronger and is constantly against you.

How can you find encouragement in that place of struggle?
How can you rise above the fear and anxiety that threatens your life?

Let's continue to follow Jesus as we study through the book of Mark and find out what the Spirit of God would want to speak to us. He wants to encourage us today by turning our attention to Jesus.

Let's begin with Mark 6:45. You can follow along in your Bible.

(Slide 1)

Mark 6:45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

We begin where pastor Nate left off last week. Jesus revealed more about His identity as God in the flesh by feeding this crowd of thousands with just 5 pita sized pieces of bread and 2 fish.

Immediately after this, Mark says Jesus MADE his disciples get into the boat to go ahead of him.

There is not much more written by Mark here that tells us why he uses the words, Jesus "MADE" them get into the boat. But we get a sense with this wording that there was some type of initial resistance to getting in the boat, or some other opposing desire.

If it were up to them, they would have chosen to do something else. Sound familiar?

Maybe they looked out at the sky, and as fishermen they saw that

storms were brewing. Or maybe the disciples wanted to join the crowd who witnessed this miracle and wanted to forcibly make Jesus king (John refers to this in his parallel account).

Last week, we saw that the disciples would have chosen to do something else with this crowd. They wanted Jesus to send the crowd to the countryside to find food for themselves. They wanted to send the families away hungry.

But Jesus had a different plan. Jesus wanted to send them to their homes full, with more of a revelation about who He was as the Son of God, a mighty provider, the compassionate and caring King of kings. The God who sees and cares.

(Slide 2)

Jesus moves us into places where we come to a greater experience and understanding of His glorious identity as God in the flesh.

There are still stirrings in all of us that naturally RESIST God's will. We sometimes think we have a better idea, we have better plans, we have a better way of solving problems.

We need to be reminded today that when we chose to put our faith in Jesus, we chose to surrender our distorted desires and misguided will. When we chose Jesus, we chose a life of trusting His will and following His word.

And there will be times, when Jesus' will or the direction He sends you in your life will make absolutely no sense to you.

But it doesn't have to make sense to you before you obey. The question is whether or not you trust Jesus as Your Lord. Are you believing Him today? Are you re-adjusting as He directs you today? Are you repenting where He convicts your heart today?

Are you doing the last thing Jesus told you to do because you are convinced that His will is superior and life-giving and never leads to wasted time, or wasted resources.

Remember when Jesus first called these disciples? Jesus got into Peter's boat and told Peter to drop the fishing net in the deep waters. This makes no sense to Peter because Peter had been striving all night to catch fish and has come up empty. But I love Peter's response found in Luke 5:5

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“Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.” — Luke 5:5

And because Peter followed Christ's will, he found himself experiencing an even greater revelation of Jesus. They pulled those nets up and caught so many fish that it filled multiple boats so full that the boats began to sink.

And in our passage today, the disciples don't know why Jesus is telling them to get into the boat and cross to the other side. But they obey.

(Slide 4)

“Because you say so, I will.”

They had a **“because you say so, I will”** response toward Christ.

And with that child-like trusting faith, they allowed Jesus to steer them in the direction of personally encountering an even greater revelation of who Jesus is.

There is a big difference between reading about who Jesus is and experiencing who Jesus is by living a **“because you say so, I will”** life.

That is where I want to be in my life. I want to personally encounter Jesus. I want to personally KNOW Jesus. But that means, I must surrender my distorted desires and misguided will.

(Slide 5)

Jesus said in Luke 9:23 “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

Jesus calls us to a **“because you say so”** attitude of following Him, not a resistance to His will that leads to a hardened heart.

One thing I noticed in this sanctuary when we recently returned were those banners with those three words keeping us all united in our vision as disciples of Jesus Christ. Know, Grow and Go.

KNOW Jesus more deeply.

GROW in your faith in Jesus.

And GO into the world shining the light of Christ by proclaiming the good news that Jesus has made a way for us to be forgiven of our sins and restored to a personal relationship with God as a free gift of His grace.

As I studied Mark chapter six, those three words seemed to come back into my mind. Know, Grow and Go.

Initially, it is Jesus who is going and teaching. Then Jesus sends his disciples on a mission telling them, don't bring a bunch of supplies, and don't worry about making reservations at the local Inn (that's my loose translation). Go and heal the sick and cast out demons and tell people they need to turn away from sin and turn back to God. Go in full dependence on God, who will provide for you on the mission I send you.

You see, after they had spent time with Jesus getting to know Him, it was time to grow and **there is no better place of growth than being found doing the last thing Jesus told you to do**, because you trust Him, because you believe His will is superior and life-giving and never leads to wasted time, or wasted resources.

