

KIDPAK ADVENTURES

STORM CHASERS



MONTHLY
DEVOTIONAL



DAY ONE

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“So keep watch. You do not know on what day your Lord will come.”*
Matthew 24:42 NIRV

Storm chasers are a little bit crazy. You’d have to be, when you’re racing towards a F5 tornado, while everyone else is running *away* from it. There’s no question that they’re fearless! But when you understand the reasons they’re chasing after storms, you’ll begin to see what it’s all about: they’re trying to save lives.

Some time ago there was a man out in the wilderness that everyone thought was crazy. He was completely fearless, and tore a path through all their religious traditions. But he was trying to save lives. He went by the name of John the Baptist, and Jesus said there wasn’t anyone greater on the planet.

A storm chaser is what it sounds like: someone who chases storms. As Christians, God didn’t put us here to run away from trouble. Picture a team of chasers zooming off road to get as close as possible to a twister. Like them, we shouldn’t be frightened of any principalities of the air. With God’s help, we can have the boldness of a man like John the Baptist.

Remember, it’s all about saving lives. We may find ourselves in some wild situations, doing things we’ve never done before. But that’s the walk of faith. Although the atmosphere may seem extreme with situations whirling around you, remember to keep your eyes on Jesus. He’ll keep you anchored!

Time is short! The average time between a tornado warning and a possible strike is only eleven minutes. That’s not much time. There is an urgency to what a Storm Chaser does, because lives are on the line.

John the Baptist felt the same way: he knew that people were in danger. He had a passion and an “urgent urgency” about him. That’s what God wants to see in you. Even now, He’s looking for someone to be bold and just a little crazy, all in the name of saving lives. That sounds like something right up your alley, doesn’t it? No question about it, you can be a Storm Chaser!



DAY TWO

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud. It guided them on their way.” Exodus 13:21 NIRV*

Storm chasing goes *way* back. In 1956, the first recognized storm chaser, David Hoadley, began chasing storms in North Dakota. He’s personally witnessed over 200 tornadoes, and has driven over 750,000 miles as a storm chaser.

But believe it or not, he’s not the first of the actual storm chasers. Again, as a reminder, storm chasing goes *way* back! Check out this scripture if you’d like to see how far back we’re talking about here. It says in Exodus 13:21, “By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud. It guided them on their way.”

The Israelites were the first storm chasers! They were following a pillar of a cloud through the desert as the Lord was guiding them forward. As amazing as this is, imagine during the night time, when it became a firenado! The Bible says the Israelites were following a pillar of fire!

The Bible tells us that the Lord was *in* the pillar of cloud, and it also tells us that this pillar didn’t leave its place. And that was good news for those wandering Israelites! He was with them, by them, and didn’t leave them there.

Of course, you know that He’s there for you as well. Now, it probably wouldn’t be an encouraging site for you to see a pillar of cloud going through your neighborhood. In fact, it might be pretty terrifying! But you can be encouraged when you read the scripture that tells us that God has promised to always be with us, and that He’ll never leave us or forsake us. Deuteronomy 31:6 reminds us, “Be strong and brave. Don’t be afraid of them. Don’t be terrified because of them. The LORD your God will go with you. He will never leave you. He’ll never desert you.”

People have been chasing after Him for many, many years. And God loves that so much. He wants you to know He’s right there waiting for you, ready to lead you on into a great adventure!



DAY THREE

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”*
Matthew 8:27 NIRV

Hold on tight, and get ready to ride it out! Just ahead through the barrage of hail and lightning, there’s a swirling vortex of ominous darkness, and it can only mean one thing: spotters are tracking a storm front coming!

It rains on the just and unjust, and when menacing weather looms, keep calm and carry on. The rain cloud isn’t just over your head alone, as Jesus said that rain comes to *everyone*. Ever since sin swept into this world, we’ve all had to encounter seasons where severe storms advance across the skies, threatening destruction.

But remember that your footsteps are ordered of the Lord. Jesus said to the apostles, “Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.” They had no idea what they were heading into. He sent those apostles right into the heart of a storm! It was quite an adventure, but Jesus knew everything would be okay.

Don’t be afraid when the dark clouds start to form around your life. Your steps are ordered from the Lord! Just make sure Jesus is in your boat. The key to riding out any storm is having Him with you. Just ask the apostles, who marveled, “Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!” He can certainly calm the storms in our lives.

In fact, with Jesus in our lives, we can have complete calm. He has made us to be greater than the storms that come. We can’t necessarily stop them all, but we can do the next best thing: keep calm and praise Him through the storm.



DAY FOUR

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Lord, you bless those who do what is right. Like a shield, your loving care keeps them safe.” Psalm 5:11-12 NIRV*

The greatest storm that ever took place was just moments away. Fortunately, it was forecast many years before, and God had told Noah all he needed to know. They had themselves the ultimate storm shelter.

As the thunderous noise shook the world outside the shelter, Noah just had to be grateful for God’s provision. Years before, God gave Noah the plans for what he needed. It would be a massive ark, built with resources Noah had nearby. God also gave him the time to complete it: this took years to do, and the Bible tells us Noah was ready when the storm came. God even gave Noah triplets, three sons to help complete the task. If God wants you to do something, don’t panic: He’s got you covered!

But don’t wait too long to get started. God wanted a storm shelter built right away, and it wasn’t going to build itself. Get busy, or you’ll be in over your head!

