

# Can You Sleep When the Wind Blows?

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I'd like to tell you a story. And then the sermon will be based on the story, but the story relates to what I just said.

Years ago along the Atlantic seacoast there was a farmer who owned land and actively farmed that land. And, if any of you have lived in New England, which Dorothy and I have for several years, it tends to be pretty rocky. It tends to be very stormy. The Nor'easters come barreling in and all kinds of storms during the growing season and then beyond the growing season come.

And this farmer, because he lived right near the coast, had a very difficult time getting hired hands to help because it was hard work, hard soil, tough weather. And he would advertise for applicants to help him with the farm. And as he got older, applicants became scarcer. And people were moving off the farms. And so he was having an increasingly difficult time because of not only the weather but the land, particularly the weather. And these storms would come through and just wreak havoc on the crops and on the buildings.

And so this farmer began really scratching to try to find somebody to work on his farm. And nobody would come. Nobody would come! And people would refuse if he went to them and asked if they would like to work.

And then finally a short, very thin man, well past middle-age approached the farmer as the farmer was trying to find people. And the farmer asked him, "Are you a good hand? Are you a good farm hand?" And this older man, wizened and thin man, said, "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows." That was his answer.

And the farmer was puzzled by that answer—as I think we all would be. And being desperate for help, he hired this fellow. Didn't have any choice! And he was nothing much to look at. He was, like I said, very wiry and up in age.

And he found out that this little wiry guy worked really well around the farm. And he was busy from dawn to dusk doing all the chores. And the farmer felt satisfied with this man's work.

And then one night, the first really bad storm came off from the northeast and began ripping through the trees and banging up the buildings and all of that. And it woke the farmer up. And he jumped out of bed and grabbed his lantern and he rushed to the outbuilding where this helper

was located. And he broke in, slammed the door open, and went into this hired hand's bedroom. And he yelled. He said, "Get up! The storm's coming! Tie things down before they blow away!" He was very concerned about that.

And the man never got out of bed. He just rolled over and he said, "Nope, not going to do that. I can sleep when the wind blows." That's what he told him in the beginning.

So the farmer is just enraged and thought this guy was a slacker!

And he ran out and began checking the barn and he found out that all the hay stacks had been covered with tarps. All the doors to the barn and the windows to the barn had been battened down. And the cows were in the barn as they should be. The chickens were secure in the chicken coop and the shutters were secured in the house and in his little house. And everything was just at it should be. Everything was tied down. Nothing would blow away.

And then the farmer came to himself and understood what the hired hand meant when he said, "I can sleep when the wind blows." And so the farmer was able then to return to his bed that night and get a good's night sleep because then he could sleep while the wind blows.

Now there's a lesson in that for all of us. We don't know specifically what lies ahead. Given the conditions of our nations, conditions of the world, this violence that we had down in Texas, and all manner of evil that is coming to fruition in this world, we don't know what lies ahead. We don't know what the next trial or test will be. We just don't. Just like that farmer didn't know when the next storm would blow in.

Let's go to Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 6 by way of introduction and see that when trials and tests come, we shouldn't be amazed. We should not marvel and say, "Why is God allowing this? Or why is God doing this?" Hebrews 12 and verse 6, we're told:

**Hebrews 12:6.** *For whom the Lord [loves] he [chastens], (KJV)*

Now we need to take that to heart. We need to realize that that applies to all of us.

**Hebrews 12:6.** *For whom the Lord [loves] he [chastens], and [He scourges] every son whom he [receives]. (KJV)*

Now if you look at the Greek word for *chasten*, it's Strong's 3811. And it is translated chasten or chastise, or teach or instruct. And if you look at the meaning of the word, it can be used to mean to train children. And, of course, we're all little kids to God. I don't care how old we are. Compared to God's eternity, we're just little kids to Him. It can mean to chastise or to correct. Or it can mean to mold the character of others by reprove and admonition, to mold

or shape the character of others by reproof, by admonition, by correction, by teaching.

And so we're told here that there are going to be trials and tests but they serve a purpose—to mold and shape us so that we can be the Bride of Christ. And so we had better be prepared for trials and tests.

So the question, if you want to put a title on the sermon, is:

### *Can You Sleep When The Wind Blows?*

Or can we not? When the trials come and the tests come, do we run around in circles wailing and throwing up our hands? Or are we able to go to sleep and get a good night's sleep while the wind is blowing outside and the trials are coming our way?

Now the hired hand in this story was able to sleep because he had secured the farm against the storms that were to come. He had done everything that he could do to secure that farm and to weather the storms. And what we, as God's people, need to do is to secure ourselves from the storms of life by doing in advance what we should do to prepare for those storms. So then obviously the question becomes:

What are the things that we should be doing to allow us to sleep through the storms or to sleep when the wind blows?

The First Point I'd like to make—and it is amazing. It continues to amaze me how sermonettes and sermons tie together because Stuart made the First Point. The First Point is that:

We can sleep while the wind blows by loving God with all our heart and becoming like Him and like Jesus Christ.

By loving God with all our heart and by becoming like He and Jesus Christ, it will allow us to sleep while the wind blows.

Now we know—and we won't turn there—but we've covered it so many times. Philippians 2 and verse 5 tells us that this mind should be in us—the mind of Jesus Christ. The mind that was in Christ should be in us. If we love God and Christ with all our heart, isn't it logical that we should want to be like Him? If we're commanded to love God and Christ with everything that we have, doesn't it follow that we would want to emulate Them as Stuart was pointing out? We would want to be like our Master, our Teacher, our Rabbi. Shouldn't we want to do that? Well, of course!