(Slide 6)

Make the last thing Jesus told you the first priority of your life and you you always always find yourself in the best place to know Him, to grow in Him and to go with Him.

What is the last thing He told you to do?

Are you hesitating or resisting because it doesn't make sense to you?

In chapter 6 of Mark, Jesus is telling the disciples, you teach them, you heal them in my name, you deliver them through my power, you feed them by faith in my name.

There is a transition happening where the disciples are not just learning a bunch of head knowledge. They're not just sitting on the sidelines watching.

They are GROWING to be more like their Master as they GO on doing the last thing Jesus told them to do. Then they would return and fellowship with Jesus and be sent out again.

If you want to KNOW Jesus, and GROW in Jesus and GO in the name of Jesus, then you must have a **“because you say so, I will”** attitude toward the will of Jesus.

In Mark chapter 6, people are getting healed and delivered through the disciples in Jesus' name.

People are getting taught and fed through them through Jesus' power. People are turning away from sin and turning to Jesus because of their message of repentance.

I can tell you, the life of knowing, growing and going is much better than spending all your life focusing on yourself and your own pursuits.

It is such a blessing to have the privilege to be used in God's plan to spread His truth, to touch others with His power, to reveal Jesus Christ through your life in the sphere of influence God has placed you.

But we can miss out on the amazing works that God is willing to accomplish through us if we allow our hearts to become hardened and resist the last thing He has told us to do.

May I encourage you today to ask yourself, am I doing the last thing Jesus told me to do, even if it doesn't make sense to me?

Let's continue in our passage today:

(Slide 7)

45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

The disciples are doing the last thing Jesus told them to do. They are on their way in the boat while Jesus dismisses the crowd and in verse 46,

we read: “After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.”

The Christian life is not just about productivity and the amount you can do for God, it is also about resting and spending time in secret doing what the world would label as unproductive and inefficient.

But for the Christian, Jesus shows us that prayer is the place where we are empowered and given the ability to be productive and effective for God’s purposes. It is the place of remaining in an intimate relationship with God and coming to know His will.

Jesus dismisses the crowd. To a business-minded culture that highly values efficiency and productivity, a growing crowd and all the excitement may seem to be the perfect time to do more.

But Jesus shows us, it was not time to do more for God, it was time to be WITH God in fellowship. It was time for Jesus to rest and to be refreshed in the presence of the Father. So He dismisses the distractions for a time of prayer alone on that mountain.

(Slide 8)

Just last week, we read in Mark 6 that after a busy season of ministry, Jesus tells the disciples: **“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”**

This was not a rare occurrence in Jesus’ life. We read in **Luke 5:15-16**

(Slide 9)

“Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

As disciples of Christ, we all need to learn how to resist the rushing and busyness of our culture that is drowning in distraction and spiritually malnourished. We need a different lifestyle that leads to spiritual health. Jesus shows us the way to follow.

God wants us to have a steady diet of rest and times of restoration with Him in desolate places. That means places where you can give Jesus your undivided attention and more clearly hear what He is saying to You

by His Spirit.

Jesus would OFTEN go to places where He would not be disturbed or distracted, to linger in prayer, to be with His Father.

Even though Jesus was the Savior of the world, he was not always busy saving the world. He would OFTEN withdraw. He would dismiss the crowds. In His humanity, he needed the Father to empower Him, renew Him, strengthen Him and continue to lead Him.

This is how Jesus, the sinless son of God, made important decisions and dealt with troubling emotions in His humanity.

We cannot live well for God or love well as believers if we ignore Jesus' invitation and example of withdrawing OFTEN for rest and intimacy with God in prayer.

When my attitude with others begins to look ugly, when my thoughts begin to drift toward fallen ways, when I seem to have no patience or I am irritable and selfish. The warning light and alarm begins blasting in my soul... Allen your spirit is malnourished. I get spiritual hunger pangs. My soul is rumbling with hunger.

It is as if my spirit is running on empty and I'm rushing past every place where I could stop and fill up. I'm running on fumes while God is waving His arms signaling to me to slow down, to enter in, to stop and sit down at his feet, to come away with Him and rest.

We've already learned today that there is no better place of growth than being found doing the last thing Jesus told you to do. But you can't know the last thing Jesus told you to do unless you are regularly dismissing distraction and coming to God to rest and pray.

That is the place where you can bring your confusion, your grief, your praise, your questions, your thanksgiving, your requests to Him. That is the place where you can renew your trust in Jesus and lean into His presence believing in His love for you.

(Slide 10)

Church family, we need to follow Jesus in dismissing distraction and coming away OFTEN with Him to a quiet place to rest and to pray.