Once that door shut, it was over. We simply must have covering if we’re going to survive the storms that can head our way. God is our covering, our protection and strength in times of trouble. But He also gave us leaders as our spiritual covering, our pastors and the leaders in our family.

Noah’s family had the best covering, and rode the storm out in the greatest storm shelter ever created. As we learn from Noah, we too can have that safety. God will provide what’s needed. We just need to get busy working, and be ready to get under the cover of His Storm Shelter.



DAY FIVE

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don’t give up.” Galatians 6:9 NIRV*

There had been no rain for three years in the entire land. But Elijah was a storm chaser, and he knew something was brewing out over the sea. The forecast looked dry, and there was plenty of doubt. But while Elijah was praying, he sent his servant to look for signs of rain, over and over again. *Six times* that servant came back saying there just wasn’t anything to look at.

But on that seventh trip, the servant saw something unusual. It was a small cloud, just about the size of a man’s hand. It was a tiny little thing. But it was something, and before long, the Bible tells us that black clouds were filling the sky: the outpouring had arrived.

The message is simple: even though it doesn’t look like it, your time may be right around the corner. You just have to be obedient and patient, and see things with faith.

Remember the Apostles in the upper room? Like Elijah, they had been waiting for a different sort of rain, a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told them to wait there, and as He was taken up into heaven, they watched until a cloud hid him from their sight.

There’s that cloud again. There was nothing to look at but a cloud, but the Apostles were obedient, and they waited. They kept doing what Jesus told them to do, despite it all. And soon enough, suddenly a sound came from heaven, like a strong wind blowing. And just as promised, there was a great outpouring. God was about to blow them away!

If you want to be a good storm chaser, you’ve got to be obedient. Jesus told those apostles to wait, just like Elijah told his servant to just keep looking. In both cases, they were obedient. And in both cases, it was about to rain!

Like a meteorologist, our job is to tell others the forecast. God wants to pour out His Spirit like rain. Elijah and the Apostles let everyone know it was coming. There are people out there right now enduring a severe drought in their lives. Encourage them today and let them know: an outpouring is coming!



DAY SIX

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: “Don’t forget to do good. Don’t forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings.” Hebrews 13:16 NIRV

A storm has been raging, and the end results aren’t pretty. Even now, some people are in survival mode, just trying to pick up the pieces. As Christians, we can’t help but notice the wounded around us, or those who have lost so much. In the blink of an eye, people will need emergency assistance – will you be there?

God wants us to do more than observe. He wants us in midst of the debris, helping put things back together for those who are hurting. It may seem like an overwhelming task, but don’t worry: we’re not called to do everything. But we are called to do *something*.

Forces of darkness can link up, twisting and turning, and spinning a path of destruction, sometimes right out of the blue. The situation can certainly look hopeless! But we as a church can bring hope to the hopeless. We do this when we work together. The church should join together, hand in hand, a swirl of action that lifts hopes, and blows people away with extreme love.

It’s time to join the rescue and restoration team, and make every moment count. In the end, there’s only one thing that can stand the test of time, and that’s what you have done for Jesus and His church. And the only thing you can take to heaven with you are those who know Jesus. So bring hope to the hopeless! Store up treasures in heaven, and be thankful for what is most important. You can help pick up the pieces.



DAY SEVEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll.”*
Zechariah 5:2 KJV

Look up! The weather appears kind of funny. In fact, as meteorologist Sam Sparks would say, it’s “Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs!”

In this hilarious movie, inventor Flint Lockwood has a vision to create a very unusual device. But things go in an unexpected direction pretty quickly when his entire hometown falls into the dangerous situation of becoming buried with food!

To see where our adventure begins, we must look back in time a bit to Flint’s childhood. He always wanted to be an inventor, even when he was much younger.

In fact, how great it was that Flint had parents to encourage his talents. We should do the same, not just for family, but for everyone we see. God’s given us all unique talents, and we should do our best to celebrate them.

Now things didn’t quite work out the way Flint expected. But at least he kept trying. In fact, that’s good advice for you too! Keep rolling. Just like with Flint, things may not work out the way you want, when you want. But with patience and perseverance, your efforts will be rewarded. You just have to keep trying.

Finally, you should use your talents to honor God. Flint Lockwood initially used his gift for the wrong reason, and wasn’t listening to what he knew was right. But he changed his forecast by the end of the story, and used his abilities to save the day.

You can use your gifts and save the day too. God has blessed you with the ability to do some amazing things, and if you keep serving others, and don’t give up, your forecast will be spectacular. No meatballs required.



DAY EIGHT

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Save others by pulling them out of the fire.” Jude 1:23 NIRV*

At one point in one of the more famous movies about storm chasers, one of the main characters stands there about fifty feet from a huge growling tornado. She’s just transfixed by the awesome power behind it, and apparently isn’t even thinking of the extreme danger she’s in. Fortunately, her partner drags her back in time to a protected area underneath a bridge.

Audience members like myself were just sitting there wondering what she was thinking, and why doesn’t she use her common sense and run for her life?

Wouldn’t it be horrible if that character in the movie just stood there, and her partner did nothing to help?

Sometimes we’re in a situation in life where we don’t see the danger we’re in. It probably isn’t an approaching tornado, but it might be something that could cause us a lot of harm. That “something” might be a person that is known to cause trouble, or it could be going to a place that has great risk. It could be a great many things, as approaching storms take on many forms.