And Christ even said—again, we won't turn there. You know it by heart. Matthew 5 and verse 6, He said, "Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness." Now righteousness is defined in the Bible. We know, if we want to know what righteousness is, we look in the Bible. And righteousness is the character of God and Christ. It's what They would do, how They would live if

They were on this earth. And so if we love God with all our heart and with all our mind and with all our being and we would want to be like them, then we would want to behave like Them and think like Them and act like Them.

And so, if we're close to God, then we will be able to weather the storms. We will be able to sleep when the wind blows—if we're close to God. If we're not, we will be filled with worry and upset and turmoil. We won't sleep at night. People get ulcers. People get all kinds of ailments because of stress and tension in their life. But if we love God with all our heart and we begin to mold ourselves in the character of God and Jesus Christ, then we will be able to sleep while the wind blows. That's the First Point. As I said, Stuart nailed that one down in the sermonette.

The Second Point is that:

We can sleep while the wind blows by studying the Word of God—but there's a catch here—by studying the Word of God for understanding as to how we should live our life.

We study the Bible to learn how to live. We study the Bible to learn how we should think and how we should act. Studying the Bible is not an intellectual exercise. Now I know for some people it is. They could be studying a history book or they could be studying somebody's views on prophecy and they do it for an intellectual exercise. But we should be studying God's Word not for knowledge for knowledge's sake. Not for knowledge so that we can impress everybody by how much we know, but we should study God's Word for understanding as to how we should conduct our affairs in this life. In other words: applying that.

The farmhand knew in advance what had to be to secure the farm. I mean he knew that tarps ought to be over the haystacks. He knew that the cows should be in the barn. He knew the chicken coops should be secured. He knew all of that. Now he learned that through experience. And so he did it in advance so that when the storm came—the trial came—everything would be fine. Nothing would be lost. He learned what to do from experience.

And God's Word, you see, provides us the experience without actually having to go through it. We need to understand that—that God's Word allows us to learn the easy way! God's Word says—and I'm translating it into what we say to our little children—God's Word says, "Don't put your hand on the hot burner on the stove." Now most times, we learn the hard way and we put our hand on the stove and we get burned. God's Word says, "Don't do that." So if you learn that in advance, then you will never put your hand on the stove and you don't have to have a bad experience. We learn in advance.

Will Rogers said—we've quoted this before:

"Good judgment comes from experience. Most experience comes from bad judgment."

We learn the hard way. "Most experience comes from bad judgment. And good judgment comes from experience."

Too many Brethren study to prove themselves right and other people wrong. Too many Brethren study fringe subjects rather than studying the fundamentals. "Get way out on the twigs." As Mr. Armstrong used to say, "The twigs." Crawl up the trunk, go out on a big branch, then get to a smaller branch, then get out to a twig somewhere and just study, study, study on this little twig way out from the trunk of the tree. And he had a lot to say in his life about that.

Let's go to Matthew 23 and verse 23. As we get closer to the end time, as we are trying to mold and shape ourselves through the power of God's spirit to be the Bride of Christ, we should pay attention to Matthew 23 and verse 23. As you know, Matthew 23 is Christ's railing on the scribes and the Pharisees, the religious leaders of His day who were leading people astray. He says:

***Matthew 23:23.*** *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (KJV)*

Because they would say one thing and do something else!

***Matthew 23:23b.*** *for [you] pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted [And this is the important part!] the weightier matters of the law. (KJV)*

And He lists three. Now the King James says, "judgment". It actually means *justice*. That's how we treat other people fairly. "Mercy" when somebody wrongs us, we are quick to show mercy and forgiveness. And then "faith" because as we get closer to the end, we are going to need mountains of faith! And these Christ tells us are the "weightier matters of the law."

And He goes on to say, "You shouldn't neglect tithing and being diligent about that. You shouldn't neglect the Sabbath and the Holy Days and all the physical things that we need to do." But He said, "It's time we need to focus on the weightier matters of the law." And these three, if you look at them, are very essential to be able to sleep through the night when the storms are raging and when the wind is blowing.

We need to study for correction of our own conduct and our own path. We should study with the idea that we're looking into the Bible to see where I am wrong and where I need to change. Or what path am I going down and is it the path God and Christ want me to go down? Or am I heading off into a ditch somewhere? We need to study with that in mind.

Let's go to Hebrews 4 and verse 12, a fundamental Scripture about the purpose of the Bible. Hebrews 4 and verse 12, I'm going to read it out of the NIV because it makes it a little clearer. Paul is talking about the purpose of God's Word. Hebrews 4 verse 12:

***Hebrews 4:12.*** *For the word of God is living and active. (NIV)*

Now that means it's not out-of-date. And just because the Bible is describing something that happened thousands of years ago, as Stuart pointed out again in his sermonette, showing what happened back then, it's there for a purpose. It's there for us to learn from. And in that sense, the Bible is living. It is applicable today even though the words that were written were written thousands of years ago.

**Hebrews 4:12b.** *Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to [the] dividing [of the life] and [the] spirit, [the] joints and [the] marrow; (NIV)*

Now notice this last phrase!