Let this word of Christ become a personal invitation to you today.
“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

(Slide 11)

Let's continue reading in Mark 6 verses 47-48

47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them.

The last time the disciples encountered a storm like this, Jesus was with them in the boat sleeping. And when the disciples woke him in that account in Mark chapter 4, do you remember what they frantically said to Jesus?

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“Don't you care if we drown?” (Mark 4:38)

In a less dramatic situation that may have felt just as disturbing, Martha, who was frantically preparing food for Jesus and the disciples, saw her sister Mary just sitting there at Jesus' feet listening to what He was saying. And Martha said to Jesus,

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“Don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” (Luke 10:40)

We can relate to this cry that erupts in us when we feel like things are out of control, and we want God to do something right now to fix this problem our way. Can't you just snap your fingers Lord and make all of this go away? Don't you care Lord?

Yes, God deeply cares. But He may not care so passionately about the temporal things that we care about. You see, God is always active in furthering His spiritual objectives for His children and the condition of their hearts.

God is at work reconciling fallen humanity to Himself. God's vantage point is far above any vantage point we have access to. God sees the big picture of your life. He sees where you are spiritually today and

where He wants to take you because He deeply cares for your soul. He is a redeemer of our souls. He will not leave your life the same when you entrust yourself into His redeeming hands.

But in order for our loving God to change us from who we are today into children that brilliantly reflect the nature and heart of Christ in our lives, God needs to give us a type of grace and mercy that we often mistake as abandonment.

Jesus, after having fellowship with the Father on the mountain SEES the disciples straining in the boat.

God from His higher vantage point sees the storm that you are struggling in today.

And it is important to remember HOW Jesus sees.

How did Jesus see the crowd of thousands last week who had adjusted their lives to make being with Jesus their highest priority?

“He saw [that crowd]...and he had compassion on them.”

Why did he have compassion on them? Not because they had it all together. Not because they had earned a favorable response from God because of their perfect lives.

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No. Jesus, when he saw them, had compassion on them because **they were like sheep without a shepherd.**

They were helpless, lost, confused, misguided, needy. That is what a sheep is without a shepherd. That is what we are without Jesus in our lives.

And Jesus comes to shepherd them in compassion, provide for them in His power, and send them home full of His mercy with a greater revelation of His identity that would help them to have a deeper faith in Him as Savior.

Don't you care Lord?

Don't you see what I am going through?

Can't you just fix this the way I want it fixed?

(Slide 15)

Yes, He cares and He sees you with compassion.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

Yes, He cares, but know that He has a much greater agenda for you and your heart. An agenda that leads you into places you may not have chosen to go so that He can grow you into a person you could never imagine possible.

The disciples have been rowing for hours in their own strength. They have come to that place of experiential helplessness in their humanity. They are experiencing that human solutions, human strength, human ideas, human resources will not help.

Do you remember who made them go in this direction?

Do you remember who's idea it was that they cross together in the boat? Could this be the mercy of Jesus moving the disciples in a direction they would rather not have gone so that they be in the perfect place to experience a greater revelation of Jesus?

This is not abandonment. This is God's mercy that is often misinterpreted as abandonment.

(Slide 16)

Jesus will move your life into places you may not have chosen so that your capacity to trust Him and depend on Him and believe in Him continues to grow.

We often mistake God's care for the formation of our souls as a lack of care. When we're in the midst of difficulty and discomfort, our first thought is, "Get me out of here!"

We don't see our lives and our hearts from God's vantage point. We're not thinking about our spiritual formation in that moment. We just want relief. We cry out, God if you love me, fix this now!

And we think, when He doesn't fix it now, God is failing and holding back what we need, when in fact, God is mercifully shepherding our hearts to grow in their capacity to trust and depend and believe.

Let's move on in our passage:

(Slide 17)

Mark 6:48b

“Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them”

Jesus begins walking toward them. He doesn't need a boat. He is God in the flesh.

He doesn't need the disciples to make their way to Him. They couldn't make their way to Jesus no matter how hard they tried. Jesus makes His way to them. He makes His way to us! The God of heaven, Jesus Christ has spanned the distance from heaven to earth to save us!

This miraculous walking on the water reminds us of the beauty of God's mercy and power that moves toward us. Jesus is walking on the water through through the storm. Jesus is above the threats of your life. Jesus is greater than the difficulties of your life. Jesus Christ has risen above every challenge and difficulty that threatens us and He has chosen to move toward us. This is good news!

The last time the disciples were in a storm like this, Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet, Be still!”