It’s at this point that we should be really grateful to hear the warning of a friend or loved one. God has placed with us real friends to help protect us. And yes, you yourself are a real friend if you try to help keep others safe.

If you feel like a your parents are nagging at you about something, don’t stand there and ignore their warnings. If your friends are annoying you, telling you not to do something, don’t get mad at them. Instead, listen carefully, and be grateful. They’re seeing something that perhaps you don’t, and they’re just trying to help you not get sucked into a bad situation.

And likewise, if you see someone heading into trouble, be sure to act like that hero in that famous storm chaser movie. Don’t just stand there watching, but instead act like a hero and help pull them from danger.



DAY NINE

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Don’t let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen.” Ephesians 4:20 NIRV*

In one old superhero movie, a team of heroes known as the X-Men are being chased down by two other jets that want to shoot them down. One of the X-Men, Wolverine, asks about the jet they are in, “Don’t you have any weapons in this thing?”

What follows is intense! Suddenly, a storm appears from nowhere, one filled with dark spiraling tornadoes, the skies covered in darkness. That atmosphere changes, and they’re able to escape. But where did all those twisters come from?

Have you ever met someone who can change the atmosphere wherever they go? When some people walk into a room, it’s like a breath of fresh air or a ray of sunshine. Yet when others walk in, they bring darkness and storms.

Orooro Munroe can do all that, literally. Her code name is Storm, and she has the amazing ability to bring all kinds of weather with her, to help the X-Men any way she can. She can twist around bad guys with mini-cyclones and freeze any hothead who’s up for a battle. She can even tell you what it’s like when a Toad gets hit with lightning (the same thing that happens when anything else does!).

It’s an amazing superpower, but you have one that’s quite similar. Here’s the big question: How do people feel at your approach? You can change the atmosphere whenever you walk into a room, and if there are storm warnings going off, perhaps you need to chill out a bit.

You see, God has called us all to bring the light of the world to all people, but not darkness and gloom. No one wants to hear someone complain all the time, be frequently angry, or be in a perpetual state of sadness. It’s okay to feel those emotions and be honest. But every storm passes, and if we don’t keep control of ourselves, we won’t be the kind of people others want to be around.

Storm controls the weather, and as a result has been made a leader of the X-Men, keeping calm while fighting off evildoers. You can lead the way too! Be like Jesus, the calm before a storm. The joy of the Lord is your strength, and with His help, you can bring His light and peace into any darkened situation.



VERSE: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.” Romans 1:16 NIV*

On March 20, 1948, two meteorologists sent out a report to the local Air Force base that there were 35 mph winds without any thunderstorms. Just after 9:30pm that night, disaster struck, as a tornado had hit the airport and tore a path straight through the base, causing over ten million dollars in damage.

The importance of accurately predicting a storm suddenly became very important to the Commanding General there, and these two meteorologists suddenly had a very big job in front of them. There just had to be a quicker warning system than what they already had. That’s why Major Ernest J. Fawbush and Captain Robert C. Miller worked hard the next three days looking at patterns, comparing charts and looking for any similarities in previous instances where there were storms.

And wouldn’t you know it? On March 25, just five days after that first tornado hit their base, they saw similar patterns in the weather. Was it going to happen again?

You can imagine what they were thinking. What were the odds that the same exact thing would happen the same exact place, just five days later? No one had ever put out a warning or prediction of a tornado before, because no one knew how yet. But based on everything they were looking at, it sure seemed like it could happen.

They put out their warning, risking a lot of embarrassment, but still feeling it was the right thing to do. And sure enough, all the officials at the base may have been rolling their eyes. Some may have even been laughing! Nevertheless, they sent a message to all the airplanes coming in: land somewhere else. More importantly, everyone at the base went elsewhere to some place safe.

Right after 6pm that very day, a tornado struck the base. Again. This time, it caused another six million dollars in damage. But the important thing was this: no one was hurt.

Major Fawbush and Captain Miller are now famous heroes for their warning. This was the first ever forecast of a twister, and the prediction they issued saved many lives.

Before the storm, can you imagine how nervous they must have felt, sending out this warning? What if people laughed at them? What if they were wrong? Still, there was an inner conviction that told them it was the right thing to do.

Deep within you is a similar conviction. It’s the voice of the Holy Spirit leading you on and telling you to stand up and do the right thing, no matter the cost. Have you ever invited someone to church? Have you ever told others how much God loves them? Have you ever warned someone that they’re heading into danger? You may feel awkward or nervous, or possibly even afraid that people will laugh at you. But remember that it’s not about what others may think. It’s about helping others, and possibly saving their lives. Like these two early storm chasers, you too can be an unforgettable hero in someone’s life.



DAY ELEVEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.” Matthew 7:25 (MSG)*

There’s an area of this country known as Tornado Alley, and yes, you know why they call it that. If you’re going to live in a house in this area, it’s super important to have it anchored properly. What does that even mean? It just means the house needs to be securely attached to a firm foundation. Otherwise, the house can be pulled up off its foundation. And what goes up... must come down. The end result isn’t pretty.

Jesus had some similar thoughts about how to build, although he wasn’t talking about just building a house. He was talking about building our lives. Listen to his advice, found in Matthew, chapter seven:

“These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock.”

In Tornado Alley, all those nice little additions you can add to your house are nice, but guess what? They’re not as important when the storms come. The most important thing is having your house anchored to something that will not move.