**Hebrews 4:12 continued.** *it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (NIV)*

What that tells us is when we go into the Bible and we read what's there, and then we look into our own attitudes. We look into our own thoughts. And do our attitudes and thoughts sync up with what we find in the Bible? Or is the Bible something different than our behavior and our thoughts and our words and our deeds? And if there's a difference, then we need to have a course change. We need to walk down a different path so that we become in harmony and sync with what we read in the Bible. That's one of the great, great purposes of the Bible is to teach us who and what God and Christ are and then see all the examples in the Bible and then it motivates us through the power of God's spirit—not that we do it ourselves—to be like God and Jesus Christ. We need to compare our thoughts and attitudes with what we find in God's Word and then make corrections up here in our brain, in our mouth, and in our deeds and conduct.

Mr. Armstrong said something that was very profound in the old book Why Were You Born? It was published first in 1957. I remember reading that book diligently. It was one of the catalysts that clicked in my mind. Mr. Armstrong said the following quote:

Bible study is of value only in proportion as the knowledge revealed is incorporated into your character by actually living it.

I'll read it again.

Bible study is of value only in proportion as the knowledge revealed is incorporated into your character by actually living it.

It is useless if we don't put it into practice. It is worth nothing if we don't become like God and Jesus Christ in our thoughts, in our words, and in our deeds.

Let's go to Proverbs chapter 1. As we know the Book of Proverbs is there to give us wisdom in advance. It gives us knowledge and understanding and wisdom. Wisdom is the important thing. And so it teaches us the lessons without us learning those lessons the hard way through painful experience. Proverbs 1, we're going to read the first seven verses. This is a purpose for God's Word.

**Proverbs 1:1.** *The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; (KJV)*

Notice this! This second verse and third verse are very important.

**Proverbs 1:2.** *To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; 3) To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice [There's that word again.], and judgment, and equity [meaning fairness]; (KJV)*

Verse 4:

**Proverbs 1:4.** *To give subtlety to the simple, (KJV)*

1 Corinthians 1:26 says, "We're the simple." We didn't make the cut, just as the apostles didn't make the cut. In the world's view, we are not the elite. And so the Proverbs:

**Proverbs 1:4.** *give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion [far beyond his years]. (KJV)*

A young man can behave and act and think like a veteran, somebody with ages of experience.

Verse 5:

**Proverbs 1:5.** *A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man [or a woman] of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: 6) To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings [meaning deep sayings]. (KJV)*

Verse 7, this is another key.

**Proverbs 1:7.** *The fear of the [Eternal] is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (KJV)*

And the Bible is our instruction book, and foolish are we if we ignore that, if we don't hunger and thirst out of righteousness.

Let's jump to chapter 3 and we'll begin in verse 19. Notice this! It pertains to the story that we read in the beginning.

**Proverbs 3:19.** *The LORD by wisdom [has] founded the earth; by understanding [has] he established the heavens. 20) By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. (KJV)*

Verse 21:

**Proverbs 1:21.** *My son, let not them depart from [your] eyes [wisdom, knowledge and understanding]: keep sound wisdom and discretion: 22) So shall they be life unto [your life], and grace to [your] neck. (KJV)*

Now notice verse 23.

**Proverbs 3:23.** *Then [shall you] walk in [the] way safely, and [your] foot shall not stumble. (KJV)*

Verse 24:

**Proverbs 3:24.** *When [you lie] down, [you shall] not be afraid: (KJV)*

As the hired hand wasn't afraid!

**Proverbs 3:24b.** *[you shall] lie down, and [your] sleep shall be sweet. (KJV)*

Just like the hired servant. You don't have to worry. You don't have to be afraid. You don't have to be tied in knots, if we learn from God's Word and apply it in our lives. You see God's Word allows us to learn the easy way and therefore, be able to sleep when the wind blows.

So this Second Point is that:

We must study God's Word but from the standpoint of correcting who and what we are.

That leads us to the Third Point.

We can sleep while the wind blows by putting God's Word into practice.

As Mr. Armstrong said, "The knowledge is useless if you don't put it into practice by living it every day of our lives."

Now the hired hand took steps in advance. He didn't talk about, just yammer on about what he should do or what needs to be done or what would be a good idea to have happen before the next storm. He actually went out and did it. He put the tarps up. He battened down the hatches. He made sure the cows were there where they needed to be and the chickens where they needed to be. He made sure of all that and then he could sleep. He put his knowledge and his experience to practice.

So what we need to do is to take direct steps to daily secure our lives from Satan and what is to come because we can take the steps now. We don't want to start taking the steps after the trial hits us. We want to take the steps now so we will be ready for what lies ahead.

Look at James 1 and verse 22. In the Protestant world, all you have to do is believe and then everything will be fine. Some Protestants call the Book of



James "the book of straw" because they don't like what it says. But notice what James says in chapter 1 verse 22:

**James 1:22.** *But be [you] doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving [yourselves]. (KJV)*

If you just hear the words—and there are people in the greater Church of God that believe "Well, if I can just sit in the right place, if I can be part of the right group, if I can tithe to the right organization, then that's all I need to do. I just have to show up." But that's not what this says. You have to be doers of the word. You just can't sit out and hear it! You've got to put it into practice.

Let's go to Matthew 19, very, very famous Scripture, and we're going to read verses 16 through 19. Because a man came to test Christ, but he asked a very pertinent, very important question—the fundamental question! And Christ gave him an answer that we need to pay heed to. Matthew 19 verse 16:

**Matthew 19:16.** *And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, (KJV)*

Notice this! Now notice the question!

