

4- The Power of Wind
Pastor Joe Oakley - GFC – 8/25/24

Today is the last sermon in our series called Putting Down Roots. Next week we will begin our series through the book of Galatians.

We've spent weeks teaching you how to lay the ax to the bad roots in your life and roots teaching you how to put down good roots in your life. Proverbs 12:12 says:

The wicked desire the plunder of evil men, but the root of the righteous flourishes.

The New Living Translation says: *...the godly are well rooted and bear their own fruit.*

Our main text is Colossians 2:6-7.

Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built up on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

In this series, we compared our Christian life to trees and we've seen what it takes for roots to go deep. For a tree to grow it requires 3 main things – water, sunlight and nutrients. We need the same 3 things to grow spiritually: water, light and nutrition.

Of course, the main way we get that is the word of God. In the Bible it is called water, light and food. But we've seen that water also represents baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which we all need.

We also saw that we need to be rivers not reservoirs. We need to pour out, not just take in, or we will become stagnant. Pastor Deb did a spectacular job preaching about us being root stimulators, stimulating one another to growth and maturity.

But there is something else we need for our roots to go deep. And it's probably something you don't expect. Let me tell you a true story to illustrate it.

In the late 80's a Texas billionaire financed a project called Biosphere 2. The purpose of it was to see if man could create a closed environment that would sustain life by creating its own oxygen, water and food. The biosphere was built in an Arizona desert. The trees were one of the most essential elements of the biosphere because they produced fruit to eat and oxygen to breathe. So, nothing but the best trees were selected.

However, soon into the experiment it became obvious that something was seriously wrong with the trees. They did not flourish. In fact, they drooped and struggled to survive. Some got top heavy and fell over. They were not creating the

oxygen that was needed, so oxygen had to be pumped in while the problem was analyzed.

The scientists examined everything about the trees and discovered that the biosphere gave the trees everything they needed - except one thing. Can you guess what it was? Wind. Without wind, the trees were never forced to struggle. They were not forced to develop deep roots. Without wind, the trees were weak and vulnerable.

There were other reasons the biosphere failed – but it shows that man cannot create a perfect problem-free environment. It also shows that nothing really grows in a stress-free environment.

I'm preaching today on the Power of Wind. Trees only develop deep roots when they go through windy times and dry times. It's the same in life. None of us can create a perfect, problem-free environment. If we could, we would not grow in our faith. When we try to isolate ourselves from the winds of life – our faith will never be developed and we will end up weak and easily swayed.

By the way – I'm not preaching on family today – but parents need to know that trying to create a stress-free, problem-free life for your children will not be good for them. We can overprotect our children from the storms of life and they may end up with shallow roots, weak faith and spiritual and emotional immaturity.

Some young people these days have a hard time coping with tough times and one reason is because their parents tried to shield them from anything they considered difficult.

For example - they put them on sports teams where there were no winners or losers and everyone got a trophy for participating. Does that prepare a child for real life? NO! No one is handing out awards for participation in the workplace. You have to do more than show up – you must actually do some work and sometimes work is hard and sometimes getting along with other employees is hard and sometimes your boss is not a gentle, empathetic person. Many young people are having a hard time coping with that. If we shield our children from all the winds of life, they will be weak with shallow roots!

You must go through some tough times in order to build tough faith. A tree planted in a rain forest where there's lots of water does not have to extend its root system more than a few feet below the surface. Consequently, it is poorly anchored and can be toppled by a minor windstorm. But a mesquite tree planted in a dry land must send its roots down 30 feet or more in search of water. Its unfriendly habitat actually contributes to its stability and enables it to withstand storms. For roots to go deep, there must be some adversity, some dry times, some wind.

Now wind is a powerful force, for good or bad.

For instance, when we were in Amsterdam and Belgium there were windmills everywhere. There were a few of the old-fashioned kind that are mainly for looks. But there are wind turbines everywhere. Why? To generate power. That's good.

But bad wind is the destructive kind we see in tornadoes or hurricanes. Those kinds of wind represent adversity in life. We all experience the winds of adversity. Times when relationships are tough or finances are tight.

And sometimes we all experience the same winds of adversity like with COVID or the high inflation we are dealing with now.

Sometimes the whole body of Christ experiences adversity like we are now these frequent reports of fallen pastors. That doesn't just impact those local churches – it actually impacts everyone in the body of Christ. We all experience some level of pain over that. And it causes unbelievers to look at the church with disgust rather than trust.

Those kinds of destructive winds are difficult to deal with. But here's a key to surviving a windy storm in life: Discover why you're in the storm. You see, we can be in a storm for different reasons.

- **Stormy winds can result from our own sin.**

Think of the story of Jonah. God told Jonah to go to Ninevah and deliver a message from Him but Jonah rebelled, refused and ran from God. Jonah 1:4 says:

Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.

God sent a such a great wind and a violent storm that the sailors thought the boat would sink. So they asked Jonah in Jonah 1:8-12

"Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come..."

So stormy winds can be the result of our own sin and rebellion. I'm not saying that every time you sin you will end up in a storm. But sin that you do not repent of can lead you into a spiritual storm.

By the way, a storm is something God wants to take you through. His goal is to get you to your destiny on the other side. And He wants to get you through it quickly, but if you turn on God in the middle of the storm, you could get stuck there like the Children of Israel getting stuck in the wilderness due to their sin and rebellion.

So stormy winds can be the result of our own sin and rebellion. But...

- **Stormy winds can result from other people's sin.**

When I read Jonah 1:12 I left out Jonah's last 2 words.

