

## **“Storm-Stopping Faith”**

By Walt Kallestad

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I want to talk about storm-stopping faith and you sang about it. I want to talk about life-giving hope and also world-changing love. As a member of the international board, I have to tell you I'm so humbled to be able to speak to you. We have been through some days where we have cried together and prayed together. We've spent time with some of the leadership walking around campus, crying out to God, trusting that God isn't scratching His head, wondering, "What am I going to do?" There are some big challenges ahead, but God does know what to do. God is in control.

Our heavenly Father told us it wasn't going to be easy. He did say it would be worth it. And during these times of transition, I express to you how encouraged I am when the churches around the world are so divided, they're so fractured, there is not unity in the body of Christ, and that breaks God's heart. And for this ministry, for Hour of Power and the Crystal Cathedral, to step forward and say, "We are going to bring unity in the body of Christ, we are going to pray for it, we're going to open up our hearts, open up our lives and open up our campus in order that that can transpire" - I am so encouraged and that message is a positive message to the whole world.

I want you to know what we prayed in one of our prayer sessions. "Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all" (Ephesians 4:1-6, New Living Translation).

This is God's good news. His heart has to be filled with joy in this new direction of

the Hour of Power and the Crystal Cathedral. So, I really commend you. Dr. Schuller has been one of my spiritual fathers. I love him. I love his family. I love Robert. I love those in leadership. And, as a part of the international board, I have been fasting and praying during this time of significant transition, that God's will would prevail.

I want to take you right now to a place that I believe the apostle Paul in writing Romans wanted us to go. Dr. Schuller said it. This is not about building the kingdom of the Schullers. It is not about building the kingdom of the Hour of Power. Their ministry is not about building the kingdom of the Crystal Cathedral, it is about building the kingdom of God. And there are two kingdoms. There's a kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, and there's a kingdom of the earth. And when the kingdom of heaven breaks through, lives are transformed: people are healed, and relationships are reconciled. There's transformation, the world changes.

If we promote simply the kingdom of the earth, we're told that that will come to an end. Yes, even our churches. I have a congregation, Community Church of Joy in Phoenix Arizona. I know that our campus, even though it's a vast campus with many buildings, that's not what it's about. I tell people, "One day this will come to an end." But there are three things that will last. And in 1st Corinthians (13:13), Paul tells us, "Three things will last forever - faith, hope and love - and the greatest of these is love."

The word of God is the final authority on everything. As preachers, what we say may be interesting, but it is not going to change your life. What God has to say will change your life. That's why I want to take us for a few moments as we focus on God's word.

In Romans, the 8th chapter, beginning with verse 26: "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness." There is a great deal of weakness that surrounds us and storm-stopping faith comes from Jesus Christ.

One of the great passages that remind us of that is Luke, the 8th chapter (22-25): "One day Jesus said to the disciples, 'Let's cross to the other side of the lake. So they got into the boat and started out. As they sailed across, Jesus settled down for a nap. But soon a fierce storm came down on the lake. The boat was filling with water and they were in real danger. The disciples went and woke him up shouting, 'Master, Master, we're going to drown!' When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves. Suddenly the storm stopped and all was calm. Then he asked them, 'Where is your faith?'"

This *storm-stopping faith*, as Romans tells us, comes from the One who is Lord over

nature and Lord over all. His name is Jesus Christ.

Paul goes on to write (Romans 8:26), “For example we don’t know what God wants us to pray for, but the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.” Have you ever cried so hard that you cannot even get the words out? Last night at the airport, coming in, there was a woman sobbing and sobbing. She put her luggage down and my wife and I went over and we held her and she was unable to even articulate what was going on inside. God knows there are times like these in our lives: it might be the economy, a family crisis, illness, or pain and suffering. Paul tells us when our groanings are so great that words cannot be expressed, the Holy Spirit, which is a person, is our advocate. Jesus said, “I’m going to heaven. I’ll send you an advocate. I’ll send you One who is the greatest possibility thinker who ever lived.” His name is Jesus. He not only prays for us, he answers our prayers. I don’t know of a greater deal than that.

Our heavenly Father tells us, look when you can’t pray, I’ll pray and I’m the one who answers the prayer. So, even though you don’t know what’s best, I’ll pray what’s best. Even though you don’t know what the future holds, I do. I know what’s in the future. And I’ll be there arranging the best for you, even though you don’t know what pleases me. We don’t know, in our human limitation, what will please the heart of God. Our heavenly Father tells us, I’ll pray that way in order that it will be fulfilled. Isn’t that good news? That is wonderful news. This is the greatest passage of prayer in the New Testament, I believe. What a powerful word.

Then he goes on and he tells us (Romans 8:27), “And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will.” It’s the synergy and the ultimate good that God has in store for us. He loves to give good gifts to His children. It’s in harmony with God’s will. “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them” (Romans 8:28).

So, there’s *storm-stopping faith* and there’s also *life-giving hope*. And God promises us that not all things turn out good, but what he tells us here is that if you’ll let Me be in charge all things will make you more and more like Me in every way: your thought life, your relationships, your actions, your decisions. God wants us to become more and more like him and that’s what he’s saying. He’s saying, let Me make you more like Me in all the fires and all that you go through. Let Me make you more like Me.

I had a woman share with me this last week that, yes, there's a recession, but her family has decided not to participate. She said, "There's great hope," so she went out shopping. Well, I'm not sure that's the answer, but what God wants us to know is that there is life-giving hope in Him. He is Lord over the recession. And he holds our future. That is good news. Isn't that good news?

Then Paul goes on (Romans 8:29-30), "For God knew his people in advance and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory." So he offers you that which is life-giving, not only abundant life today, but eternal life forever.

And then these powerful words, and I end today with these words (Romans 8:31): "What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?"

Can you just say it with me? God is for me. Can you just say that? "God is for me." He is. He's not only for you, he's with you. he is beside you, he's above you, he's around you, he's in your hearts. "Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?" (Romans 8:32). The one who died on the cross, who shed his blood for you and for me, he offers us that world-changing love. That sin-stained cross had the blood-stained love of Jesus Christ wash us clean. He did not spare His Son.

And then (Romans 8:33-35), "Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for His own? No one - for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who, then, will condemn us? No one - for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting at the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does he mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble, or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?"

And then he quotes Isaiah about how we all suffer. Being a Christian isn't about stopping our suffering; it's about being able to have one who has suffered, who knows how to handle it, who will carry us through. And one day he will set us free.

(Romans 8:36:) "For your sake, we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered

like sheep.’ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.”

And friends, that’s in the present tense. It means again and again and again we will have victory. God will give you more victory and then He’ll give you more victory as we walk in Christ. He tells us that victory is ours through Jesus Christ who loved us.

“And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow — not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below — indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Romans 8: 38-39).

That deserves applause. Nothing is going to separate your love, nothing in all creation. He loves you with an everlasting love and I can’t improve on what God said, so I’m going to say, Amen.