

“STORM: Finding Jesus in the Gathering Dark”—1

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□ The Storm

- Mark 4:35-40
- *Desire of Ages*: “Absorbed in their efforts to save themselves, they had forgotten that Jesus was on board. Now, seeing their labor vain and only death before them, they remembered at whose command they had set out to cross the sea. In Jesus was their only hope. In their helplessness and despair they cried, ‘Master, Master!’” But the dense darkness hid Him from their sight. Their voices were drowned by the roaring of the tempest, and there was no reply. Doubt and fear assailed them. Had Jesus forsaken them? Was He who had conquered disease and demons, and even death, powerless to help His disciples now? Was He unmindful of them in their distress? Again they call, but there is no answer except the shrieking of the angry blast. Already their boat is sinking. A moment, and apparently they will be swallowed up by the hungry waters.” (334)

□ The Prayer

- Jim Cymbala: “I have come to the sad conclusion that Christians have lost faith in God’s promises concerning prayer. How else can we explain why prayer isn’t paramount in our lives and in our churches? If we believed his promises, wouldn’t we sometimes preach entire series about prayer? Wouldn’t we make room for prayer in [Sabbath] services and set aside weekly times where we could together learn to call on God for his help? We would—unless we are convinced that the status quo is acceptable and we don’t need help from heaven. The key to prayer that changes things is a deep sense of inadequacy and helplessness among God’s people.” (*STORM: Hearing Jesus for the Times We Live In* 42)
- Paul Miller: “God wants us to come to him empty-handed, weary, and heavy-laden. Instinctively we want to get rid of our helplessness before we come to God. . . . If we think we can do life on our own, we will not take prayer seriously. Our failure to pray will always feel like something else—a lack of discipline or too many obligations. But when something is important to us, we make room for it. Prayer is simply not important to many Christians because Jesus is already an add-on. That is why . . . suffering is so important to the process of learning how to pray. It is God’s gift to us to show us what life is really like.” (*A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* 54, 59)
- Jim Cymbala: “If we look at society today, if we look at the challenge of a country becoming more godless by the week, if we look at laws being passed that mock any form of morality—instead of lamenting and protesting, wouldn’t it be better for us to plead with God to visit his people? We need to move toward God, and it begins with desperate prayer.” (Ibid 43)
- 1 Samuel 1:10, 15, 16
- Ellen White: “We are to pray for the impartation [gift] of the Spirit as the remedy for sin-sick souls. The church needs to be converted, and why should we not prostrate ourselves at the throne of grace, as representatives of the church, and from a broken heart and contrite spirit make earnest supplication that the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high? Let us pray that when [the Holy Spirit] shall be graciously bestowed, our cold hearts may be revived, and we may have discernment to understand that it is from God, and receive it with joy.” (*Ye Shall Receive Power* 321)

The New Year Gift