

Pastor Penny's 2 Cents

The Old Song "Stormy Weather" has been going through my head this last week. Maybe because we have been talking about the storms in our lives and those that Jesus calmed. Maybe because April is the month of rain and stormy weather, or maybe because we are embarking on Holy week and the major Stormy weather on the horizon. The last week of Jesus' life was far from quiet or dull. In fact, before he rode into Jerusalem as King of Kings, the long awaited Messiah on the donkey, he had just brought Lazarus back from the dead! Talk about making an entry. As I stood there on the long extremely steep road that descended from the Mt. of Olives to the Kedron Valley, then back up to Jerusalem; I have to admit "Feeling that day", imagining the pomp and circumstances, the palms waving and the people gleefully singing it gave me goose bumps and I was catapulted back in time. Unfortunately, the joy of that day did not last. Stormy weather was on the horizon. Immediately when Jesus came into the temple he continued to make his presence known by overturning the money changer's tables, and driving them out with a whip. It was justified, they were cheating and gouging the people, in God's house no less. He continued to do miracles and break all of the "Pharisaical" rules, which caused more storm clouds to rise. Jesus spent his days and nights teaching and preparing his disciples for the storms that would soon arise in that week and the years ahead. He even told of the impending storms at the end of that age and the next. This year we will be experiencing a Seder meal like never before. The disciples had participated in every Passover meal including 2 prior with Jesus, but this time was different! Jesus changed "the rules" again. He declared his divinity to all who were present. We will look at each element what it had stood for and the new transformation of some. It wasn't long after supper that the storm clouds rolled. Jesus was in that lull before the storm in the garden as he cried his heart out to God, even to the point of sweating blood. The very disciples he had saved from multiple storms were sleeping, had mentally abandoned him. The storm broke as the soldiers marched into the garden and the kiss was made. The thunder rolled as the circus trial took place and accusations made. Lightning struck when Jesus was presented to both Pilot and Herod. The crackling rippled across the sky as Barabbas was chosen and Jesus was sentenced to death on a cross. The crackling electrified the air with each strike of the whip. And then again, with each strike of the nail the thunder resounded, and the clouds rolled as on that cross Jesus continued to absorb all of humanities sins, past, present and future for the full 6 hours. It wasn't until the last sacrifice was made at 3pm and the high priest stretched out his arms and said "It is finished", that Jesus with outstretched arms cried out those same words, "It is finished". The final sacrifice was made and it was only then when the last shofar blasted, he lifted up his spirit to God. The Storms raged, the thunder deafened, the lightning struck and an earthquake shook so massive it split rocks and ripped the Temple curtain in two, exposing the Holy of Holies. No longer now was there a separation between the God the Father and us. Jesus the Son of God, became the bridge and The Way. For all who was there that horrible and fateful day all they saw was stormy weather. Pain, anguish, anger, grief, sadness, and shock. But here is the thing, if Jesus had been a human that would have been the end of the story. And that story would

have died out over two thousand years ago. But..... As Christians we know that the story did not end! As Christians we know the rest of the story. It was also lightning that struck and shook the soldiers guarding the tomb, it was the lightning and angel that rolled the stone away letting our Blessed Victorious Savior emerge from that dark cold tomb into the dawn of the first day. The Jewish day of first fruits, which means the first bundle of grain that is consecrated, consecrates the whole harvest. Jesus is the first fruits and through his consecration we are ALL consecrated. We are all redeemed, we all get to enjoy in the Salvation that only comes in and through our Lord Jesus (Yeshua). And the stormy weather cleared. The sun shone bright.

While the storms did not stay away, the disciples, apostles and us- you and I no longer have to fear the storm, because Jesus is in the helm. We are not like the world who has no hope when tragedy strikes and the storm clouds roll. We know we serve a Risen Savior that has conquered sin and death, and one that commanded the storms to be still. When our circumstances become too much and we take our eyes off of Jesus, like Peter we will start to sink. But if we put our trust in him and cry out like Peter "Lord, Save Me!" Jesus will be there, outstretched arm grabbing ahold of us and pulling us out of the storm. That is why we celebrate, remember and tell all who will listen this Easter Season why we look at the world differently. Why even when the storms rage we have hope and joy and even when we are in the darkest of times we can look up to the SON and bask in his glorious redeeming light.

May you and your family have a very blessed Easter Season!

Shalom

Pastor Penny