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And the disciples still in shock turned to each other asking, **“Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!”** (Mark 4:41)

They still didn't get it and Jesus is continuing to show them who He is. So there is a NEW storm, there are NEW difficulties, and they are in a NEW place to personally encounter a greater revelation of Jesus.

The word says, “Jesus was about to pass by them”. This doesn't necessarily mean Jesus is trying to hide from them. It means He is moving alongside of them so that all of them can see Him walking on the water.

It is as if Jesus is ‘passing by’ as He showed himself to Moses when Moses asked God in Exodus 33:18 to show him His glory.

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In Job chapter 9, Job distinguishes God from mere mortals by saying:
Job 9:8 “[God] alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.”

What Job poetically proclaimed that God ALONE could do, Jesus is now literally doing as a demonstration that confirms His identity. Who is this that the wind and waves obey Him? Who is this that treads on the waves of the sea?

This is God in the flesh. It is Jesus who has come from heaven to earth. He is coming toward the disciples, passing by to show them His glory.

And you would think, the disciples are ready this time. They already experienced Jesus calm the wind and waves with a command. They already saw Jesus multiply 5 loaves and 2 fish to feed thousands and thousands of people.

Surely, there is going to be rejoicing at the sight of Jesus powerfully walking above the water and through the storm that threatened them. Surely they are going to embrace each other and shout for joy as they see Jesus passing by with great glory.

(Slide 20)

Mark 6:49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified.

What is going on here? What happened to all those previous experiences, all of those amazing works that they witnessed, all of those miracles they had personally experienced. Forgotten in a moment. Erased by fear. It is as if nothing that Jesus had shown them previously changed their perspective in life. Their hearts were still hardened.

They still could not see Jesus for who He was. They thought he was a ghost and instead of being overcome with worship, they were overcome with fear.

What about your life? What happens when you find yourself in the midst of a new storm, a new challenge, a new difficulty in life?

Do you go back to saying, “Don’t you care God?”
Do you forget who God is in that moment of fear?
Do you doubt that God is for you?
Do you drift back to believing that God doesn’t hear you?
Do you doubt that He loves you?

We read this and it is so easy to think, “What is up with these disciples?
How can they miss this again and again and again?”

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Well what about you? What about our lives?

Are you bringing the merciful revelations that God has already given to you into the next storm of your life?

What is going through your heart in those storms? Is there a deeper trust, a greater faith and dependence in Jesus based on all that you have already experienced in the past with Him? Or does fear take over instead of faith? Does panic prevail instead of belief?

(Slide 22)

We continue reading:

Immediately, Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. Mark 6:50b-51a

Have you failed to see with the right perspective today? Have you failed to learn your faith lesson like the disciples? Have you slipped back into fear instead of faith?

Jesus is ready to help you today. He doesn’t raise his arms at the disciples and increase the wind and waves in anger shouting at them, “I am through with your failures, I am through with you not getting it!”

No, first He saw them with compassion, and went toward them when they couldn’t go toward Him. And now, Jesus speaks with compassion saying, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

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Jesus is literally saying, “Take courage! “I AM”.

I believe this is one of those powerful statements that Jesus is making to reveal His identity as God in the flesh.

(Slide 24)

In John 8:56, we hear Jesus saying 'I tell you the truth...before Abraham was born, I AM!' At this, they picked up stones to stone him... (John 8:56–59).

That violent response of the Jews to Jesus when He said this "I AM" statement indicates they clearly understood what Jesus was declaring. Jesus is saying that He is the eternal God incarnate. Jesus was equating Himself with unique "I AM" title God gave Himself in Exodus 3:14.

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The I AM, God incarnate, says, Don't be afraid. Take courage. I AM.

You are not alone in the storm.

You are not experiencing a battle that the I AM cannot overcome.

The I AM is with you.

The I AM is for you and wants to shepherd you.

The eternal God came from heaven to earth, looking at you with compassion, came toward you in power and He wants your faith and dependence to be in Him alone.

If Jesus is in your life as your Savior, there is always living hope for deliverance and a better tomorrow.

If the great I AM is your Savior then help is on the way and you have nothing to fear in His presence.

This is where we put our hope in as a community of disciples of Jesus Christ. Yes, we find ourselves in a world with the wind against us and waves that threaten us.

Yes, we struggle with terrible medical diagnosis, personal loss, pressures in relationships, confusing circumstances. And in the storms of life, we must know where our hope is found.

We are not putting our hope in our finances, our social status, our job, our physical or mental abilities, our political leaders. Our hope is in the

great I AM who has compassion on us, who has come from heaven to earth to save us, who enters into our lives and says, Take courage I AM with you. I am here. You are not alone.

