

STORMS & SHAKING

The purpose of storms and shaking is to help us see the difference between the things that can and can't be shaken—and to hold firm to what cannot be shaken.

KEY POINTS

- ❖ In the books of Luke, Matthew, and Mark, Jesus tells His disciples that when this world is in its last days there will be signs—hearts will be failing and powers will be shaken.
- ❖ His intent is not that we should be running scared, but that we should know what time we are in. All the trouble that is happening around us and the trouble that is happening to us has a message: lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing nearer than it ever was before. But as redemption approaches, so do the storms and the shaking.
- ❖ Paul's letter to the Christians in Thessalonica was to remind them not to be shaken by the afflictions they were suffering. In fact, he said the following: "You yourselves know that we were appointed for this" (1 Thessalonians 3:3).
- ❖ We are *appointed* for this? God would choose us and set us up for *this*? Why?
- ❖ To give each of us a chance to demonstrate who we really are. The shaking shakes off everything extra, and shows exactly what our true nature is. What are the most important parts of us—things that can be shaken, or things which cannot?
- ❖ When we find ourselves going through situations that feel like they shake us to the core, we can take the steps we are given in Hebrews 12: strengthen the hands that hang down, make straight paths for our feet—paths that lead to peace with others, and holiness before God. That strengthening and redirecting is what we should seek for when things start shaking. That's how we'll get through it.
- ❖ But one of the things that makes the shaking difficult is that we don't expect it, or we think it shouldn't be happening in a good Christian life.
- ❖ In Luke 22, Jesus told Simon Peter about something that happened in heavenly places regarding him: "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren" (verses 31-32).
- ❖ Jesus did not say that the sifting would not happen. His prayer for Peter was that his faith would not fail.
- ❖ Shortly afterwards, Peter had a shaking. A shaking so bad that he completely denied knowing Jesus at all. A shaking that left him weeping bitterly and wondering if he was even a disciple anymore.
- ❖ We all face different types of sifting; of shaking; of extremes that take us to the edge, and then past the limits of what we can endure.

KEY SCRIPTURE

Acts 27:13-25; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4; Hebrews 12:12-15, 26-28; Luke 21:25-28

- ❖ Jesus is making intercession for you (Romans 8:27, 34). His prayer for you is like His prayer for Peter, so that when the shaking shakes you, your faith in Him won't fail even if you fail, even if your faith in yourself falls apart.
- ❖ So that one day we can be like Peter and say: Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy (1 Peter 4:12-13).
- ❖ In our life, shaking will come. But the purpose of the shaking is this: that the enduring truth of God, the strength of God, the glory of God, would be revealed in us.
- ❖ There is a characteristic of God He wants to show to us, or demonstrate through us, by way of the shaking. There is something we might never know, never show, except *through* the shaking.
- ❖ What is happening in you and through you is important and precious to God.
- ❖ Here's a prayer God is waiting to hear, and willing to answer: God, pour Your strength into me. Bring me through the storms and the shaking. Help me hold on to what is solid, what is essential—the things that cannot be shaken, the things that will remain.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Was there a time(s) in your life where you felt as if you were being "sift[ed] as wheat"? Was there any warning, any sign of what was to come? How did you weather that storm (what methods did you use to emerge on the other side)?
2. After going through your fiery trial(s), what strengths/weaknesses did you learn about yourself? How will this knowledge affect how you comport yourself in the future?
3. Pray, using the prayer box below as a guide.

Prayer Time

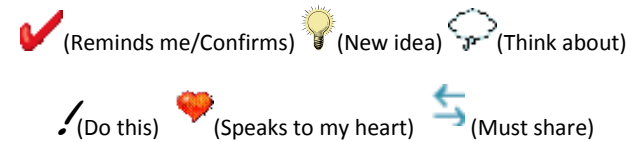
God, pour Your strength into me, and bring me through the storms and the shaking. Help me to hold on to what is solid, what is essential—things that cannot be shaken and will remain.

L.G. Ice-Breaker: "When there is a shakeup, what methods do you use to adapt to/cope with the situation?"

WEEK OF SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2018

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.



PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

Go deeper with your Life Group family.
 CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
 Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline