

PEACE BE STILL

DEVOTIONAL SERIES BY **HOPE DARST**



INTRODUCTION

When we sat down to write the song Peace Be Still, our lives were filled with circumstances that had us feeling fearful. We were all standing face to face with some scary situations. We knew that fear was present in our personal lives, but we also knew that we could choose to declare the promises of God in the midst of our fears, and His presence would flood us with peace that silences every wave of fear, anxiety or worry. Worship is a weapon to defeat the schemes, lies and voice of the enemy. Worship is a way to stand upon the waves and tell the storm to go to sleep.

I can't begin tell you how many times, I have personally had to sing the lyrics of Peace Be Still over my own life, mind and situations. I have battled fear and anxiety to a great deal in different seasons. At times, I have failed to anchor myself in the word of God through scripture or song and the waves of anxiety and fear have overtaken me. The aftermath of those storms have sometimes left damage that took more time and energy to restore than God ever intended. However, when I chose to grab on to the lifeline of God's word, declaring His promises over my life, the storm was silenced, either in me or in the natural.

As we started this new decade, all over the world, we are facing a health pandemic that hasn't been seen in over 100 years. People feel confused, scared, uncertain and worried about the future. It feels like a storm of fear and anxiety has hit us pretty hard. Right now, we can choose to get swept up in the waves of fear and worry, doubting that God is for us or we can choose to remain anchored in the presence of God and allow His peace to wash over us and calm the storm inside our hearts and minds. We don't know what the future holds. We don't know how this current world situation will play out in the following weeks and months. What we do know is that our God is our shield, our fortress, our deliverer, our provider, our healer and our strong tower.

Psalm 91:1-4 (God's Word Translation)

Whoever lives under the shelter of the Most High will remain in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "You are my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust." He is the one who will rescue you from the hunter's traps and from deadly plagues. He will cover you with his feathers and under his wings you will find refuge. His truth (word) is your shield and armor.

Worship builds a reservoir of God's truth to draw from when we face difficult moments. I know that every time I choose to worship, it builds my faith in God. It reminds me once again, that my God is greater than any storm and He speaks PEACE OVER ME!

My prayer is that during these times of fear and uncertainty you will find refuge in the Almighty, declare His promises, sing His praises and know His Peace that passes all understanding!

Over the next five days, through a series of daily devotionals, we are going to unpack Mark 4:35-41 and remind ourselves of the truth of God's word and the power and authority we have through Jesus. We are going to let God's promises move us from fear to faith. Let's get started....

I don't want to be afraid

EVERY TIME I FACE THE WAVES

I DON'T WANT TO BE AFRAID

I DON'T WANT TO BE AFRAID

I don't want to fear the storm

JUST BECAUSE I HEAR THE ROAR

I DON'T WANT TO FEAR THE STORM

I DON'T WANT TO FEAR THE STORM

DAY ONE || THE OTHER SIDE

Mark 4:35 (NIV)

*That day when evening came, he said to his disciples,
“Let us go over to the other side.”*

When I began writing this devotional, I knew this story in Mark's gospel pretty well. How the disciples freaked out about the storm and Jesus woke up to calm the wind, and corrected the disciples for having little faith. But what I kept coming back too was the beginning of the story.

The disciples got in the boat. After a long day of preaching, Jesus said to the disciples “let's go over to the other side”. A boat was the only way. A boat that would have to journey out into the middle of the sea to get to the other side, where there was obvious potential of a storm. Did the disciples say, “That's too dangerous. We can't go. Let's stay here?” No, they jumped in the boat and started the journey. They didn't have their eyes fixated on all the things that “could go wrong”, they just had a goal - get to the other side.

Have you ever felt God ask you to go on a journey with Him...a new job, move to a new city, start a new venture, go back to school, etc.? In my experience, I've often wanted to just get to the “other side” of it. Move past the beginning when it's new, uncomfortable, hard or painful. I don't want to have to go on a journey. I just want to get to the good part or get it over with. I think the disciples in a way, kind of did the same thing. They were so fixated on just getting to where they wanted to be, they didn't consider that the journey across the sea was just as important as the destination.

