



Storm: Hearing Jesus for the Times We Live In

Jim Cymbala

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Storm: What Jesus Is Saying to His Church is a book for every Christian who is concerned about the challenges that face believers today. Using powerful stories of people who have been transformed by Christ, it will strike a note of encouragement and hope, helping Christians to remember that a life surrendered to Christ in the midst of a church transformed by his presence cannot be defeated. No amount of spiritual darkness or cultural pressure can drown out the life-giving power of the gospel.

Jim Cymbala believes that the church in America is in the middle of a powerful storm, the intensity of which is likely to increase in coming months and years. Many Christians are bewildered, disheartened, and concerned by what they see--a culture that's become increasingly hostile to biblical Christianity and a church whose vital signs are quickly waning. Like the storm surge that overtook lower Manhattan during Hurricane Sandy, powerful forces have come together to create a surge that's threatening the health of the church.

Storm will talk about the tendency on the right and on the left to conflate the kingdom of God with a particular political party. Many conservative Christians have made the mistake of substituting America for the Israel of the Old Testament, failing to realize the danger of adopting Old Testament principles that were never affirmed in the New Testament. Their message has sometimes been harsh and legalistic, making it difficult for them to proclaim a gospel of grace. Even though there is a great deal of emphasis on the Bible in such churches, it can often be the wrong emphasis.

Jim Cymbala will explore the importance of preaching a gospel of grace rather than a gospel of mixed messages, so common in the church today. He will speak of our need to understand spiritual battles and for total dependence on the Holy Spirit, and he will discuss the importance of prayer. He will also explore the motivational atmosphere of the early church which flourished despite far worse conditions than those we face today. We don't need more church growth programs to turn the church around. What's needed is a transformation at the heart of the church so that the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit is allowed to lead, and lives are transformed.

Storm: Hearing Jesus for the Times We Live In Details

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From Reader Review Storm: Hearing Jesus for the Times We Live In for online ebook

Jim says

As I do this review, I am reminded that I have not read any books by Jim Cymbala in over a decade - I guess I could say I forgot how good he really is as a Bible teacher. He teaches a lot on prayer, and this book is no exception. In "Storm" you will learn a lot about prayer and a lot about revival. He also points out how we have gotten away from the ways of the early church, and that much of what we call church today has no resemblance to the true Church. He discusses the many problems we have in the modern day churches, and how we need to get back to simple Bible believing and get away from all these "new things" that we think we need to do to have a successful church or to be a successful Christian. He also takes a break from teaching in 4 chapters spaced throughout the "Storm" to have some people share their testimony, I think they are included to show real life examples of prayer and the mighty power of God.

I am very impressed with this short book (only 182 pages), and I am sure it will be a blessing to many. Since reading this book, it has inspired me to listen to many of his sermons on line, especially one life-changing audio sermon, "My House Shall be Called a House of Prayer." Also, this book has inspired my prayer life, which was definitely in need of something to spark it. While I gave the book 4.5 for content, as to its impact on my prayer life, it is beyond even 5 stars! Read it, it's not deep, it's an easy read. Maybe it will be a life changer for you, or at least remind you how important prayer is in our lives, and that we serve an awesome God!

Edward Arrington says

Using Superstorm Sandy as a backdrop for his introduction, Jim Cymbala quickly gets to the meat of the subject for this book. The Church is facing a serious storm. We only need to read the subtitle to know the real answer. We must hear Jesus. With that said, this is not a book with simplistic answers to deal with the storm bearing down on the Church. It is a well thought-out manuscript of where we are and what needs to be a priority for the Church. Pastor Cymbala shares several stories from the lives of people he knows to help communicate the age-old truths that he shares. This is a must-read for any pastor or church leader who is truly concerned about the Church in the twenty-first century. His message is not limited to certain churches or denominations but to the Church everywhere. However, it has to take root in the lives of individual men and women and be put into effect with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Melanie Johnson says

Read this as ARC from NetGalley. This is a great book for pastors, ministers, Sunday school teachers etc. to read about the state of the church today. Jim gives very thoughtful and loving admonition about churches becoming too focused on "entertainment" or numbers of new members instead of allowing true change through the Holy Spirit to happen in the pews. There were also quite a few testimonies that were so amazing and will stay with me for a while. Great read.

Violet says

Jim Cymbala, who experienced Hurricane Sandy in 2012, likens it to the storm he expects will soon hit the evangelical church of North America. In *Storm* he gives advice to pastors and lay people about how to get ready so that the light of faith won't be snuffed out like the city lights of Lower Manhattan were in Sandy's wake.

"I believe followers of Jesus in America are on the cusp of something horrible. I, and many others, see the early warning signs all around" – Jim Cymbala, *Storm*, Kindle Location 148.

Three areas that cause him to be concerned about the American church are:

- 1] The church isn't as big or popular as it thinks it is.
- 2] Personal transformation is rare.
- 3] Biblical literacy is declining.

To remedy this he addresses lacks and needs in a variety of areas:

- The failure of modern models of church planting and growth (he calls them "fads and trends").
- The need for prayer, both personal and corporate intercessory prayer.

"... the deepest secrets of prayer are only learned by spending time with God" – K.L. 805.

"Think about the people we love and worry about but rarely pray for" – K.L. 2641.

- Godly, exemplary leadership.

"... the quality of spiritual leadership can only be measured by how it looks in the Lord's sight"
– K.L. 1096.

- The need for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our churches and ministries.
- A clear, Christ-centered gospel message.
- Clarity on the difference between the Old and New Testament Covenants.

"Old Testament passages are only properly used when they ultimately point us to Jesus and the New Covenant" – K.L. 3006.

- How to live in anticipation of Christ's return.

Following chapters of teaching are first-person stories of people from his church whose lives illustrate the point he has just made.

The book's ideas are logical and the points well supported with Scripture. Cymbala speaks from a wealth of pastoral experience which gives his voice and message passion and urgency.

There is nothing new here, really, just a plea to get back to basics, made urgent because of how quickly events are changing the political and social landscape in America and the world. For those who have lost fervor or gotten bogged down in esoterical theology, this easy-to-read book will pull them back to the Bible essentials.

I received *Storm* as a gift from the publisher via BookLook Bloggers for the purpose of writing a review.

Jennifer Pickwell says

Storm is yet another great read by Pastor and author Jim Cymbala. I found it insightful and full of wisdom for living in the world today. It will make my list of favorite non-fiction reads for 2014. I think the most surprising thing about the book is that Pastor Cymbala identifies several areas in which Christians have gotten off task when it comes to reaching the lost. If there was ever a time to keep the main thing the main thing, it is now!

My favorite parts of the book were the stories of life change. I love to hear stories of people experiencing the gospel and as a result their lives are never the same. The most inspiring to me was the story of Avril. Most of us would look at her life and count her as a casualty of her circumstances. However, Avril overcame and not by her own hand but by the grace of God and a Pastor who took the time to show her Christ's love. His simple act of blessing her with furniture changed the course of not only her life, but the lives of so many people

If you have time to read one more book this year, pick this one. I was given a complimentary copy of this book by its publisher in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own and I have not been compensated.

Greg Davenport says

Great book on the state of the church today and how we can go back to the bible for a true move of God today! Technology and novel ideas are fine, but unless we have the power of God's spirit no one's life will be transformed! Let's pray and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to usher us into the last days! These are the thoughts from *Storm*. Good read!

Ellie Sorota says

This book was good and thought provoking but not life changing, not a book I'll be going out of my way to recommend because I think in many ways it has a small audience. While any church member will benefit,

much of it is directed to church leaders. Cymbala calls his readers to a return to "Jesus, only Jesus" church leadership. Heavy on prayer and relying on the Holy Spirit to transform ourselves and our churches; less reliance on business models and formulas for "successful" churches. Sprinkled throughout are fantastic testimonies from members of his own congregation that help us grasp how God is still saving people, what ultimately speaks into their lives and how to be open as leaders and church members to spiritual transformation. He emphasizes how much people don't know when it comes to scripture and how that should affect our teaching. One point I hugely appreciated was his critique on the overuse of business models and formulas in church function. Cymbala reminds the reader that church is not a business and God has purposely usurped man's methods and measurement of success. As uncomfortable as that makes us when we try to responsibly lead our churches, we must continue to rely first and foremost on the Holy Spirit and early church examples and ignore or at least give FAR less weight to what is going on in the business world. We are not in a business; we are in a family.

Edward L says

This is a book comparing winter storm Sandy to the storm that is going on in the church today. Jim's thoughts are right on. Many churches are failing to meet the storm that is attacking them today. But there is hope. Jim cites many personal anecdotes of the way individuals have responded to the storm. one that is particularly insightful is about a Muslim man that converted to Christianity despite the physical danger to him. His example is only one among many.

John says

As expected from Jim Cymbala. The genesis of the book was Hurricane Sandy as Lower Manhattan was dark - that is dark! No light!

The coming storm of persecution to the Church of Christ and the sufficiency of the Spirit of God for His people.

Are His people praying for the salvation of the persecutors? A thought - "Was Saul's salvation the outcome of the persecuted church praying for his salvation?" Not seeking revenge, or seeking the Roman government to suppress the persecutors? May this be our prayer today!! God works to glorify His Name!! What Glory for the humiliation and salvation and "new life in Christ" for the great enemies of the Gospel!!!

William Chilton says

Christian, you desire a change in your Christian life and tired of the status quo?

Pastor Cymbala through the guidance of the Holy Spirit has written this book for you. Prayerfully read this book and you will find that you will have a Fresh and New outlook as a Newborn Child of God and will be able to help others too...

Paul Simon says

Great book

I really enjoyed reading this book. I recommend it for any Christian who wants to grow in their walk with the Lord.

Rebecca "Rebeka" Lewis says

Wonderful book. Always learn a lot when I read great books like this one. It doesn't surprise me about the apathy so many Christians have but it gives me such a need for revival in our world. Jim is a wonderful writer and every time I go to Brooklyn I love going to worship with him and his beautiful church family. Yea there are storms but with God we can weather them.