**Matthew 19:16b.** *what good thing shall I do,* (KJV)

He's asking not, "What must I think? Where should I attend?" but "What must I do:"

**Matthew 19:16 continued:** *that I may have eternal life?* (KJV)

Now that is the question. But we have to understand it's deeds. It's what we actually wind up doing, what's going on in our head, what's coming out of our mouth, and what we actually wind up doing as far as our own deeds and example.

Verse 17:

**Matthew 19:17.** *[Christ] said unto him, Why [do you call] me good? [There's not one] good, that is, [but] God: but if [you will] enter into [a] life, [He says, This is what you have to do. You have to] keep the commandments. (KJV)*

And we know that Christ added a spiritual component to the Commandments. The Sermon on the Mount started that off. It's not just something physical, but it's something up here motivated by God's spirit, a spiritual application to the Word of God.

Verse 18:

**Matthew 19:18.** *He [the man said] (KJV)*

Again he was trying to tempt Him or test Him rather.

**Matthew 19:18.** *He said, Which [ones]? [And Christ] said, [You shouldn't] murder, [you shouldn't] commit adultery, [you shouldn't] steal, [you shouldn't] bear false witness, 19) Honor [your] father and [your] mother: (KJV)*

And then He summed it up by saying:

**Matthew 19:19b.** *[You shall] love [your] neighbor as [yourself]. (KJV)*

Now He didn't mention the first four because that was taken for granted. That was obvious because they were living in Judah. And nobody would doubt the first four. And so He was very clear though that He mentioned the ones of how we treat others, how we relate to others, what is our example. And Christ is very concerned about our putting God's Word into practice.

Now we know—and we won't turn there—but in Matthew 7 Christ says twice—What did He say in Matthew 7 twice? "You shall know them" how? Not by what they say. But we know one another "by their fruits," what is actually done, how one's conduct is exemplified. So let's understand that. We put God's Word into practice.

With that in mind, let's go to 1 Peter 1 and verse 17. We're told here that Peter also said that "judgment is now on the house of God," but notice what he says here in verse 17, 1 Peter chapter 1. He says:

**1 Peter 1:17.** *And if [you] call on the Father [our Father], [Notice this!] who without respect of persons (KJV)*

God doesn't cut people slack because they have a certain office. There's one set of rules for the ministry and one set of rules for everybody else. There's not one set of rules for somebody higher up the pipeline and another set of rules for all of us.

**1 Peter 1:17b.** *who without respect of persons [judges] according to every man's [or every woman's] work, [he says then, we better] pass [our] time of [living here on earth] in fear: (KJV)*

Meaning: we take it to heart. And we realize that our works are what are being judged. Not what we want to do, not what we should do, not what we think we should do, but what we actually wind up doing.

You know in Star Wars? Obi—the little short one—I can't remember which one he is—Yoda is it I guess? He said, "There is no try." Very profound statement! "There is no try." You either do or you don't. And you know our kids say, "Well, I tried! I tried to make an A." Or "I tried to write this paper." And they wind up not doing!

So at the end of the day, you either do or you don't. And what God is telling us is that at the end of the day, "You either do or you don't." And we're judged by what we do. Very important!

So we can sleep while the wind blows if we do and not just talk. We can sleep while the wind blows like that farmer's helper. He did. He went out and did what was necessary. Therefore, he could sleep. Now if he hadn't done what was necessary, and the chickens are running to and fro and the cows are out who knows where and the hay's just blowing everywhere, then, no, you're not going to sleep very well. And you're going to be, as they say, "Trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube." It's already out. And you don't want to be in that position. None of us want to be in that position. So we can't just talk. We must do.

That leads us to the Fourth Point.

We can sleep while the wind blows by seeking God's will in all that we do.

And I'm here to tell you, having been in the Church forty-three, forty-four years now, I've gone off half-cocked so many times. I've headed off in directions. I either didn't even think about it, assuming it was God's will or I just took my will as God's will, and you walk off into a ditch! And I've made most of the mistakes that any Church member could make or any minister could make because I just go off half-cocked. And you look back and say, "Well, why didn't I think about that? Why didn't study about that? Why didn't I fast about it? Why didn't I pray about it?" And we just run headlong into a disaster.

Christ, again on the Sermon on the Mount—we won't turn there—but in Matthew 6, what did He say when He gave us the outline for the prayer? "Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come." And the next one? "Your will be done." That's what we should pray every day. That should be part of the outline. If we have tasks to do that day or we have decisions to make, we should pray in the morning that we do God's will. Not our will, not the world's will, not Satan's will, but what God wants us to do.

Now, Christ came headlong into that His last night on earth. Look at Luke chapter 22 and verse 42. I mean He was in agony. He was sweating great drops of blood. He knew what was ahead of Him. He knew the cross. He knew the scourging. He knew. It wasn't a mystery to Him.

So with that in mind:

**Luke 22:42.** *[He said], Father, if [You] be willing, (KJV)*

I mean His physical flesh was screaming out, "I don't want to do this! I don't want to go through this!" He said:

**Luke 22:42b.** *if [You] be willing, remove this cup from me: (KJV)*

But then He said:

**Luke 22:42 continued:** *nevertheless not [what I want], but [what You want is what I want to do]. (KJV)*

And we need to learn that lesson. We need to do it God's way. And one of the lessons I've learned over the last couple of years is that my will means absolutely nothing! It means zero because if we don't do what God wants us to do, we'll wind up in a disaster. We will be in a ditch.

We must do it God's way! And we must take the time to fast, to pray, to study, to meditate on what God wants us to do, not only as individuals, but as the Pacific Church of God, as our group. We need to do it God's way.

