

“Five Simple Truths About Life: Surviving the Setbacks and the Storms”
January 18-23

Our entire lives we have been told “when you face a tough situation, hold your head up high, be strong, you’ll get through this.” But this is easier said than done. Maybe we do “know we will get through” our storms.....but still, there are moments when it doesn’t feel like it. At times we face things that bring us to our knees....and quite frankly, sometimes we don’t know if we can get back up. The storms of life overwhelm us.

Jesus doesn’t try and hide the fact we will all face storms in life. In fact, at various places in the Scriptures he plainly says “you will have setbacks and you will suffer...” but then he follows it up by saying “but don’t worry about anything.” And when we hear this we wonder how the two can come together. Well, the two come together because our faith acts as a life preserver for us in life. It doesn’t keep us from ending up out in the deep water.....but if we keep it around our hearts it will save us from sinking. And that, more than anything, is how we “survive,” not avoid, the setbacks. When we face the storms of life we, as people of faith, are called to cling to the only one who can save us....Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This week we are going to spend some time thinking about Christ as our life preserver. We are going to look at how we can cling to Him when facing our own storms....but also how we can be those people who throw the life preserver to others when they feel like they are sinking. We can’t avoid the storms.....but, through the grace of God, we can survive!

Monday: READ Matthew 6:25-34

Many of our fears and worries are tied up in what we worry “might” happen. We spend an exorbitant amount of time looking ahead and worry about the pitfalls that await us. This passage teaches that we should deal with the present, and not worry about the future. Are your fears and concerns mostly about something that’s happening, or about something that you fear might happen? How do fears about the future affect your daily life and relationships?

Pray the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

Tuesday: READ Mark 2:1-5

When we face setbacks and storms in life the people around us can play an huge role in helping us survive. Just think about the story we read just a moment ago. What role did the paralytics friends play in his healing? Read the passage again and notice just how determined they were to get help for their friend. Who are your “stretcher bearers”? For whom are you a stretcher bearer? Do you have a friend or co-worker who needs a bit of encouragement today?

Pray the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

Wednesday: READ Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

This passage points, again, to the importance of cultivating companions who help anchor and support you, and who you anchor and support, during the storms. This, maybe more than anything, should remind us of the importance of a community of faith. So often we get out of the habit of being active in a church. We convince ourselves it is just too much hassle, too inconvenient to spend so much time in one place. The church, however, can and will be that “friend” that helps you up when you fall. It, along with the love of Christ in your life, can offer you support and love like you can find no where else.

Pray the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

Thursday: READ Psalm 91:1-4

This is one of my favorite passages. It reminds us that God is a “fortress” for us in times of need. Think about your life. When have you needed a fortress in life? In what way does God fulfill this passage of scripture? What would these words mean to someone facing a life threatening illness? How is God our fortress even in tragedy or in the face of death?

Pray the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

Friday: READ Proverbs 3:5-8

How does this passage of ancient Hebrew wisdom summarize the teaching of this week’s scriptures? Whose wisdom are you depending on the most—your own or God’s? What does it mean to trust in the Lord in the face of storms and setbacks?

Pray the Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

Saturday: READ Matthew 4:8-10, Luke 12:13-15, 20-21

Today you will be reading the passages we will deal with in worship tomorrow. Spend some time thinking about and reflecting on them. What are they saying to your life? Pray that God will open your heart and prepare you for a true and holy worship experience.