

MONSOON 4:
Relief Is Coming

I. Introduction

- A. We are continuing our series called monsoon. Monsoon is a season we experience when our desert heat causes winds to shift drawing moisture up from the gulfs of California and Mexico. The heat, wind and moisture create an environment where storms are common, sometimes sudden and destructive. And in this monsoon series, we are comparing components of a monsoon storm to the storms we experience in living life.
- B. Storms like financial issues or health issues or relational issues or personal issues. Some of us are married to our storm; some of us birthed our storm. But we all face these various storms at various times in our life.
- C. Our first week, we talked about wind and fear, and we said faith destroys the power of fear and looked at several ways to battle fear in our storms.
- D. Then we compared the heat and humidity of our monsoon season to discouragement. And we looked at ways we can help bring down discouragement in our storms.
- E. Last week we compared lightning to God's power in our storms.

II. TODAY'S COMPONENT

- A. For the last 3 weeks, we have talked about some negative aspects regarding monsoon storms; things like wind and humidity and lightning. And we tried to put a positive spin those negative aspects. But this morning, I'd like to look at the positive side of monsoon storms. Today, we are concluding our series by considering rain. Our monsoon season generates one-third to one-half of our annual rainfall each year. And after the many days of 100+ °F temperatures, rain is usually a welcomed component. As you know, many times we get the wind and we get the heat and we get the thunder and lightning, but no rain. And it seems like there will never be an end to this misery we call Monsoon season.
- B. Without rain, the heat stays, the dusty air stays. Sometimes it seems like day after day nothing changes.
- C. And then the rain comes. And there is relief. Finally, a change.
- D. And it seems to me that real life storms can feel much the same. So, this morning, I'd like us to spend a few minutes considering the relief that a good rain can bring.
- E. But before we do that, I'd like to make this disclaimer. By saying that relief or good things come from storms in no way minimizes the pain, fear or discouragement we experience in storms. Recognizing there might be relief down the road might encourage some of us to hang in there, but not everyone is encouraged by that analytical thought process. So please don't hear me saying this morning that your storm ain't that bad because good is coming. Please don't hear me saying that your storm ain't that bad because someone has it worse than you. Please don't hear me saying that God doesn't care about your storm because he's gonna bring something good.
- F. My goal this morning is not make you feel bad in your storm. My goal this morning is to encourage us that relief is coming.
- G. So, what happens when it rains during a monsoon storm that can also happen in real life storms?

III. BIBLE LESSON

- A. Reveals our S & W
 - 1. Number one: ►when a storm hits during monsoon season, it tends to reveal our strengths and weaknesses.
 - a. **STORY:** I remember a couple of years ago when we reshingled the church roof. It had been completed a few months when a we got a great, wet monsoon storm. But as I walked down the office hallway, I heard that familiar dripping of water coming from the above my head in the middle of the hall. I stood on a chair to move a ceiling tile, when water poured off the end I had lowered and drenched me. We realized- in the storm- that something wasn't quite right and needed some attention.
 - b. And similar things happen in real life. When storms hit, we sometimes recognize some areas that need some attention.
 - c. ►^{NLT} **Romans 5:3** We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.

- d. The storms aren't always fun, but they seem to be important for our maturity. To help us mature in areas we aren't.
 - e. ►**STORY:** When I was looking for a job after being let go from a job I loved, I was in a bit of a storm. I spent 8 months actively looking for a church job. I sent around 200 resumes, did several dozen phone interviews, filled out a few dozen application packets, ultimately being rejected by every one. And somewhere in that storm, I came to realize that my value as a person, husband, Christian, father, had nothing to do with the title on my business card. I wouldn't be so bold to say, "That's the reason God allowed all that rejection." But I certainly found an area that needed attention.
2. But storms can also reveal our strengths. And here is where some relief can come. It's sometimes easy to find the weaknesses. They kind of jump out and demand some attention. But strengths don't. As I walked down the office hallway with a pail to collect water from my brand new roof, I was angry. "We paid good money; its only a few months old, what if it leaks in the auditorium on equipment." Never once did I think to myself, "I sure am glad it's only leaking here." Or "I'm sure glad the roof is not falling down." Or "I'm glad the windows are solid." Or "At least we have really nice carpet." You see, the storm revealed those things too. But my only focus was on what was broke. And of course, we can't ignore what's broke. But I think it's just as important not to ignore the things that work. The strengths we have.
- a. And I know we do this in storms. We tend to focus on the weaknesses. We see things in our selves we don't like. We feel guilty for not trusting God more. We play the blame and shame game because after all, our own choices brought this storm. And these things may be true and might need to be addressed. But they aren't all that's true.
 - b. ►^{NLT} **Philippians 1:20** For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past . . .
 - c. Paul is in prison facing an uncertain future. But in spite of his storm, he finds his strengths.
 - d. When you are weathering a storm, it's probably revealing some strengths in you too, BUT *you have to look for them*. They are so easy to ignore because they aren't screaming for attention.
 - e. But I think it's important to consider. Not to minimize the storms we are enduring; instead to provide some balance so the weaknesses, the negativity, the bad stuff doesn't become so overwhelming. And let's be honest, some storms can feel overwhelming.
 - f. I'm not the only one to feel that, right? So, we can experience some relief when we look for the good as well as the bad.
3. ►So rain can reveal some things- both good and bad- positive and negative- encouraging and discouraging. Don't just focus on one. Because when we do, we either grow arrogant and can't learn a thing, or we become discouraged and overwhelmed. Neither extreme is healthy, and God doesn't want us living on either edge. He uses storms to teach us both our strengths and weaknesses. And we focus on both, we can experience some relief.