We learn by experience and I have learned over and over and finally just in the last few years, finally the light bulb went on. You know fast learner that I am! It's only taken four decades plus! But the fact is that you learn by experience only God's way works. We can try to force our way, force our desires, force our wants into a situation and it won't work if it's not God's will. And so we must seek God's will.

Look at John chapter 9 and verse 31. We don't want to be in category. He starts with a negative and ends on a positive. John 9 verse 31:

**John 9:31.** *Now we know that God [hears] not sinners: (KJV)*

And Isaiah tells us that our sins separate us from God that He will not hear. We understand that. So we don't want to be in that category.

He says, "but"—the other side of the coin.

**John 9:31b.** *but if any man [or woman] be a worshipper of God, (KJV)*

Worship one, but notice the second qualification.

**John 9:31 continued:** *and [does] his will, him he [hears]. (KJV)*

Now if we continue to, as Paul said in the New Testament, "kick against the pricks"—that means opposing God, being at cross purposes with God, going against God's will. And I've used the analogy of taking both shoes off, taking your socks off and walking up to a rose bush and start kicking the rose bush. That's kicking against the pricks. It hurts! It's stupid. There is no good fruit. And you have blood and pain and infection and all of that.

And so, what we're being told here is that not only do we have to worship God but we have to seek and do His will. And if we try to force our will into a situation, we kick against the pricks. We come up infected, bloodied, and in pain, and we suffer. And none of us wants to do that.

And we learn from bad experiences as Will Rogers says. We've learned and learned and learned that my way ends in pain and suffering. God's way ends in

all the fruits of His spirit—love and joy and peace, tranquility, peacefulness of mind, safety, security, if we do God's will.

And it's only by doing God's will that we will ever be truly safe in this world and safe when the wind starts blowing. We're not relying on anything physical but we're relying on God our Father. When we do His will, He hears us and then He answers our prayers. And I can't tell you the number of prayers that God has answered for our fellowship, the number of prayers that have gone up to God for healing and God answers and He answers and He answers. And that's the position we want to be in because we're doing God's will. We've got to do God's will in our personal life as well as in the life of our church, of our group.

That leads us now to the Fifth Point. The Fourth was:

We need to seek God's will.

This Fifth is:

We can sleep while the wind blows by doing all we can, all we should, and then trust in God for what we can't do.

Mr. Armstrong said that for years and years and years. He says, "Do everything you can do. Do everything you should do. And then once you've done all of that, then trust in God for the rest."

Now that hired hand did everything he could do. He tied everything down. He protected all the animals. And then he went to sleep because he'd done everything he could do.

We, on the other hand, do everything we can do humanly and physically. And then we pray and study and get close to God and then the rest is out of our control. And you learn just to take a deep breath and let God do the rest.

As we say in West Texas, "You hide and watch." It means out in the dust and boulders and sagebrush and jack-rabbits of West Texas, you kind of get behind a rock and let God do what He's going to do. And you stick your head up every once in a while and see what God's doing. And then you hunker back down so you don't get your head shot off.

And so we hide and watch after we've done everything we can do!

Let's go to 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 7, a Scripture that we need to take to heart because it should apply to each and every one of us. We don't walk the way of the world. A very short verse, 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 7:

**2 Corinthians 5:7.** *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:) (KJV)*

And sometimes when the situation is desperate—I'm sure the Halls have been up against this many, many times recently—that sometimes you don't see a solution. Whatever you pick, there's a downside. You just don't know where to

go. And so you have to step out on faith. You have to trust in God. Make the best decision you can make and then just trust Him for the best. That's all we can do.

Let's jump over to Hebrews 11 and verse 6 and see that trusting in God, having faith in God is something God is going to look at and we will be judged by. Are we wringing our hands and looking to the world, or are we looking to God. Hebrews 11 verse 6:

***Hebrews 11:6. But without faith it is impossible to please him: (KJV)***

We should take that to heart! It is impossible to make God happy! Well, if we love God with all our heart and we want to be like Him, wouldn't we want to make God happy? Wouldn't we want God to be pleased with us? Well, of course, we would. And it says the only way we can be pleasing to God is to have faith, to trust in Him.

In the middle of this raging storm, this man could just relax and go to sleep. In the middle of the raging storms in our life, trials in our life, we come to the end of our rope, we've done everything we can do, and the only thing that's left is either worry yourself into an early grave or trust in God and go to sleep and relax. And God is teaching us that. He teaches us that everyday. And trials are going to come on us to see are we going to tie ourselves in little tiny knots, run around in circles and go crazy? Or are we going to trust in Him and relax and let God handle it?

Let's go to Matthew chapter 8. Christ not only said the words, but He did the deeds. He lived what He said. This is an example of the disciples following their Master into a ship. And notice their reaction versus Christ's reaction. Matthew 8 verse 23, this was very early in their ministry and being together.

***Matthew 8:23. And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. 24) And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: (KJV)***

Now these ships in those days were open on the top. And they were open to the wind and the weather. We're not told if this ship was a combination of sail and oars or strictly a sailing ship. We don't know. But when it says the waves were covering it, they were breaking over either the side or the bow of the ship and water was drenching all of those inside. They were exposed to the elements. So, they weren't down in some hold in the middle of a gigantic ship and you're not aware of what's going on outside. They were intimately aware of the storm. They weren't riding in an aircraft carrier. I mean this was a small ship and they were really being tossed around.