Dottie Parish says

This book is written as a warning to the Church. Cymbala believes we are in an increasingly powerful storm with our culture becoming more and more hostile to Christianity. He outlines the warning signs of the storm coming and the failures of church trends. He cites the value of "desperate prayer" and throughout the book emphasizes the necessity of prayer, the need to preach the pure gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit. Cymbala vividly illustrates these topics with stories of people in his congregation who overcame all sorts of odds through prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. The best chapter, #10, is titled Storm Team and is about the power of intercessory prayer. He says:

"We must understand that what is needed daily is supernatural revelation by the Spirit to our hearts (Eph3:4-5). The truths of our faith aren't grasped by the natural mind. There are brilliant scholars who know the Bible but don't know Christ." 135

The final chapter on preparing for Christ's return is excellent also.

I have some question about Chapter 11 A Fog of Confusion. This chapter is about understanding the Old and New Covenants. Cymbala, in answering questions about the violence in the Old Testament, seems to dismiss the Old Testament as no longer applying to Christians. I've learned to recognize the ways in which the Old Testament reveals the character of God and foreshadows Christ throughout especially on the cross in the Day of Atonement. I hope Cymbala teaches the Old Testament more deeply and completely than what is given in this chapter.

This is an important book with an urgent message. Every church needs to grow in the power of prayer, in the power of the Holy Spirit and offer the clear Gospel. The cultural storm is real.

Connie says

If you only pick one Christian book to read this year, this should be it. Jim Cymbala has a lot to say to the small churches whose pastors are off attending seminars to learn from the mega churches. Hopefully, those in a position to bring new faces into the fold and shepherd the ones already attending will listen. Church shouldn't be about the fancy lighting and choice of music, because Cymbala states, and I agree, that what we need are more people who have a personal relationship with God. He also states that prayer plays an important part in our Christian lives and churches aren't fulfilling that need.

This book challenges us to cry out to God to have a life transformed by Him. Christianity in this country has become too watered down.

I highly recommend buying a copy of this. It will provide motivation and encouragement for you.

James Pate says

Jim Cymbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, believes that a storm is coming. It's a spiritual storm. Christians with orthodox beliefs are becoming a minority in the United States. Churches are in decline and look to business models rather than God to solve their problem. A number of Christians look to political activism and forsake Jesus' call to love their enemies in the process.

A lot of this book is Cymbala trying to encourage Christians to pray for their church and for other people, to seek and to desire God's presence, and to preach the Gospel of God's transforming love. Cymbala also includes stories, perhaps to illustrate the sort of authentic spiritual Christianity of which he speaks. One story is about a homeless lady who started a ministry of giving furniture to the poor. There are also stories about conversion to Christianity from Santeria and Islam.

Cymbala also includes a chapter that highlights the differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant in the Bible. This, for Cymbala, is not merely an intellectual exercise, but it has profound practical ramifications. According to Cymbala, many are confused by the Bible because there are a number of Old Testament rules that Christians do not keep, and they wonder why, since those rules are in the Bible. Moreover, skeptics attack Christians as being inconsistent in not obeying all of the Bible. Cymbala also notes the ill results that have occurred when Christians have imported Old Testament teachings into Christianity: the prosperity Gospel, intolerance, war, cursing of enemies instead of praying for them, legalism, and spiritual insecurity. Cymbala is not against Christians learning from the Old Testament, for he in the book draws frequently from the Book of I Samuel. Cymbala stresses, however, that the message under the New Covenant is different from the one of the Old Covenant, and that the New Covenant message is about salvation through Jesus Christ, joy, and eternal life. His rule is that believers should accept only the Old Testament commands that are explicitly affirmed in the New Testament.

Cymbala's love and hunger for God are contagious, and the stories that he included were inspiring. Cymbala

is also honest about his own weaknesses and growth as a Christian, and his book contains valuable insights, such as Martin Luther's statement that God does many things in response to people's prayers.

I had, however, three problems. First of all, Cymbala tells about a minister who said that he enjoyed spending time with God but not with other people, and Cymbala replied that this is a problem, and that the pastor should show love to God by helping and loving people. I certainly agree with Cymbala that pastors should be loving, but I wish that Cymbala had shown more compassion, empathy, and understanding to that pastor, or had offered the pastor practical guidance on how to serve his congregation as an introvert. Maybe Cymbala did so and did not mention it. Second, while Cymbala made valuable points in his chapter about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, I still have questions. Should we assume that the New Testament was abrogating the Old Testament, when the New Testament quotes Old Testament passages as authoritative? Moreover, even if one shares Cymbala's view that the New Covenant is better, he should still address the question of why God acted as God did in the Old Testament. Third, while I agree with Cymbala that Christians in the political arena can easily become acrimonious rather than loving, I do not entirely agree with his criticism of liberation theology. The Hebrew Bible is often concerned about societal justice, and I have my doubts that God discarded that concern when transitioning to the New Covenant.

Overall, though, this is a good book.

Note: I received a complimentary review copy of this book through the BookLook Bloggers (<http://booklookbloggers.com/>) book review bloggers program. The program does not require for my review to be positive, and my review reflects my honest reaction to the book.