I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.

There are stormy winds that can come into our lives because of other people's sin.

A true Christian cannot run from God without God coming after them! He's going to call you back first, but if you keep running, He will design a whale of a situation to get your attention.

But understand this: if you go down, you take others with you! Your sin doesn't just affect you, but others! The sailors in the story of Jonah were not in a storm they caused. They were in a storm Jonah caused!

Sometimes all it takes is one rebellious, disobedient person to take down a whole shipload of people.

- A person can be in a marital storm because of their spouse's sin.
- A family can be in a financial storm because of one family member's financial irresponsibility.
- A company can be in a storm because of the owner's sin.
- A church can be in a storm because of the pastor's sin.

Unfortunately, we've seen way too much of that lately. The consequences of sin do not just impact an individual – but also those who are close to them - their family, friends, co-workers, fellow church members.

You can be in a storm of your own making or a storm of someone else's making. But both of those are the results of someone being out of the will of God.

So, why are you running from God or why is Jonah still in your boat? You must get ruthless with sin and Satan. 1 Peter 5:8-9 says:

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith.

The Bible also tells us to flee from lust, from sexual immorality, from idolatry and from the love of money. We must run from sin rather than run from God!

So, getting out of the stormy winds involves both fight and flight! Fight Satan and flee from sin.

You can be in a storm of your own making or a storm of someone else's making. Stormy winds can result from our own sin or someone else's sin. But both of those are the results of someone being out of the will of God.

Now – the next reason you could be in a wilderness is exactly opposite of those two. There are times when:

- **Stormy Winds Can Result from Being in the Will of God**

I know that this will mess with some of your doctrine. I know some Christians think they should never face any trial or test. But I must teach you the whole counsel of God and sometimes God leads you into situations that don't seem so blessed! In fact, stormy winds can result from obeying the will of God!

After Jesus fed the five thousand, Matthew 14:22-24 says:

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side while He dismissed the crowd. After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray.

When evening came, He was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

So, Jonah got into a storm for disobeying the word of God.
Paul got into a storm when others disobeyed the word of the Lord.
But the disciples got into a storm while obeying the word of the Lord.

This might surprise you – but you can be in the middle of a storm and in the perfect will of God at the same time!

We tend to think of storms as destructive, but when we are walking with God - storms can be constructive because they are instructive. We can be transformed in the storm! Matthew 14:33 says that after Jesus calmed the wind:

Then those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

That story ends with the disciples getting a greater revelation of who Jesus is.

So we see – some storms are of our own making - our disobedience can cause storms in life. The only way out of those storms is repentance.

When other people's disobedience continually causes us to be in a storm, we must get Jonah out of our boat.

But when we are in a storm because we are in the will of God, we must stay in faith, keep rowing, and pray for a greater revelation of Jesus.

I encourage those who are experiencing the winds of adversity to tap into the power of prayer and ask God for a greater revelation of Jesus. Ask Him what He wants you to learn from this storm.

Also, we must also tap into the power of the Holy Spirit. Many times in the Bible the wind speaks of the Holy Spirit. In fact Hebrew word Ruach can be translated spirit, breath or wind.

A great example of the power of the Holy Spirit being compared to wind is in Acts 2:2-4.

*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

The power of the Holy Spirit blew upon the followers of Christ in Acts and changed them forever. And that wind is still blowing to this day!!

We should all be praying for a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to blow on us, on our families, on our church and on our nation! We need the fresh wind of the Spirit!

Without the wind of the Spirit we are like a sailboat in the doldrums. The doldrums is an area near the equator where there is often very little or no wind. Back when ships were powered by the wind, sailors dreaded getting caught in the doldrums. Ships could become stranded for days or weeks and run out of food and fresh water to drink. And without the wind of the Holy Spirit we will have no power, no direction, no depth to our roots and as a result, no spiritual growth.

Living an overcoming Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit is impossible!

We cannot love other people with the unconditional love of God without the power of the Holy Spirit!

We cannot experience healing for the sick without the power of the Holy Spirit!

We cannot set captives free without the power of the Holy Spirit!

We need the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

Living the Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit is like trying to run this drill without electricity.

Living the Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit is like trying to drive a car without gasoline.

Living the Christian life without the power of the Holy Spirit is like trying to water ski without a boat.

It's impossible!

We need the power of the Holy Spirit.

We need the wind of the Spirit for our roots to go deep in Christ.

We also need each other.

Do you know what the largest living things on earth are? They are the huge redwood trees in California, which are the tallest trees and the largest living things in the world.

Some of them are almost 400 high, which is as tall as a 35-story building. You would think that trees that large would have a tremendous root system, reaching down deep into the earth.

But that is not the case. Redwoods have a very shallow root system. In fact, their roots only go down 10 to 12 feet deep before spreading outward 60 to 80 feet. What keeps them from falling down is that the roots of these trees are tied in with each other; interlocked. So, when the storms come and the winds blow the redwoods still stand.

With an interlocking root system they support and sustain each other. They need one another to survive.

Guess what? So do we!

We need to be intricately connected to each other.

We need other believers to support us in times of need.

We need other believers to help us get back on track when we stray.

We need others who care enough to call us when we're not here, help us when we have needs and encourage us when we're down.

We need each other. We need connection. Are you connected?

Today – not tomorrow – not next week – not some nebulous time in the future - you need to get connected to the Holy Spirit and the family of God.

We can pray with you today to be filled with the Spirit and our small groups start next week to help you get connected!