But notice at the end of verse 25, what was Christ doing? "He was asleep" while the wind blew. He was just asleep. Wind raging, boat bouncing around, he was asleep.

Verse 25:

**Matthew 8:25.** *And his disciples came to him, and [they shook Him awake], (KJV)*

And you know they're wringing their hands and wailing and crying and saying, "Save us, we're going to perish!"

**Matthew 8:26.** *And he [said] to them, Why are [you afraid], (KJV)*

And you can imagine being on the receiving end of Christ's "Why are you afraid?" You're looking around and say, "We're going to die is why we're afraid?" They didn't have God's spirit at that time.

**Matthew 8:26.** *And he [said] to them, Why are [you afraid], O [you] of little faith? (KJV)*

And then I'm sure He slowly got up, stretched his legs a little bit, and then looked out at the waves and the sky and the rain and the wind and all that. And He just commanded that it cease. And guess what? It says at the end of verse 26:

**Matthew 8:26b.** *and there was a great calm. (KJV)*

Now these men were early in knowing Christ, early in their association.

**Matthew 8:27.** *[And they] marveled, What [kind] of man is this, that [He can command] the winds and the [waves! (KJV)*

Well, they were going to find out that He was a lot more than just a man! There was a lot more going on than just a human brain in a human body. They would find that out. But this was a very pregnant example of being calm in adversity because you trust—Christ was trusting in His Father. He knew that.

When we pray in faith, the waters will be calm. When we pray in faith, the wind and the storm will be calm. Now what I mean by that is the wind is still going to blow outside, but we will be calm. We will be at peace if we have done everything we can do and then trust in God for the rest.

Now the problem becomes when we haven't done all we should do. Then we feel guilty. And then we're suffering and we're saying, "Oh, I wish I'd gotten in more prayer," or "Oh, I wish I'd studied a little harder," or "Oh, I wish I hadn't done this or hadn't done that," or "Oh, I wish I'd worked on this weakness that I have or this sin that I have." In the midst of the storm, you can sleep by working on that. And God and Christ understand we are human. They understand that we will never be perfect, but they want to see growth, fruit, progress. That's very, very important.

So let's go to 2 Timothy chapter 1 now and see that if we have a spirit of fear, it's coming from the wrong place. 2 Timothy chapter 1 and we're going to read verses 5, 6, and 7. And Paul is writing to Timothy and he's reminding Timothy of certain things. 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 5:

**2 Timothy 1:5.** *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned (KJV)*

That means not fake. Some people can claim to have a lot of faith. They'll talk about their faith. But he's saying, "Timothy, you have not fake faith. You have real faith." He says:

**2 Timothy 1:5b.** *the unfeigned faith that is in [you], which first [dwelt] in [your] grandmother Lois, and [in your] mother Eunice; [He says,] I am persuaded that in [you] also [this real faith, this true faith]. 6) Wherefore I put [you] in remembrance that [you] stir up the gift of God [this faith and God's spirit], which is in [you] by the putting on of my hands. (KJV)*

But notice what he says:

**2 Timothy 1:7.** *[Because] God hath not given us [a] spirit of fear; (KJV)*

And one of the things I've learned, especially when I wake up in the middle of the night sometimes and there's a knot in my stomach about some issue or some situation, I have learned that that doesn't come from God. That fear or that anxiety isn't from God. And you have to get down on your knees and pray to God and say, "Look, I know this is either coming from me, my human nature, or it's coming from a spiritual source that is evil. I understand that and I am asking You to rebuke the fear. I am asking You to give me more of Your holy spirit."

We know God's spirit is analogous—oil is analogous to God's spirit. And we're told that when Aaron had oil poured over his head, we're told that it ran down over his face. It says it ran off of his beard onto his cloak and then it ran down his cloak to the edges of the cloak and then dripped on the ground.

And if you ask God the analogy between oil and God's holy spirit to give you God's spirit and to give you the peace that comes as a fruit of God's spirit, I've literally experienced that. Where the peace starts at the top of your head and just flows down over you and a few seconds or a few minutes later, you are relaxed and you are at peace. That comes from God's spirit and the fear is vanished. The fear is put away. I have felt that personally several times. And sometimes you just feel like this trial maybe is insurmountable.

God has not given us the spirit of fear, but notice what He gives us!

**2 Timothy 1:7b.** *of power [to rebuke the fear], and of love [which rebukes fear], and of a sound mind. (KJV)*

Not a twisted, worried, raveled mind, but of a sound mind, a balanced mind!

So let's understand that if we have fear and unrest, it is not from God. It's from another source. And we need to get our mind re-gearred so that we can have that peace.



Let's go to Matthew chapter 6 now. As we come to the end of the age, this Scripture in Matthew 6 is very, very important for God's people today. We're going to read verses 24 through 34 and I'll read it out of the NIV. We know this. We understand it, but we need to make it part of our lives! Matthew 6 verse 24:

**Matthew 6:24.** *"No [man or no woman, no] one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. (NIV)*

Meaning: this physical world.

Verse 25 of Matthew 6:

**Matthew 6:25.** *"Therefore [because you can't serve two masters] I tell you, [don't] worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. [Isn't] life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26) Look at the birds of the air; they [don't] sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. [Aren't] you much more valuable than [these little birds that fly around]? 27) [Or] Who of you by worrying (NIV)*

And this is something we all need to pay attention to!

**Matthew 6:26:** *[Which one of us by worrying] can add a single hour to [our] life? (NIV)*

We can't! Worry accomplishes nothing.