When we choose to follow Jesus and go on a journey with Him, He knows what we are going to face. When the disciples got in the boat, Jesus knew there was going to be a storm. He also knew the storm would reveal the actual condition of their hearts and level of trust in Him. Jesus knew that the storm wouldn't destroy them. He knew they would get to the other side.

And that other side...its the place where the demon possessed man was delivered, the dead girl was raised to life and the woman with the issue of blood was healed. The other side is where miracles would happen.

In your life right now, you might be stepping into something (a boat of sorts) fully trusting God to lead you into greater things or you might be in the middle of a massive storm that feels like it's going to drown you. But let me encourage you, either way, you are not alone. Jesus is in the boat with you and He knows that the storm will not destroy you and you will get to the other side.

Hold on. The storm is going to die down. Peace is with you and there are miracles ahead for you on the other side!

PRAYER

God, it is so easy for me to get overwhelmed in the journey of life. It's so easy to forget that You are the greatest captain and faithful leader. You would never invite me on a journey that doesn't ultimately take me to where You planned. Today, I choose to trust that Your plans are for me and that You have good things in-store for me. I will stay the course, trusting You along the way and believing that there are miracles and victories waiting up ahead. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 29:11 (The Message)

I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope."

DAY TWO || THE OTHER SIDE

Mark 4:36-37 (NIV)

Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

After a long day of teaching the parables, Jesus gets in the boat and immediately falls asleep. He rests. He was literally exhausted from ministering. He knows that when they reach the other side there will be more things to do, more lives to change, more people to heal. He knows He needs to rest and retreat with the Father to continue the journey. So, in the middle of the sea, Jesus took a nap.

We tend to live our lives at a fast pace. Going, going, going. Have you ever been doing so much, even really good things, that you don't feel like you have a moment to catch your breath? Has life been coming at you so hard and fast that it's taking every waking moment to keep up? Either way, it's really hard to rest in the middle of everything.

Rest is vital for the journey. When we don't rest, we deplete what we have. When we don't rest, our weaknesses can grow unknowingly and create places in our heart and mind where doubt and disappointment can live. When we do rest, we give space to God to heal and restore the places where we have grown tired and weak. When we make time with God a priority, we refuel with the right energy - allowing God's word to strengthen us spiritually. We also allow our physical bodies time to recover and gain strength. If we don't rest, we eventually run out of fuel, crashing ourselves and others along the way.

Did you notice that Jesus rested and the disciples did not? Did you notice that only the disciples freaked out when the storm came and Jesus did not? Exhaustion can create an ungarded heart, a loose tongue and a weak spirit. Rest guards your heart from doubt and lack of faith. Retreating into God's presence restores your joy and strength. Jesus knew this - it's why He took a nap and could wake up in the middle of a storm full of peace and authority.

Are you willing to stop in the middle of your life right now, to pause for a moment, and allow yourself time to recalibrate and restore your strength in the presence of God?

Your response in the middle of everything can be the difference between panic and peace. Rest doesn't mean sleeping all day and watching Netflix until 2am or shutting your life down for weeks on end. Rest means to pause in the middle of everything - to spend time with God and His word. Maybe it's setting aside time to worship and pray in the middle of your day. Maybe it's taking one day of rest in the middle of your week. Maybe it's shutting work or your phone off at a specific time each day. Maybe it's going to bed before responding to emails or texts. I don't know what rest in the middle looks like for you, but I know it's important to ensure that you are ready to face anything ahead with a heart and mind full of the Peace of God!

PRAYER

God, it's so hard to stop and rest in the middle of my life. Forgive me for not taking time to rest and restore myself in your presence. Your presence is my lifeline, my oasis, it sustains me with long life. I choose to pause and rest with you. Let your word refuel my heart with faith and strength for the journey ahead. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

Psalm 23:1-6 (NIV)

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

DAY THREE || THE STORM

Mark 4:38 (NIV)

Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

My husband and I are small businesses owners in our home city of Nashville, TN. For our entire marriage, we have seen many waves in our finances due to his business being a quote based industry, much like builders and contractors. We have had years of plenty and years of want. At the end of 2016, we were finishing up a major house purchase and remodel. We were anticipating a large end of the year bonus to help cover the closing costs and close out our construction loan. On the eve of finalizing everything with the bank, we got news that some business deals fell through and there would be no bonus. As a result, we also decided as business owners to take a 20% pay cut to ensure our employees salaries weren't effected. I wish I could tell you I was steady in my trust that God would work it out, but I wasn't. My heart filled with fear and panic. I tail-spun into 100 degrees of fear. My husband did not. He remained calm and hopeful that God would take care of us. Over the next 10 months, that's exactly what happened. God took care of us. The lack of finances caused us to get all of our budgeting in order and spend less. I watched God bring in work for me that I hadn't had in five years. God made good on His promises. During that time, I begin to trust Him in a way like never before. Fast forward another year, at the top of 2018, and our company had another hard year and all of the owners decided to take a full pay cut for six months. That's right, no paycheck for six months. Did I panic? No. I was full of peace that God would provide. The financial storm we weathered the year before, had revealed where my trust in God as our provider was weak. My faith needed to be strengthened. I spent a year, focused on God's word. I meditated on who He was and how He takes care of His kids. And when that second storm hit the following year, my heart was prepared. I already knew that God would provide and He did. It wasn't always easy and there were some really hard months. And even though we didn't have a paycheck, we had peace during that entire season and it was worth way more.

When the storm begin to brew on that boat, the disciples immediately panicked. The storm was real. The fear was real. The danger was real. They let us know what they believed about the storm and Jesus. They thought the storm would destroy them and Jesus didn't care about their lives. I get it. Way too often when I'm standing

in the middle of a life-storm, it looks like all is lost. I fight feeling alone and abandoned. Fear and doubt seem to have a megaphone in my ears. Storms can steal our attention - making it easy to focus on the storm and its damage, instead of focusing on God's word and His promises. Storms reveal our belief system - showing us what we really believe about God when life becomes filled with hardship, loss and disappointment.

Jesus knew the disciples were of "little faith" before they got in the boat. Maybe it's why He invited them on the journey. Knowing there would be a storm and knowing that it would reveal to the disciples that their faith and trust in Him wasn't as firm and steadfast as they thought. Not to shame them, but to reveal where their faith could grow and strengthen. He knew that they would freak out the minute the storm began. He knew they would panic and doubt whether or not He would take care of them. He also knew that they needed to see His power and authority firsthand in the middle of the storm in order to know that they could fully trust Him. So that when they found themselves in future storms, they would remember who He is, their Refuge and Shelter.

Isaiah 25:4 (NASB)

For You have been a defense for the helpless, A defense for the needy in his distress, A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat.

Storms reveal our anchors and our focus. Whether our hearts and minds are built securely on God's word and His nature, or if they are faulty with holes that can cause us to drown in our feelings and fears when life rages against us. When faced with life-storms, does the storm get all of your attention? Do you panic and doubt God's faithfulness? Or do you have God's promises so deeply rooted in your heart and mind that your focus is on who God is and what He has said?

Maybe you're in your first storm and this is where you get to discover the condition of your faith and trust in God. Maybe this is your 5th or 10th storm, and you need a reminder that the storm has stolen more of your attention than it should. Either way, let the storm be a place where fear and doubt is silenced, trust is established and faith rises up!

PRAYER

Dear God, forgive me for thinking the storm is bigger than You. For believing it will destroy me and that You don't care. I know that is not Your heart towards me. Forgive me for doubting who You are and not having the faith to believe that You are my refuge and shelter in any storm. Thank You for being a God that cares about me and surrounds me on every side with protection. Thank You for being greater than the storm I am facing. I chose today to put my faith and trust in You. I chose to mediate on Your word, anchoring my heart and mind in the truth of who You are, and who you've always been. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

Psalm 107:28-31 (NIV)

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. 29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. 30 They were glad when it grew calm, and He guided them to their desired haven. 31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind.



PEACE BE STILL

SAY THE WORD AND I WILL

SET MY FEET UPON THE SEA

TILL I'M *dancing* IN THE DEEP

PEACE BE STILL

YOU ARE HERE SO IT IS WELL

EVEN WHEN MY EYES CAN'T SEE

I WILL *trust* THE VOICE THAT SPEAKS

DAY FOUR || SPEAK TO THE STORM

Mark 4:39 (NIV)

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

When the disciples woke Jesus up in a panic, He quickly assessed the situation and spoke to storm - telling it to hush, be quiet. He could have asked the disciples, "What's wrong? Why are you scared?" Instead, He immediately targeted the thing causing fear and silenced the storm. Removing its power and influence over the disciples state of being.