God’s Word will not move. Storms will come in our lives, and sometimes they’re more than just wind and rain. Sometimes storms can mean illnesses, money troubles, or just plain bad news. These things come with noise and fury and they try to blow you away, and send everything crashing down. But those that keep anchored to God’s Word – those that really believe it and live by every word in His book – those are the ones that will find themselves still standing.



VERSE: *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1 NIRV*

If you’ve ever heard of a cowboy named Pecos Bill, you know he’s famous for doing some mighty incredible things. Why, on one occasion, he actually roped a tornado, hopped on its back, and rode that thing all over Texas! He then rode it off west from there until it threw him off somewhere in California. He hit the ground so hard, the ground sank below sea level, right there at a place people call Death Valley. And all the water from that storm he rode? Well, it came down and washed out the Grand Canyon, making it look like it does today!

Of course, you’ve probably figured out that this is what people call a “tall tale.” The truth of things is that it wasn’t Pecos Bill that made either Death Valley or the Grand Canyon. It was God Himself who sculpted and painted the America West, the breathtaking place Pecos Bill called home. As we read in the book of Genesis, it was God who created the heavens and the earth. It was God who created so many incredible sunrises and sunsets, gorgeous beaches, majestic mountains, amazing animals, beautiful plants, and all the stunning places and things to see throughout the world – and throughout the universe!

It’s a creative story that’s told about Pecos Bill, but there’s no question who it is that is the most inventive, imaginative, and innovative. It’s none other than the Great I Am. He is our Creator, and He’s created this world and everything in it for us to enjoy. And He loves to hear feedback! The next time you see an unforgettable sunset, an amazing view, or just suddenly realized how remarkable that things are all around you, be sure to shout out a compliment to our Creator. He’s the One who did it all, and that ain’t no tall tale!



DAY THIRTEEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Then he turned to the crowd: “When you see clouds coming in from the west, you say, ‘Storm’s coming’—and you’re right. And when the wind comes out of the south, you say, ‘This’ll be a hot one’—and you’re right. Frauds! You know how to tell a change in the weather, so don’t tell me you can’t tell a change in the season, the God-season we’re in right now.” Luke 12:54-56 (MSG)*

The Pharisees and teachers of God’s law were the ones that knew more about God’s Word than just about everyone. Imagine someone today knowing more about the Bible than anyone else, an absolute expert! And now, imagine that person being selfish, jealous, and showing no love at all for anyone else other than themselves. Yes, that’s how these Pharisees were acting.

How terrible! How ironic that throughout history, these teachers of God’s Word will always be remembered as the ones that didn’t act like they knew God’s Word at all. Think about it: they were literally right there with the Son of God himself. And they were so filled with selfishness that they missed out on the very thing all their ancestors hoped and prayed to see someday. Jesus said have ears to hear time and again, and they still would not listen. They missed it, big time.

The Bible is filled with examples of people that we can learn from, and yes, we can even learn from these guys. Jesus said to them that they could tell when a storm was coming just by looking at the clouds. And yet they refused to recognize the signs all around them: people being healed miraculously, and salvation for all! The Son of God himself was in their midst. They should have known better.

The truth is that we should too. Consider this: every person we meet here on earth is made in the image of God. True story! You probably know someone who you think is a little different. But ask yourself this question: do you listen to what they have to say? Do you treat them with love? Do you respect them as someone made in God’s image?

Don’t be like a Pharisee. All the knowledge in the world is nothing if we don’t show one another love. If you’re acting selfish or jealous, recognize the signs that there’s trouble on the way if you don’t change. Act with love. That’s the law that matters most.



DAY FOURTEEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *"Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10 NIV*

Elijah was on a mountain when the storm hit. It was more than just a storm, actually, and fortunately there was a cave where he could seek shelter. First, there were winds as strong as a tornado, so violent that there were rocks in its path that shattered. Then there was an earthquake, loud and strong, shaking the entire mountain. After that, a fire blazed brightly, filled with heat and consuming energy.

Through all of this, Elijah was full of faith. He was looking for God in all of this, listening carefully each time something big would happen outside that cave. He heard the noise and commotion, but he did not hear the Lord's voice in any of this. No, instead of any booming voice that sounded like thunder, Elijah actually heard something else quite remarkable. It was a gentle whisper. It was the Lord's voice.

There is a famous scripture in the Bible that tells us simply, "Be still and know that I am God." As Elijah discovered, there are times we hear best from God when it's nice and quiet. Worship bands do a great job bringing energy and passion, and it's great to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. And it's so incredible to gather together, joining with other church members, cheering and clapping when a pastor gives a good message from the Bible. But there are many times in life where we all need to get away to a quiet place. It doesn't have to be a cave on a mountain, of course. But it does need to be a place where you can shut everything out, to pray and just be still. Rest in His presence. Be still, and know that He is faithful. Be still and know that He is holy. Be still and know that He is your loving Father. Be still, and know that He is God.



DAY FIFTEEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV*

In 2013, a weather event occurred over Los Angeles that was unlike anything those people had ever seen before. If you see a tiger shark underneath your car, perhaps you should look to the skies! There might be another sharknado!

Of course, there’s no such thing as a sharknado. For those of you unfamiliar with the term, it’s basically a tornado with a whole bunch of sharks inside it. Someone came up with this crazy idea for a story a few years ago. It was a super weird story on television where a massive waterspout picked up a whole bunch of sharks from the ocean, and yes, suddenly there are sharks flying all over the place.

Before continuing, let’s be really clear: that’s not something to be frightened about. You have a greater chance of growing rainbow hair, along with a unicorn horn on your head.

Yet there are people who still fear things like that happening. Maybe it’s because they watch stories like this on television all the time. Or maybe it’s because they spend all their time focusing on things to be fearful of, no matter what they are.

You might find yourself frequently fearful of one thing or another. Black plague? Meteor shower? Zombies? It could even be a sharknado! If that’s the case, then it’s time for you to grab one thing. No, not your chainsaw. And it’s not the remote control for your television either. In fact, it might be time to set all that aside if it’s filling your mind with all these scary thoughts and ideas.

No, the thing you need to pick up is your Bible. It’s filled with true stories of God’s faithfulness, and reminders that ours is not a spirit of fear, but of power and of sound mind. Yes, fill your mind and your spirit with His word, instead of images of sharks and tornadoes. When you spend more time with God’s Word, you’ll feel a whirlwind of courage sweep in. And you’ll remember this simple fact: ours is not a spirit of fear. God is with you, always.

Also, there aren’t as many sharks flying around. So there’s that.



DAY SIXTEEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.” 2 Kings 2:11 NIV*

We wouldn't recommend this form of travel: in 2014, a truck was picked up by a tornado in the town of Mayflower, Arkansas and dropped off twenty-seven miles away in the town of Vilonia! Can you imagine that?

Not that long ago in the Bible, there was another vehicle that went up in a whirlwind, and it went even further. We're talking *way* further! Back in the book of 2 Kings, we read how Elijah told his student and friend Elisha that it was time to leave for heaven. And sure enough, while they were talking and walking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared between the two of them. And right there, Elijah went up in a whirlwind! That must have been an amazing sight to see! As Elijah went up towards heaven, his cloak fell down to Elisha, who wore it from that day on.

There was a reason Elisha wore that cloak, of course. He was honoring his teacher and his mentor. Earlier that day while Elijah was walking away, Elisha told him he'd never leave his side. He was faithful, persistent, and always seeking as much as he could learn from his mentor and friend.

In the end, Elisha was blessed with a double portion of the gifts and talents his master Elijah had. And within this story is a lesson for all of us, a message about the valuable gifts and talents that we too can take from our teachers, our parents, and those we look up to. It can take humility, service, obedience, and persistence. But when you listen and follow closely those you can learn from, there's so much that you too can be blessed with. God has placed people in your life that you can learn from. Stay close and follow, taking in all they have to share. You too can walk away with a double portion!



DAY SEVENTEEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“The Lord is my rock and my fort. He is the One who saves me. My God is my rock. I go to Him for safety. He is like a shield to me. He’s the power that saves me. He’s my place of safety.” Psalm 18:2 NIRV*

Thanks to the efforts of storm chasers and meteorologists, we have a warning system in place that can help alert us to dangerous weather when it approaches. There are sirens that blare in some communities, but there are other ways to know trouble is looming.

One way to be prepared is to check the atmosphere around you. A certain color sky, unexpected gusts, hail and horizontal rain are all signs that you’d best take cover indoors, somewhere safe, and quickly!

If we ignore these, we risk running into danger, and possibly “the hook.” This is the tell-tale sign of serious trouble for those studying the weather radar. If you see a hook-shape in the Doppler radar, something dark and sinister is barreling in the heart of the storm. You don’t want to mess with that.

As Christians, we experience different atmospheres – some are great, and some are places to avoid. One place the Bible is really clear about is sin. We don’t want to mess with it.

But God has given us ways to escape. As storm chasers ourselves, we should see the atmosphere we’re in, and recognize immediately if it is a place to avoid entirely. Sometimes going somewhere we shouldn’t can be a little tempting, but always remember that hook is there, lurking. Sin has a way of grabbing hold, and messing up lives.

As forecasters alert you to the dangers in weather patterns, your friends do something similar. Don’t get annoyed if it seems your loved ones are trying to keep you from something: maybe they’re just trying to get you out of harm’s way.

The best strategy is to have an emergency plan. When storm seasons come around, it’s always good to have a family meeting to plan ahead what to do should trouble come calling. And with tempting situations, the solution is quite the same: have your mind made up ahead of time who you will serve, and what you will not do, and what shelter you will seek: go to the Rock.

“The Lord is my rock and my fort. He is the One who saves me. My God is my rock. I go to Him for safety. He is like a shield to me. He’s the power that saves me. He’s my place of safety.”



DAY EIGHTEEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people must go out each day. Have them gather enough bread for that day.” Exodus 16:4 NIRV*

This is one of the wildest things you’ve ever heard of, but you can be assured that it is absolutely true! It’s very rare, but there are actually times where it rains fish from the sky! That’s right, fish start falling from the heavens, just like a fisherman’s happy dream. Now don’t go outside and sit waiting for that to happen. It’s really super rare, but other creatures have also been seen falling out of the sky, such as frogs, toads, and even jellyfish.

Yes, it’s rather strange! This is how it all works. When storms move over the water, there are times that a funnel cloud called a waterspout begins to form. These waterspouts can actually pull up water – and anything *in* the water – way up into the sky. Then they can drop the water – and everything else – somewhere else. And sometimes that can be many, many miles away. Talk about flying fish!

Now, as odd as raining fish may seem, imagine pieces of bread falling from the sky. Well yes, that happened too! In the book of Exodus, the hungry Israelites were fed by a food called manna, which actually fell from the sky *every single day*.

As you read the story, you’ll see how God took care of the Israelites in the desert. And you know something? God takes care of us too. It might not be fish falling from the sky, of course, but there are so many other ways that God provides for us each and every day.

So don’t spend so much time worrying about your future. Instead, trust our Heavenly Father. Another name for Him is Jehovah Jireh, our Provider. He knows what you need, and He has amazing blessings that He’s about to pour out over your life. Hey, maybe it’ll even be more fish!



DAY NINETEEN

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Go into all the world. Preach the good news to everyone.” Mark 16:15 NIRV*

Each year storm chasers follow storms for research, for footage, and perhaps even the thrill of the chase. Technology has changed so much over the years that today just about anyone can hold up their cell phone and record a decent quality movie of an unusual cloud formation or even a twister. But did you know when the first actual movie footage of a tornado was captured?

You might be surprised. The first video of a tornado was taken in 1951 in Corn, Kansas. And even further back in 1933, there was movie footage of a waterspout taken in Cuba. The first photograph ever taken of a tornado? You have to go back to 1884, when a photographer used his clunky box camera to take a picture of one in Anderson County, Kansas.

These images were shared pretty quickly, and not long afterwards, everyone all over the world was not only hearing about these storms, but seeing actual images of them as well. And it's still like that to this day. The number of storm chasers out there have grown, and so have the images, videos, and all the scientific observations. All that they see and hear is shared right away.

Storm chasers are pretty excited about what it was they just saw. But consider this: many, many years ago, there were some ordinary people that were super anxious to share what they just saw too. The early apostles and followers of Jesus were chasing after him, ready to roll with him at a moment's notice, and ready to see or hear something that would change their lives. Right away, just like a storm chaser, they were ready to share what they saw with the rest of the world. In fact, you can read a whole lot of that in the four gospels, the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The love of Jesus is more powerful than any tornado, and more awe inspiring than any storm cell. Be sure to spend time chasing after Him with prayer and reading God's Word. And as you experience His love, don't miss an opportunity to share it with the world.



VERSE: *“I know the plans I have for you,” announces the Lord. “I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come.”*
Jeremiah 29:11 NIRV

If it weren't for the overcast skies over his hometown, Tetsuya Fujita would have died a whole lot earlier. On August 9, 1945, an atomic bomb was supposed to strike his city, and wipe it out completely. But because of cloud cover, the airplane couldn't see below, and Kokura, Japan was spared. The target changed.

There's a chance you've never heard of this man before. But meteorologists and anyone fascinated with the study of weather know him very well. And storm chasers certainly do too. Have you ever heard of an F-1 tornado? It's his last name where the "F" came from. He's the one that came up with the system to measure and predict tornados. And because of his scientific work, he discovered something called microbursts within storms. His research has saved millions of lives. The airline industry used his studies to change everything about air travel, and his work with the study of storms has helped to create a world where we are safer from storms than we were in the past.

God gave him a gift to see the tiny details, studying patterns and seeing things that others could not. He had this gift early in life. In fact, while still in Japan, he spent his life savings on a typewriter that typed in English, just so he could send all his work to a college in America. He was hoping to get a job, and was taking a very big risk.

It all paid off. He got a position on a research team here, and got right to work. It was difficult at first, as he didn't speak English as well as others, and of course being a Japanese person in the middle of America right after World War II made things challenging. But his skills and imagination were never questioned. And today he is known as "Mr. Tornado," the scientist known for measuring the unmeasurable, and unlocking countless mysteries in the skies above.

God has given each of us gifts. Yours may be nothing like Dr. Fujita's, of course. But that doesn't mean they are any less significant. Time and again throughout his life, he kept moving forward, staying focused on that one thing he was made to do. And in the end, that one thing saved countless lives.

Challenges come to all of us. But God has given you a gift and a dream. It's within you now, and it's meant to help others. It's meant to save lives. Take that leap of faith today, and chase after that purpose that God has put inside you. It can lead to the adventure of a lifetime!



VERSE: *“But the people you redeemed, you led in merciful love; You guided them under your protection to your holy pasture.” Exodus 13:13 (MSG)*

The book of Exodus records the first people ever to chase after a pillar of clouds. It wasn't a tornado though – it was God's presence! He had just rescued all the Israelites from Egypt and was leading them towards the Promised Land. What a time of rejoicing that was! In fact, it was so wonderful that Moses and his sister Miriam stopped to lead everyone in a song of worship to the Lord!

In their song, they worshipped God for things He had done, for things He was doing, and for things He would be doing in their lives. And that's something we should be worshipping God for as well. He's done so much for us, and we have so much to praise Him for. When was the last time you stopped to thank the Lord for all the things that He has brought you through? Don't focus on what you think may be wrong. Instead, praise God for all that He has done for you.

When you do that, you'll find it easier to see how He's even now working in your life. So why not praise Him for what He's doing now as well? Just like that mighty pillar of cloud that shielded the Israelites from the Egyptian army, God is right now protecting you from things that could make your life much, much worse.

And right now, He's guiding you forward. What's amazing about the song Miriam and Moses sang was that it told of all the things that God was going to do as well. God has great plans for us, plans that will bring a song of joy to your heart!

Some Israelites never learned to be grateful or praise, always focusing on what they thought was going wrong. As a result, these complainers lost their way, and never really went anywhere in their lives. But those who trust in the Lord and praise His name? Those are led with merciful love, guided under His protection to His holy pasture.



VERSE: *“You make it clear that you are a letter from Christ. You are the result of our work for God. You are a letter written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. You are a letter written not on tablets made out of stone but on human hearts.”*
2 Corinthians 3:3 NIRV

Back in February of 2017, a lot of storm chasers came together to do something remarkable. They drove themselves out in different directions, all over the state of Oklahoma, doing so in such a way that if you looked at everyone’s GPS coordinates, they spelled out two ginormous letters: “BP.” These were the initials of an actor that starred in a movie that inspired each of them to be storm chasers themselves. And yes, not only did they do all this right in the heart of Tornado Alley, but they also made it so the town of Wakita, Oklahoma, was dead center between those ginormous letters.

Do you know exactly how big these letters were, if you measured each one? The answer is two hundred and ten miles tall! Now that’s a tribute!

As big as a mark they left all over the state of Oklahoma, he must have left an even bigger mark in their lives too. His role inspired hundreds or maybe even thousands of people to become what he himself portrayed on the big movie screen: a storm chaser.

Riding through life, we too are making our mark. At a later time, people will look upon our lives, and all the things we did. And yes, even now there are those that are looking at the things we are doing now. That being said, how are you spending your time? Every day is a gift you’ve been given, and we should make the most of the life we are living. Are we inspiring others to live for Jesus? Or are we leading people towards a place God isn’t pleased with?

It seems unlikely that anyone will be spelling out your initials or mine all across the state of Oklahoma. Still our lives are a letter, one written by God Himself, one sent to make a significant and wonderful mark for the world. Make those letters as huge as you can, and be sure they’re pointing upwards to Him.



VERSE: *"You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it."*
1 Corinthians 12:27 NIRV

A team of storm chasers is just that: a team. Everyone has a specific job when following storm fronts across the countryside. Each team needs a driver, of course. Then there's someone who knows the land and knows maps. There's the one who can read and understand weather patterns and so on. There's also the photographer too. In fact, there are all sorts of tasks, and each one is super important. For example, imagine storm chasers riding out to chase a storm front, and they get completely lost and find themselves driving into a lake? Or what if they see the most amazing weather formations, but have no way of recording important information about them, or even any way of filming them?

This is just like the church, of course. God made us all with unique gifts and talents. Some work with the youth and children's ministries, while others work as ushers or even guides in the parking lot. Some lead songs in worship, while others preach, and there are those of us that write or create, or even keep track of the church budget. There are all kinds of things to be done, and each one is pretty important to the church. In fact, if someone's not doing their job, just like a team of storm chasers without a navigator, the church can get pretty lost.

So! What is your role? God made you to do something, and if you know what that is, then what are you waiting for? Join the chase, and help the church move forward. If you don't know what your role is, then get ready to have some fun finding out. Try different things, helping out with different areas that need it. You'll find your place soon enough, and that's when you'll be exactly what God called you to be: a vital part of the team!



VERSE: *“Aaron reached out the stick that was in his hand. He struck the dust on the ground with it. The dust all over the land of Egypt turned into gnats. They landed on people and animals alike.” Exodus 18:17 NIRV*

Just recently in Argentina, many people spotted something dark, menacing, and swirling. At first they thought it was a tornado. But there was no inclement weather, no rain, and not even much wind. What was it that they saw? While harmless to buildings and cars, it was still something pretty terrifying in appearance to some people. It was a thick column of mosquitoes swarming upwards about a thousand feet into the air! Yikes!

Somebody call the SWAT team! Get it? Okay, that one might have gone right over your head. Sorry, we won't *bug* you with any more of these bad puns.

Anyway, back in the book of Exodus, there was something similar that happened to the Egyptians. One of the Ten Plagues that Egypt suffered through was a Plague of Gnats. That must have been awful! These are like mosquitoes, flying around in swarms, and yes there are gnats that bite. Ouch!

The Bible tells us that Moses' brother Aaron reached out his staff and struck the dust on the ground there in Egypt. That's when the dust all over the land turned into gnats, landing on people and animals alike. Talk about an unpleasant situation!

If only Pharaoh wasn't so stubborn. He literally was faced with a choice: let the Hebrew slaves go, or watch as Egypt's people suffered through plague after plague. He could have stopped at any time. But rather than do what was right for the Egyptians, his own people, he made the wrong choice. And that choice was gnats.

Each day we face choices, just like Pharaoh. We can choose to do what pleases God, or we can choose to do the wrong thing. When we sin, and do things we know don't make God happy, we're heading in the wrong direction. That doesn't mean a tornado of gnats is coming your way. But it does mean things aren't going to go well for you.

In the end, it's your choice. Don't be stubborn like Pharaoh. Instead, choose to love and think of others first. Don't think of only yourself, because that choice, my friends, is completely gnats! Sorry.



DAY TWENTY FIVE

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“Anyone who is kind to poor people lends to the Lord. God will reward them for what they have done.” Proverbs 19:17 NIRV*

Many times things are picked up and carried off in a twister, sometimes pretty far away. In one famous instance back in 1991, a personal check was carried by a storm, traveling from Stockton, Kansas all the way to Winnetoon, Nebraska. That’s roughly two hundred and twenty-three miles away!