Verse 28:

**Matthew 6:28.** *"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or [they don't] spin. 29) Yet I tell you that Solomon in all [of] his splendor [wasn't] dressed like one of these. 30) If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? (NIV)*

And He's saying when we worry about those things and stew about those things, then we don't have the faith that we should have. Yes, if we're out of a job, we should move mountains to apply for jobs and do everything we can. But once we've done all we can, then we trust in God.

Verse 31:

**Matthew 6:31.** *So [don't] worry, saying, 'What [are we going to] eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32) [He says,] For the pagans run after all these things, (NIV)*

The people in the world run to and fro and we see it on the news. They were interviewing people last night. They were out of work and they're just wringing

their hands, "What are we going to do? What are we going to do? And I've tried. And I've been out of work for a year. And I don't know what to do!" And they're just tied in little bitty knots!

Verse 32 continuing on, He says:

**Matthew 6:32b.** *your heavenly Father knows [what] you [have] need [of]. (NIV)*

He knows our needs before we even ask!

**Matthew 6:33.** *But seek [you] first his kingdom and his righteousness, (NIV)*

The point we covered in the very First Point.

**Matthew 6:33b.** *and all these things [are going to] be given to you as well. (NIV)*

Verse 34:

**Matthew 6:34.** *Therefore [because of everything He said up to this point] do not worry about tomorrow. (NIV)*

I've got to learn that. I learn it every day!

**Matthew 6:34b.** *[Don't] worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (NIV)*

I think we're learning that! Every day has enough trials and troubles about its own so why twist in the wind about something that's down the road that may never happen? As one man said, "Today is everything that you worried about yesterday." And you're dealing with it today. So was all that worry necessary?

You see we don't need to understand everything. We don't. After we've done all that we can do, then we just need to be like a little kid and stick our hand up in the air. And God's here and He sticks His hand down to us and He walks us through it.

I can remember—Cleo Aho is sitting in the audience—when she had cancer. And we were sitting talking one day. And we talked about this very subject. That she had done everything she could do. She did everything she thought she should do. And now she was facing surgery and whatever the outcome of that would be. And we just talked. Look, you get to the point you've done everything you can do. All you have to do is just stick your hand in God's hand and let Him walk you through this step-by-step.

He is your loving Father. He wants you to be in His Kingdom. He has an abode for you. He has a place already mapped out for you. He's not going to walk away and desert you. You've done everything you could. You've been

responsible in everything you've done. So put your hand inside of God's and let Him walk you through it.

And she came through it. She kept told me she kept thinking about that and she just relaxed. And I was amazed because we talked right before she went into surgery and she was just fine. She didn't have a worry in the world! Just went through the surgery just fine because you learn that we do everything we can do and then we trust in God.

Once we have prepared spiritually, mentally, and physically there is nothing to fear! Once we've done everything we can do, there is nothing to fear.

Well, I originally had Five Points, but then I was praying here a couple of days ago—ha-ha-ha-ha! Normally you try to have five or seven or something like that, but—and Stuart's sitting there shaking his head at me. "Oh, boy! Here we go again!"

I originally had Five Points, but I was praying about the sermon because I want very desperately to speak what God wants me to speak. I don't want to speak out of my mouth. I don't because it's a flop. It just won't work. And then the thought came in about another point. So I quickly got up and wrote it all down.

And so we're going to have the Sixth and Last Point right now.

We can sleep while the wind blows by cultivating good friendships.

In this we're departing from the farmer and his helper. But we can sleep while the wind blows by cultivating good friendships. And that's something that Dorothy and I have learned in spades over the last several years. Good friends, close friends, friends that are closer than a brother, blood-brother or sister, will help you get through.

Let's go to Ecclesiastes chapter 4 and we're going to begin in verse 9. We're going to need each other as helpers and supporters and sustainers—not to replace God—but to help God do His will in our lives. Look at Ecclesiastes 4 verse 9, now this can be referring to a marriage but it also refers to friends. Ecclesiastes 4 verse 9:

***Ecclesiastes 4:9.*** *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. (KJV)*

You know you can plow a field with two a lot faster than you can plow a field with one. I mean the Roecks know that. Both of them are—they're a team. And they get a lot of work done.

Verse 10:

***Ecclesiastes 4:10.*** *[But he says,] if one of them falls, the [other] will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he [falls]; for he [doesn't have] another to help him up. (KJV)*

And we have scattered Brethren out there that are alone. And that's why we need to pay attention to those scattered Brethren. And hopefully we can set up some systems whereby all of us can help them on a personal one-on-one basis. I've been thinking a lot about that because you don't want to be alone and fall. That's why we're here. That's why we come every Sabbath. That's why we're involved in each other's lives. We know who's sick. We know who's suffering. We know who has joy. But if one falls, we want to be there to pick them up.

Verse 11:

***Ecclesiastes 4:11.*** *Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? (KJV)*

We know that. Those of you who are married know that in spades. Or those of you who have children, they're piled in bed with you and you're throwing the covers off cause they're so warm.

Verse 12:

***Ecclesiastes 4:12.*** *And if one prevail against him [an individual, maybe Satan, the Adversary], two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (KJV)*

You don't break a rope. My dad grew up on a ranch in New Mexico and I went out there. Those ropes, you had a thousand pound animal on the end of the rope and it wasn't breaking! You could haul that animal just about anywhere you wanted if you had a horse underneath you. So a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Let's go to Proverbs chapter 17 and see just a very few Scriptures about friends and about brothers and sisters. Proverbs 17 verse 17, we are going to need each other as time goes on. We are going to need to get closer and closer and closer together as brothers and sisters in God's Church because we can help and make the difference in helping somebody through a trial or overcome a problem. Proverbs 17 and verse 17:

***Proverbs 17:17.*** *A friend [loves] at all times, (KJV)*

It's not conditional! Even though somebody's going astray, you love at all times!