Right here, Jesus gives us the blueprint for silencing fear. Speak to it and tell it to stop. Simple, right? It is actually, but often times, just like the disciples, it's not our first response. In 2 Timothy 1:7, it says "we have not been given a spirit of fear, but of love, power and a sound mind." And in Romans 6:10-11, it says "The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you". Just like Jesus, we have the same authority to tell the wind and waves to be quiet, to be still. So why isn't this our response every single time?

Fear is real. Jesus says "do not be afraid" 365 times in the Bible. Jesus acknowledged that fear is real and something we will face daily. Jesus was aware of the existence of fear, but more aware of His power over fear. We must do the same. It's okay for us to admit that we are scared or that fear is ringing loud in our ears. However, in the midst of it, we must also remember that fear is not our master. Jesus has given us all authority over fear through His death and resurrection.

When we speak to our fears, declaring God's word, it breaks any false power that fear is trying to have over our lives. We might have to tell fear, to be silent many times before we begin to feel a shift in our mind and heart, but it always works. When we start to confess the word of God over our fears, the storm inside of us quiets down. But what about those times, when our emotions and feelings overwhelm us in the fight against fear? Enter worship. Oh the mighty weapon of worship. Hans Christian Anderson has a famous quote, "Where words fail, music speaks." This is so true when it comes to combating fear with faith. Worship ignites our faith. When we don't have the strength to speak directly to the thing causing fear in us, worship can speak for us.

We can't think our way out of fear, but we can worship our way through it! Our worship has the power to HUSH fear, to SILENCE anxiety and INFUSE FAITH in our hearts and minds. Let your worship rise louder and higher than any fear, worry or anxiety that you are feeling. Speak to your storm. Tell fear to be still in the name of Jesus. And let the peace of God wash over you, calming every wave of fear!

PRAYER

God, I know that Your word and my worship are the greatest weapons I have against fear. Forgive me for giving fear more authority than it deserves. I know that You will never leave me, or forsake me. You are my light and salvation, whom shall I fear? I know I can cry out to You and You will answer me and deliver me from all my fears. I chose today to walk in the power and authority that You have given me through Your son, Jesus Christ. I look fear in the face and say, be quiet. I repent for allowing fear, worry, anxiety or doubt to master my mind and emotions. I chose today to speak faith in the face of fear and worship through worry. I cast all my cares on You and receive Your perfect peace. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE

Psalm 91:1-16 (NIV)

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you make the Most High your dwelling, even the Lord, who is my refuge, then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent. "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy his and show him my salvation."

DAY FIVE || AFTER ALL YOU'VE SEEN

Mark 4:40-41 (The Voice)

Jesus: How can you be so afraid? After all you've seen, where is your faith? 41 The disciples were still afraid, slowly coming to grips with what they had seen.

At this point in Mark, the disciples had been with Jesus for some time. They had already witnessed miracles, signs and wonders. They had already seen Jesus heal Peter's mom from sickness, the demon-possessed, the man with leprosy, the paralyzed man and the man with the shriveled hand on the Sabbath. Yet here they are not days later, in the middle of the storm, and immediately filled with fear. Jesus is quick to point this out. Not to shame them, but correct them. To remind them that in the midst of scary things, we must choose faith over fear.

It's so easy to read this passage and pass judgment. To say to ourselves, "I can't believe that they thought they were gonna drown. Jesus was with them. Jesus had just performed miracles. Obviously they are going to be ok." But how many times, do we find ourselves in the middle of difficult situations...a job loss, a death, a disappointment, a sobering doctors report and immediately begin to think the worst is going to happen. We start to doubt whether or not God will come through on our behalf. This is the history of mankind - the Israelites, the disciples, and us - witnessing God do the impossible, only to doubt that it's possible for Him to do it again.

Joshua 4:1-3, 21-24 (ESV)

When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 "Take twelve men from the people, from each tribe a man, 3 and command them, saying, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.'"...21 And he said to the people of Israel, When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?'