There are better days coming because the I AM is with you.
There are miracles that are coming because the I AM is passing by to reveal His glory.

Take courage today family in Christ.
Take courage that the eternal I AM is with you and for you and is fully committed to shepherd you with compassion.

All may abandon you.
All circumstances may seem to indicate that you are alone.
All your pain may be telling you that God has forsaken you.
I don't know what storm you are in today, but if Jesus is your Savior, then you are not abandoned, you are not alone, you are not forsaken.

The I AM is with you and that means as long as Christ is living, then hope is alive in your life.

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We conclude our study in verses 51-52

51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Jesus climbed INTO the boat WITH them, and the wind died down.
One of my favorite words from Jesus is found in His prayer in John 14:3

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“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

There is a sense of Jesus always moving toward us, or wanting us to be closer to Him. It's not the other way around where we first had the idea of getting close to God.

Jesus left heaven to come to earth to seek and save the lost. Jesus has sacrificed more than we could even imagine to come into your life and

to make a way for you to be restored to God's family, forgiven of your sins and made new in your heart by the Spirit.

He wants you to be with Him. He steps into your life as He got into the boat with the disciples. He steps into your struggles, into your pain and is present with you.

And this is the heart of a life that is on mission for God. We seek to enter into other people's lives, paying no attention to color or race or class. We do all we can to introduce others to Jesus the Savior of the world, not by shouting from a stadium and keeping our distance, but by entering into peoples lives as Jesus entered into our lives.

Is there someone in your sphere of influence that seems to be sinking today? Someone you could bring the presence of Christ by intentionally stepping into their life and offering prayer, compassion, support and encouragement? Give to others what you have freely received. Step into their lives offering them the compassion of Christ.

(Slide 28)

Scripture says that:

They were completely amazed, 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

Jesus wants to help us grow into disciples that live by more than amazement. He wants us to live by faith. That means we believe in certain God-realities BEFORE we actually see them. It means we grow into disciples that have faith in the midst of the trial, not just faith that happens after the trial is over.

The disciples were amazed, but amazement is not God's end goal for us.

God is not in the entertainment business. He is in the transformation business. He is a redeemer and wants your heart to flourish with faith and dependence in Him.

Why did Jesus orchestrate this entire experience? Why did the disciples have to enter yet another storm? Because that was the only place they could enter into a greater personal experience of knowing Jesus for who He really is.

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Allow the storms of your life to deepen your faith in Jesus. He has overcome every threat in your life and has the power to bring you into eternity with Him as a transformed child of God.

Most people only believe what they see or are experiencing in the present moment. Most begin to question if God really cares or if God even hears when life gets hard.

But those are the times to believe,
I believe God loves me,
I believe God is for me,
I believe the great I AM is with me.
I have better days ahead because He is the shepherd who will take me to glory.

I will not allow circumstances of life,
I will not allow my present roller coaster emotions tell me what to believe about God.
I will not give my life over to be controlled by fear, I will choose to believe today.

I will fix my eyes on Christ.
I will remember that while I was lost in my sin, hopeless and guilty, Christ came from heaven to earth and drew near to me to have compassion on me.

I will remember again that Jesus took on the storm of punishment for my sin at the cross. He died for me and paid the ultimate price, giving the greatest sacrifice so that I could have peace with God.

I can believe nothing else but that Jesus loves me!

The I AM will never forsake me.
He is MY Savior.
He is MY LORD.
I can never be abandoned. He is here.

What did the resurrected Jesus say to Thomas who was so discouraged after the tragic events of seeing Jesus crucified?

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John 20:29

Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Jesus says, you are blessed when you believe the promise before seeing the fulfillment. The time to practice your Christian belief is in the midst of the storm, in the midst of everything falling apart, in the midst of circumstances when everything looks bleak.

That is the time to remain in faith and believe, “My Savior knows my struggle, my Savior is a God who delivers and my future is guaranteed to be better than my past. Because Jesus lives I have living hope!

(Begin background “None but Jesus” in closing**)**

Jesus says in John 16:33 “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

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Take courage today.

Do not fear, the great I AM is with you and has overcome everything that threatens to overcome you!

If I fall because I am weak, I have Jesus the great I AM to pick me up. If I have suffered losses likened to Job and have been pressed down by waves of tragedy, I look forward to glorious restoration because the I AM is with me.

If even death overshadows me, I have Jesus to raise me from the dead and give me everlasting life.

What an encouragement to know that in this very moment, Jesus sees me with compassion. Jesus moves toward me in mercy. Jesus gets into my life and says child, take courage, do not fear the I AM is here with you. You can never be alone in your storm again.