***Proverbs 17:17b.*** *and a brother is born for adversity. (KJV)*

And we can take this to mean a Church brother or sister, a spiritual brother or sister is born; that means they're there when adversity comes. They're right by your side. They're helping you through it.

Look at the next chapter. Proverbs 18 and verse 24, we generally focus on the first part of this verse, which is absolutely true and we should, but notice the latter part too. Proverbs 18 verse 24:

**Proverbs 18:24.** *A man that [has] friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that [sticks] closer than a brother. (KJV)*

Meaning: a blood-brother. And we need to be friends with one another that are closer than blood relatives because we have the bond of God's spirit. It's not a physical blood relationship. It's is a spiritual, holy spirit relationship.

During this recent distress that we've had, many have stood up for their friends. Many have not allowed their friends to be put down or criticized or kicked to the curb. When you go through tough times, as the man says, when you go through tough times, you know who your true friends are. You know who really counts when you're going through a tough time.

Look at chapter 27 verse 6. Sometimes friends have to be honest and straightforward with their friends. Proverbs 27 and verse 6:

**Proverbs 27:6.** *Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. (KJV)*

And sometimes it takes a friend to go to another friend and say, "Hey! You're off track. You're going in the wrong direction. I'm worried about you. This is what I see. Can we sit down and talk about it?" And sometimes those are wounds in the sense that it hurts to have somebody, a friend tell you that you did this and look what the Bible says and you said that and look what the Bible says. Those hurt but boy they are faithful! That person wants you in the Kingdom of God. And sometimes that's necessary.

And Christ told us—we won't turn there—John 15 verse 13. We know what Christ said. "Greater love has no man or woman than this." What is that? "That you lay down your life for your friends." That's just not only willing to give up your life. It means you dedicate your life. You lay yourself down at the feet of your friend. You're willing to help them and serve them—you know foot-washing attitude in that sense—for your friend. You're willing to give up your time, your money, your interests, to go help a friend.

There was a French poet named Jacques Delille who lived in the 1700's and early 1800's who says:

"Fate chooses your relations, you choose your friends."

We didn't choose our parents. We didn't choose our brothers and sisters. But we can choose our friends. And that's why we're all here today. We're friends. And we're going to need each other before this is over.

And Christ tells us what friends do to other friends in a way of helping and we find that in 2 Corinthians chapter 1. Let's go there very quickly. 2 Corinthians chapter 1, we're going to read verses 3 and 4. God comforts us through His spirit. And we're not here to just sit on that.

**2 Corinthians 1:3.** *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; (KJV)*

And we know God comforts us when we're in trials and troubles, when the wind is blowing. But notice!

**2 Corinthians 1:4.** *Who [comforts] us in all our tribulation, (KJV)*

But there's a purpose for it.

**2 Corinthians 1:4b.** *that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, (KJV)*

We take the comfort God gives to us when we are in trouble and we shed that and let that shine on others when they get into trouble. He says:

**2 Corinthians 1:4b.** *that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (KJV)*

Think about this! Just remember this!

Shared trials bring like-minded people closer together.  
Shared trials bring like-minded people closer together!

That's one of the reasons we're all here. And all of us are closer together because of the trials we've faced. So when the wind blows, friends are a great help and a great comfort!

Now let's summarize.

We don't know what this next year holds. We don't know. And, as I mentioned at the Feast, I came back from my first Feast forty-three years ago and was facing a court-martial and going to jail in the military. I didn't know what that next year held and I was fairly anxious about it. I was just brand-new in the Church. Maybe you feel the same way about being apprehensive of what lies ahead.

But what did Christ say to us? He said in Matthew chapter 7, He says, "Not everybody that says, to Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." But He says, "You hear these sayings of Mine and you do them and you build your house upon a Rock." If we hear and we do, we build on the Rock which is Jesus Christ. And He told Peter in Matthew chapter 16, He told Peter, "Upon this Rock," referring to Myself.

But they were standing in front of a gigantic rock. I've seen pictures of it. Our son was there and took a picture of it. This is where it happened. It was a gigantic rock. It was the size of a small skyscraper!

And Christ was standing right in front of it. And He was using the analogy saying, "Upon this rock that you see that is so physical and so strong and so

powerful"—not a speck of sand on it. It was just solid rock. He said, "But upon this rock, I'm going to build My Church and the gates of hell—the grave—is not going to prevail against it."

So, as I said in the beginning, a year ago none of us thought we would be here today. Farthest thing away from our minds that we would be here today! But it shows you what can happen when trials come. And yet God has been merciful to all of us. God has helped us. God has picked us up when we were down. We picked each other up when we were down. And we're here and we're peaceful and we're happy!

We don't know what trials lie ahead. But we can overcome anything if our foundation is built on the Rock. And that's where we can't get sidetracked. Christ and the Father are the focus! Not a man. Not an administration. Not an organization. It is Christ and God the Father! We have to focus on being right with Them. We have to focus on preparing ourselves to be the Bride of Christ.

So let's learn from this example of this hired hand so that we can sleep while the wind blows.