If you’re looking to send a check somewhere, there are much easier ways to go about doing it. In fact, at church, they usually just pass around an offering bag to collect your gift in. If you’d like to ask the usher to twirl the bag around a few times, that’s up to you. But the point is, it’s pretty easy to give at church!

That’s a good thing. Because when you give in the church, you’re doing so much! Even if it seems like the tiniest amount, that offering is still traveling a long, long ways. Yes, even farther than two hundred and twenty-three miles! In fact, consider this: your offering is helping feed others all around the world. And when your church supports missionary workers overseas, your giving is helping spread the love of Jesus many, many, many miles away.

You don’t even have to stand outside and wait for a storm to brew up. Just wait until that offering bag passes by, and give back to God. You’ll be sending His love a long, long ways!



DAY TWENTY SIX

STORM CHASERS

VERSE: *“They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind.” Hosea 8:7 NKJV*

Imagine planting some seeds, and instead of seeing a nice little tomato plant, you discover you’ve grown a major F-5 tornado! Now there’s a harvest no one wants to plant seeds for!

In the book of Hosea, God was explaining that the nation of Israel had been disobeying His laws and doing things He wasn’t pleased with, time after time after time after time. And each time, it was like they were planting into the ground some nasty seeds. Yes, these seeds were not the good kind! These were “wind seeds,” and they weren’t going to produce a nice tree with apples or oranges. No, the nation of Israel was sowing seeds of trouble, and they were about to reap a whirlwind of it!

Sin has consequences. When we keep doing something we know God doesn’t like, we’re doing something similar. We’re going in a terrible direction. It might even be more destructive than a F-5 tornado! Sin hurts people, and tears lives apart. It leaves a path of destruction wherever it goes.

It makes sense that you don’t want to see something like that in your life. Flee from sin, and do your best to please God. And whatever you do, don’t be like the Israelites in Hosea 8:7. Don’t sow the wind, and you won’t reap that whirlwind!



VERSE: *"For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV*

Over the past few decades, technology has advanced in such a way that we can now see things that used to be hidden and lurking within the darkness of an approaching storm. Radars can pick up things like wind directions and even debris, both of these huge indicators that there's trouble brewing within the storm. Some storm chasers actually drive around with a large mobile Doppler radar, a special device designed to measure and locate wind speeds within a storm front. These storm chasers are saving lives by sending that info out to warn everyone of any dangers within.

In the past, we couldn't do this. But things have gotten so advanced we don't just rely on our eyes anymore. And that's how it is with our faith, of course. The Bible says that we walk by faith and not by sight, and that simply means we can run to our Heavenly Father when we're having trouble seeing hope.

Sometimes in life, our outlook may look confusing or dark, and we may even feel a little lost, or possibly even in danger. That's when we need to go to something even more amazing than a powerful radar. When we go to God in prayer, or when we read His word, we'll see things in a whole new way. He'll show us what direction we need to go, and the best way to stay out of trouble. He'll show us the greatest way to help others, or warn them of danger. His eyes are on everything, His knowledge unsurpassed. He can see patterns developing way ahead of time, and He's the best forecaster there is.

If you're feeling lost or in the dark, don't forget that we walk by faith and not by sight. Go to God in prayer, and read His word. He can see things that you can't, and He's never ever – not once – missed a forecast!



How to Ride Out the Storm

Storms come in life for all of us. Remember that Jesus told us that it rains on the just and the unjust. But He also told us how to ride out the storm too. Listen to His great advice:

“So then, everyone who hears my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. But it does not fall. It is built on the rock.

“But everyone who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man. He builds his house on sand. The rain comes down. The water rises. The winds blow and beat against that house. And it falls with a loud crash.”

Matthew 7:24-27 NIRV

Building your life on the Rock is simple. It simply means living your life around Jesus, not just hearing His words, but putting them into practice too.

Building your life on the Rock is spending time with Jesus each day in prayer. It's finding time to worship Him for all that He's been, and all that He will be for us. It's serving others, helping those in need, and giving of yourself to help the church.

If we build our house on the Rock, we don't need to be afraid of the storms. In fact, because of Him, we can be Storm Chasers!



How to Ride Out the Storm

Preparing for a severe thunderstorm should take place long before you hear any warnings.

One of the best ways to stay alert is with a weather radio, although updates of the weather forecast on television, phones, or the internet are a good way to stay aware of any threats, particularly during “storm season.”

Make sure everyone in your house knows and understands the warning signals, from weather radio announcements to warning alarms in the community.

Finally, be sure everyone in your family knows what room to go to should there be dangerous weather. If you’re not sure which room is best, follow this advice:

- Find the lowest level of your home, such as a basement or storm cellar. If you don’t have a basement, go to an inner hallway, a smaller inner room or a closet.
- Keep away from all windows and glass doorways.
- If you’re in a building such as a church, hospital, school or office building, go to the innermost part of the building on the lowest floor. Do not use elevators because the power may fail, leaving you trapped.
- You can cushion yourself with a mattress, but don’t cover yourself with one. Cover your head and eyes with a blanket or jacket to protect against flying debris and broken glass. Don’t waste time moving mattresses around.
- Keep pets on a leash or in a crate or carrier.
- Stay inside until you’re certain the storm has passed, as multiple tornadoes can emerge from the same storm.
- Never leave a building to attempt to “escape” a tornado.

There are many other tips that you can research for yourself online or elsewhere, but you’ll be in a good spot when you remember this: the best kind of plan is one made in advance.



NOTES

**STORM
CHASERS**