

Be Still

Jeff Mangum

Jesus gives two weighty promises to us in Matthew 7:24-27. First, He tells us that at some point—and maybe many points—in our lives, we will face difficulties. No matter who we are, there is a promise that the rain will come, the wind will blow, and the flood waters will rise. That is a truth that we must come to terms with. But there is a greater truth. There is the assurance that for those who place their trust in the Lord, the winds and flood waters will not prevail. Though temporary things might get washed away, Jesus promises that our faith and security will remain intact.

God's peace is mysteriously perfect.

In 1773, William Cowper wrote a powerful poem entitled “Light Shining out of Darkness.” The first lines of the poem say: “God moves in a mysterious way / His wonders to perform / He plants His footsteps in the sea / And rides upon the storm.” These words describe the confidence we can have in God’s mysterious peace.

We will all have times when things feel out of control, when nothing makes sense, when the flood waters seem to be rising too high, when there does not seem to be a way out. These are the moments that God shows His mysterious, yet palpable, peace. Throughout Scripture, we are introduced to men and women—just like us—who are overwhelmed with fear, doubt, and insecurity. Even so, the timing and power of God’s help rings out so loudly that their confidence in Him starts to overwhelm their fear of the flood. This is the mysterious promise of God’s peace for us. No matter the storm, we are reminded of Jesus’ words to His disciples as He walked toward them on the stormy waters: “But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid’” (Matthew 14:27 ESV).

You cannot create your own peace.

Though God repeatedly promises us that He will be faithful to us during the storms, we have an awful, upside-down view of how to bring remedy. We run to things that we can see, taste, and touch in order to create our own self-peace. God warns us about this through Jeremiah: “... for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13 ESV).

We continue running to ideas and things that we hope will bring us the peace we long for. But all fall short. Only God’s wisdom and comfort will do. No person or created thing can bring such an alarming peace. No matter what illusion of hope and comfort these things bring, only God can bring us what we truly desire. The second verse of “Be Still” reminds us of this: *“He’ll see us through He’s strong of this I’m*



sure / And by His strength alone we stand secure / There is none more powerful or wise / We will trust in Jesus Christ."

God will sustain you.

It is one thing to find true rescue during the storm, but we often wonder, How long will I be safe? Will the storm eventually overtake me? In Psalm 55, the psalmist shares his overwhelming fear of being overtaken by his enemy:

My heart is in anguish within me;

the terrors of death have fallen upon me.

Fear and trembling come upon me,

and horror overwhelms me.

And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!

I would fly away and be at rest;

yes, I would wander far away;

I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah." (Psalm 55:4-7 ESV)

It is in the middle of this storm that the psalmist then reminds us of what is most true, and he instructs us accordingly: "Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22 ESV). This is the promise we can cling to in the midst of fear and uncertainty. We can call to Him, and He is faithful to endure us, for He is our true and only refuge.

"I know my God is for me nothing can stand against me / He is my God almighty I will not be afraid"