22 then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.' 23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, 24 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

Just like the Israelites, we must remember what we've seen, not just what we are seeing. We must remember what God has done, so that we can declare that He will do it again. Our God is a miracle working God. He always has been and He always will be. His promise of provision and protection never changes. We have to be living memorial stones. We must not forget His great works.

When I moved to Nashville, I was a poor college drop-out. I was working several odd jobs to make ends meet. I remember one month, after I had worked 60hrs a week, I looked at all my bills and realized I still couldn't pay them. I wanted to panic, but instead I wrote down what I needed, to the penny and prayed over it. I remember saying, "God, I have been faithful to tithe and You have been faithful to provide. You see what I need. I am asking You to make a way and help me pay my bills." The very next day, I went to my mailbox and there was a letter from a family I had known for years that felt like they were supposed to send me a check. You better believe it was exactly what I had written down and prayed over. They had mailed the check before I ever prayed that prayer. God had already gone before me. That is just one of the countless times God has done the impossible in my life. And every time, I am faced with a new challenge, trial or hard thing...I go back to those moments. I remind myself that God has never failed me and He won't start now.

We are going to be tested. We are going to face trials that the enemy will want to use to make us doubt the goodness of God. As a matter of fact, Jesus told us to expect trouble in John 16:33. However, He has promised that we will never be alone. So when the wind and waves start blowing, don't focus on the storm, focus on the One who calms the storm. Remember what you have seen. Remember His miracles and great works. Remember He will do it again.

LET **FAITH** RISE UP

OH *Heart* BELIEVE

LET **FAITH** RISE UP IN ME

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for never changing. Thank you for being faithful.

Thank you for showing up in my life and doing the impossible. I choose today to focus on You, to remind my soul once again that You have never failed me and You never will. You heal the sick, save the lost, set captives free, redeem what is lost and provide where there is lack. You calm storms, move mountains, destroy graves and reign forever. Forgive me for any doubt that has snuck in my heart and my mind. Today, I chose to pick up faith and set fear down. I chose to speak to winds and waves of worry and tell them to be still. I will remember who You are and who You will always be - the Great I Am, the one who even the winds and waves obey. Amen!

DAILY SCRIPTURES

Psalms 103:2 (NASB)

...Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;

Psalms 96 (TPT)

Go ahead—sing your new song to the Lord! Let everyone in every language sing him a new song. 2–3 Don't stop! Keep on singing! Make his name famous! Tell everyone every day how wonderful he is. Give them the good news of our great Savior. Take the message of his glory and miracles to every nation. Tell them about all the amazing things he has done. 4 For the Lord's greatness is beyond description and he deserves all the praise that comes to him. He is our King-God and it's right to be in holy awe of him. 5 Other gods are absolutely worthless. For the Lord God is Creator-God, who spread the splendor of the skies! 6 Breathtaking brilliance and awe-inspiring majesty radiate from his shining presence. His stunning beauty overwhelms all who come before him. 7 Surrender to the Lord Yahweh, all you nations and peoples. Surrender to him all your pride and strength. 8 Confess that Jehovah alone deserves all the glory and honor. Bring an offering and come celebrate in his courts. 9 Come worship the Lord God wearing the splendor of holiness. Let everyone wait in wonder as they tremble in awe before him. 10 Tell the nations plainly that Yahweh rules over all! He is doing a great job, and nothing will disrupt him, for he treats everyone fair and square. 11–12 Let the skies sing for joy! Let the earth join in the chorus. Let oceans thunder and fields echo this ecstatic praise until every swaying tree of every forest joins in, lifting up their songs of joyous praise to him! 13 For here he comes, the Lord God, and he's ready to judge the world. He will do what's right and can be trusted to always do what's fair.

PEACE JOURNAL

Reflection

Make a list of the storms in your life that are creating fear.

Remember

Write out scripture(s) that speak God's promises over the fears you listed.

Response

In prayer, spend a few moments speaking the truth of God's word over your heart and your life. Give yourself some time to meditate on the promises you wrote out, allowing your heart and mind time to move from fear to faith. Journal anything God speaks to you during your time with Him.

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