

## Controlled Chaos

**[Jesus] said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”** (Mark 4:40).

**Scripture:** Mark 4:35-41

**Song:** “Praise You in This Storm”

While a dozen children frolicked around my house—playing with toys, tossing a ball, laughing, and yelling—one of the moms asked what she could do to help me. “Nothing,” I replied, looking around my son’s birthday party. “They’re doing fine.”

She raised her eyebrows and asked, “This doesn’t stress you out?” I assured her it did not. The situation looked chaotic, but I was a teacher and knew I had the power to restore order when needed. My friend had no experience controlling rooms full of children, so for her my crazy house was something to fear.

Jesus rebuked His disciples for being afraid. They had seen Him do many miracles and should have remembered that He was in control. Though probably soaked and exhausted, the disciples should have known Jesus would keep them safe.

Jesus loves us and has the power to help us in all of life’s storms. Knowing that He is not stressed out or fearful but powerful and in charge helps us make it through the storm. Ask Jesus to help you through the storms you face today.

**Father,** You know my storms. Thank You for Your power to calm them instantly or to see me through them. Increase my faith and help me to look to You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

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June 7–13. **Katie Robles** works at a school for students with special needs. She raises chickens, beans, and little boys in Delaware.

## Worth the Hike

**“The one who stands firm to the end will be saved”**  
(Matthew 24:13).

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:9-14

**Song:** “We Will Hold On”

One summer my family stopped to hike while on a road trip. My 12-year-old son didn't want to hike that day. We assured him it would be a quick 30-minute stroll up the mountain to a scenic overlook, but half an hour passed and we were still hiking uphill. Every time we crested an incline, we told our son, “We're almost there, just a little farther.” And every time we were wrong. The trail kept going up. Over an hour later, we figured out that we had read the map wrong. My son was miserable. He felt discouraged and betrayed as well as sweaty and tired. The unexpected suffering of our mountain hike made him want to give up.

Jesus understands that His followers need to know what's ahead. That's why He warned His disciples then of the many struggles they would face, such as persecution, hatred, and deception. But He also told them what would happen in the future: believers will be saved, the whole world will know the gospel, and He will return.

For us, when hard times come, He wants us to know we're not lost on a mountainside; He knows the trail and the destination is worth it. Ask Jesus to strengthen your resolve to stand firm and keep following Him.

**Father,** thank You that victory is Yours. I pray that the gospel will be preached in the whole world and that my life and my words will be a testimony to those around me. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Happily Ever After

**Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. . . . I am convinced that neither death nor life . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:34, 38-39).**

**Scripture:** Romans 8:31-39

**Song:** “More Than Conquerors”

When I was a child, my grandparents owned two movies: *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*. I watched those films often at their house. Each movie ends with a wedding scene that I found very satisfying. It wasn't satisfying because the two characters were in love—after all, they liked each other when they first met—but it was the way they fought for their love that gave the endings meaning. If the stepmother's lies and Maleficent's spells could not keep them apart, then nothing could. The couples defeated evil and deception, and now nothing could separate them. Their happily-ever-after was secure.

In Romans, Paul tells us how our own (the church's) love story with Christ ends. Christ doesn't just love us; He fought for us. He defeated evil and deception and death itself. He made us His own and called us His bride, and now nothing can separate us from His love. The ending is written, and we are secure in Christ.

**Father**, thank You for sending Your Son to defeat evil, expose deception, and make me Your own. Help me to live today in the confidence that I am secure in Your love. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Safety Line

**“I [Jesus] came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father. . . . I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace” (John 16:28, 33).**

**Scripture:** John 16:25-33

**Song:** “My Confidence”

For my 40th birthday I did a ropes course 50 feet in the air, complete with narrow walkways and 700-foot-long zip lines. It was scary at times, but I was attached to the main cable by a safety line at all times. When I got nervous before riding a zip line, I could squat down on the platform and feel my safety line catch and support me. Then I would push off the platform and enjoy the thrill. The Tarzan Swing, on the other hand, was truly a leap of faith. I had to grab a rope and swing between treetops into a giant net. There was no room to first squat and feel the safety line’s support; I had to step off the platform and trust the safety line to catch me.