B. Renewals

1. The second thing a good monsoon rain does is it ►renews stuff. And it does this a couple of different ways.
 - a. First, it renews the air. Nothing clears the smoggy dust filled air like a good rain. The air is never clearer, fresher or cooler than after a good rain. All the clutter in the air disappears, if only for a few days.
 - b. Secondly, rain renews life. Let me explain.
 - i. **STORY:** My grandparents owned a house that backed up to the Phoenix Mountain Preserve in the Piestewa Peak Mountain Range through central Phoenix. By the middle of summer, the mountain was looking pretty brown. The lack of water was evident. Trees and bushes had dust settled in. Limbs were sagging. The colors of the trees and bushes were muted by the current hot, dry conditions. But then we'd hit monsoon season. And with the rain came life. Some trees seemed to blossom; the green got greener. The dust that had settled on the bushes was washed off. It was like the mountain had gotten a shot of Red Bull. The storm breathed a renewed spirit into the mountain. It never looked better than after a good rain. The rain seemed to bring renewed life to the mountain. And it was beautiful and amazing to see.
2. And storms and rain in real life can renew much the same way.
 - a. First, storms can clear the air.
 - i. In the middle of serious storms, we tend to discover the things that matter the most. Storms tend to remove the clutter that builds up in all of our lives. And when a storm hits: someone dies, someone's sick, a spouse leaves, a child leaves, we get arrested, we lose our job, we make a poor decision- whatever the storm- when these things happen, the clutter tends to disappear. Our priorities change. How we spend our money sometimes changes. Who we spend our time with changes. Because when storms clear the air, when the clutter of life disappears, we have a renewed sense of what's important.
 - ii. **STORY:** Growing up my grandpa was pretty hard on me. I was a terror to my parents. I wrecked stuff in every house we visited. Looking back, I was probably just a normal hyperactive kid. But my grandpa didn't appreciate me "*uniqueness*." So, I got reprimanded and scolded and picked apart quite a bit. But when grandpa got cancer, it cleared the air. The clutter in his life of retirement cleared. I remember seeing him and my grandma walk around holding hands. I had never seen that before. And one night we went to visit him- I am in high school- and as I went to leave his room he took my hand and said, "I know I've been hard on you, but I am very proud of you."
 - iii. You know, grandpas battle with cancer was a horrible storm for our family. But there are little nuggets of relief when storms clear away the clutter.
 - iv. ►^{NLT} **2 Corinthians 1:9** In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God. . .
 - v. Storms have a way of doing that because the clutter gets washed away.
 - b. ►And real-life storms can also bring renewed life.
 - i. For Christians-
 - a). A rain storm washed away the dirt and breathed life into my grandpa's mountain; we saw it the way it was meant to be seen. The junk was washed away; the colors were vibrant; the drained bushes perked up; the mountain was alive again. And storms provide the same renewal for us. The struggles we're enduring clean away things like guilt, self-reliance, condemnation, prejudice, indifference, or apathy. And when it does, it helps us see ourselves the way God does: forgiven and adopted into His family.
 - b). ►^{NLT} **Philippians 1:14** And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message without fear.
 - c). For Paul, he saw his storm breathing new life into others. And sometimes we might get to see who we are affecting; other times we might not. But God uses our storms to renew life- in us and in others.
 - d). ►As difficult as storms can be, they almost always change us. We are bombarded constantly with messages that tarnish us- the same way dust and other elements tarnish plants, trees, cars, etc. And

storms have a way of washing that away. And when it does, we see God more clearly and we can see ourselves more clearly- more like the way God does.

- ii. For non-Christians
 - a). But storms provide the same revealing and renewing for those who don't believe in Jesus for eternal life. And sometimes God uses our storms to bring us to a place where we see a need for a God who loves me and forgives me.
 - b). Jesus says, ► ^{NKJ} **John 6:47** "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.
 - c). And on the basis of his death, Jesus promises eternal life to all who simply believe him for it.

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. ► So like rain during monsoon season, our personal monsoon storms can produce good and beneficial things. Sometimes we experience those good things in the middle of storms and sometimes we see them after. And just because we "know" those good things are out there or that they may be coming, doesn't negate the truth that some storms are nasty horrible experiences. And some are. *AND* (not but) you will get through this storm. The rain WILL stop. Someday, you will see where you grew; you'll see where God breathed a renewed life and spirit into you.
- B. If you are going through a storm right now, know that it doesn't rain forever. Like all monsoon seasons, your storm season will pass too. Hang in there. And if there is some way we can help you hang in there, just put it on a connection card and put it in the box in the back of the room.
- C. And hopefully being reminded of these things will encourage you and strengthen you and provide some balance to the fear and discouragement and anger and uncertainty that can overwhelm us in our storms.

V. PRAY! Help us!

VI. COMMUNION

- A. This morning we're going to close by remembering one of the greatest personal storms a person has endured. As I read from Isaiah 53, listen for the storm and listen for the relief, because both exist.
- B. ^{NLT} **Isaiah 53** There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. ³ He was despised and rejected -- a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care. ⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. ⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on (Jesus) the sins of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. ⁸ Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. ⁹ He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave. ¹¹ When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.
- C. Jesus' storm was a horrible human experience, and an amazing renewal for us.
- D. This morning we remember that with communion. And as we celebrate communion, I'd like us to remember- not only the storm Jesus endured- but the relief and renewal it has brought to you.
- E. I'm going to pray for communion, and when I am done, you can help yourself at any of the stations around the auditorium. There are 2 cups stacked together- one with a cracker and one with juice. Grab them both. You take eat and drink at the table, take it back to your seat, celebrate with your family, friends or even reflect by yourself.
- F. You don't have to be a member here at MVBC. All we ask is that you believe in Jesus for eternal life.
- G. PRAY! Thank you for the relief and renewal!