My safety line causes me to think of Christ’s relationship with His Father. Jesus was connected to the Father at all times, and the Father gave Him peace and confidence. Likewise, Christ is our eternal safety line that connects us to the Father because we believe in Him. No matter what you’re facing today, let the constant presence of Christ give you peace and courage.

**Father,** thank You for sending Your Son to show me what it looks like to be connected to You. I love You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Final Decision

**“Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Matthew 8:19-20).**

**Scripture:** Matthew 8:18-22

**Song:** “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

My boyfriend and I had been dating for a year and a half. And not only was I ready to marry him; my entire extended family was ready for me to marry him! The only problem was that he hadn't asked me yet. My grandmother offered to call and tell him to get with it and propose. I asked my grandmother not to interfere.

That guy (now my husband) takes his time when making big decisions. He carefully considers the pros and cons and consequences, and he thinks through the details. He wants to be certain of his decision when he makes it. I knew that when he finally did propose, he would have no second thoughts about our marriage, and I was right.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus is not a snap decision either. Jesus' response to the men who offered to follow Him may sound a little harsh, but Jesus wanted them to be certain of their decision. There is a cost to being a disciple of Jesus, but the eternal rewards are well worth that cost.

**Father,** I have no second thoughts about obeying You and following Jesus. Help me be ready and willing to endure the cost when times get tough. Help me to be mindful today of eternal matters and not overly distracted with matters of this world. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Showing Mercy

**The whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region (Matthew 8:34).**

**Scripture:** Matthew 8:28-34

**Song:** “Mercy”

I’ve had experiences with people who lie, manipulate, and deceive to get what they want. Their actions and words infuriate me. Sometimes I don’t respond well, even when I suffer no direct harm, but God has been convicting me of the attitudes in my heart and reminding me that He commands me to show His love and mercy to people.

The men who met Jesus at the shore were dangerous. Since the local people were angry and feared the men, they were banished (Mark 5:3-5). But Jesus showed mercy to them by releasing them from demonic bondage, yet the locals still asked Jesus to leave. They didn’t appreciate His mercy at the financial cost from the drowned pigs (Matthew 8:34). They had not shown any mercy to the men and were unhappy with how Jesus did.

Today, Jesus is still holding out His mercy to all people. We can help people recognize God’s gift and to receive it, even the people who have done things we do not like. Our part is to love people by showing them our own mercy and leading them to Jesus for His. Then together we rejoice in what God does in their lives.

**Father**, please help me to see others the way You see them so I am ready to serve as Your voice, pointing to Your mercy for each of us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Earthquake Survivor

**The [disciples] were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”** (Matthew 8:27).

**Scripture:** Matthew 8:23-27

**Song:** “Strong Enough to Save”

For 13 years my family has sponsored a Haitian youth through a Christian organization. He grew up in poverty. And when he was 9 years old, Haiti suffered a magnitude 7.0 earthquake that damaged infrastructure and killed thousands of people. When the quake hit, the boy was home with his family. Months later he asked us in a letter to pray for him that he would not be scared anymore.

Because of the challenges he and his country have faced, his education has suffered delays. Now, at 19 years old, he is a junior in high school. He is repeating the 11<sup>th</sup> grade; instead of giving up, he renewed his efforts and leans on God for help. In one letter he said he was encouraged to remember that when God speaks, nature obeys. He has felt firsthand the power of nature in an earthquake, but more importantly, he knows God’s power in his life. If God has the power to control nature, He has the power to help a Haitian youth persevere in his studies and graduate. God has the power to stop a storm, and He has the power to carry us through every storm in our lives.

**Father,** I praise You for Your power that is at work in my life. Help me call out to You for help and receive Your strength in every kind of storm. In Jesus’ name, amen.