

## **AGAINST THE WIND (Inspired by the Bob Seger song)**

**Week #3 of a 6-Week "Songs of Life" Series**

**Rev. Richard Maraj**

**Sunday, April 26, 2026**

### **LYRICS to "Against the Wind"**

Seems like yesterday

But it was long ago

Janey was lovely, she was the queen of my nights

There in the darkness with the radio playin' low, and

And the secrets that we shared

The mountains that we moved

Caught like a wildfire out of control

'Til there was nothing left to burn and nothing left to prove

And I remember what she said to me

How she swore that it never would end

I remember how she held me, oh, so tight

Wish I didn't know now what I didn't know then

Against the wind

We were running against the wind

We were young and strong

We were running against the wind

And the years rolled slowly past

And I found myself alone

Surrounded by strangers I thought were my friends

I found myself further and further from my home and I

I guess I lost my way

There were oh, so many roads

I was livin' to run and runnin' to live

Never worried about payin' or even how much I owed

Movin' eight miles a minute for months at a time

Breakin' all of the rules that would bend

I began to find myself searchin'

Searchin' for shelter again and again

Against the wind

Little somethin' against the wind

I found myself seekin' shelter against the wind

Well, those drifters days are past me now

I've got so much more to think about

Deadlines and commitments

What to leave in, what to leave out

Against the wind  
I'm still running against the wind  
I'm older now but still running against the wind  
Well, I'm older now and still running  
Against the wind

Against the wind  
I'm still running  
I'm still running against the wind ...  
See the young man run  
Against the wind ...  
Let the cowboys ride  
Against the wind ...

### **MESSAGE:**

So how many people had a time in your life where nothing was working; it was going so bad you felt like you'd lost your way? Anybody ever have one of those? How many people have ever had a relationship or a friendship that was really important to you, and you were brokenhearted and sad about it? And finally, how many people ever made a really big decision, but you spent a lot of time second-guessing yourself wondering if you made the right decision? Okay.

How many people have read M. Scott Peck's book, "The Road Less Traveled?" So what are the first three words in the book? "*Life is difficult.*" And his argument is that: if we accept the truth that life is difficult, then life becomes less difficult.

And you may or may not believe that, but here's why I kind of believe it, is because if we take all the energy we have when life is difficult -- that we complain, that we hate, that we resist, that we reject and we fight against -- and use it to look for the good or for growth or the blessing or some insight or strength, then life is not as difficult.

But I truly believe that life is difficult, but I also believe that we can gain something good from it. Think of something right now that you're struggling with -- something that's a major difficulty or a problem or an adversity you're facing. And do you believe that there's something good you can gain from it?

Well, Jesus answers and reassures us in John 16:33, when he said, "*In this life there will be trials and tribulations, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.*" And he is saying life is difficult, but you have the power. You have the skills, the resources, the mindset, the spiritual fortitude to rise above and to bring forth good from those trials that you face.

And we're going to look at that theme today as we are in Week #3 of our six-week series, "The Songs to Life," where I take famous hit songs and extract a spiritual message. And it's always so much fun! Week #1, we did "Help" by the Beatles. Last week, we did "Redemption Song" by Bob Marley. And today, we are going to do "Against the Wind," a 1980 hit by Bob Seger.

Interestingly, his friend Glen Frey sang background vocals. They were buddies in Detroit and they also shared the same producer on a couple of albums. So, I thought that was a kind of a cool thing.

The song is really a kind of nostalgic reflection on the process of growing up and getting older and the learning and the finding of one's self through life's challenges. The song uses the metaphor of running against the wind, and it was inspired because Bob Seger rang cross-country in high school. And so, to represent the struggling against the wind -- which could be struggling against time or struggling against adversity or mistakes or heartaches or losing our innocence or dealing with the pressures and responsibilities of adulthood.

You know, we all relate to the song, because everyone's got some storms in their lives. Everybody's got some challenges to deal with. Everybody's got relationships to navigate. We all have decisions to make and lessons to learn.

"Against the Wind," to me, is such an inspiring song, because it represents the inevitable struggles that we face in life -- and choosing to keep moving forward; and choosing to keep living; and choosing to keep trying to get the very best out of ourselves and life.

Recently, I learned something very interesting about cows and bison. And do you know that they handle wind storms very, very much different than the other? Cows, in a wind storm, you know what they do? They run with it. You know, they try to outrun the storm. And so, they're running with it. So that means it actually lasts longer for them, because they're running with it. And so, there's more fear, more pain, more struggle -- and they really prolong their pain. They prolong and drag out their own suffering.

Now, bison, in a storm, will turn and run towards it. And it actually goes by a little quicker -- the pain, the frustration, the difficulty -- because they're running through it, and they get over it quicker. Still hard, but they get over it easier.

And similarly, like us, we all go through heartaches and all different kinds of adversities against the wind. And sometimes we try to hide and avoid and pretend or just pray it just goes away and fixes itself. And when we do that, our storm lasts longer and it's more intense. But when we look at and face and move through it, we actually gain from it. We actually learn from it. And so, depending on how we handle and respond to a storm, it can either break us or it can shape us. And so, if you don't remember anything from today's lesson, just remember that it is better to be a bison than a cow when it comes to facing the storms of our lives.

And so, the song is really kind of cool, because it just goes through the unfolding and maturing of this young man through the highs and lows, and ups and downs, and heartaches, and all the other things in his life, and how he learns and matures. And so, we're going to use the lyrics and the song to be our springboard for three spiritual lessons, which are -- they sound simple, but they're important -- to choose to live, choose to learn, and choose to be resilient.

And so, let's look at the first: **CHOOSE TO LIVE**. And let's look at one of the early verses. It says:

***And I remember what she said to me  
How she swore that it never would end  
I remember how she held me, oh, so tight  
Wish I didn't know now what I didn't know then***

So, here's this guy and he is in love. He is happy. And he is so happy and so in love; he wants this to last forever! And he is reassured by her saying, "This is never going to end" and holding him so tight. But his heart gets broken anyway. And I love that line:

***Wish I didn't know now what I didn't know then***

So, he's wishing that he didn't know that his heart would break. He wished he didn't know that it would end. And my question is for him: Would it have changed anything at all in how he loved? If he knew he was going to get hurt, do you think he would have loved less fully? Less freely?

How about you? If you knew you were going to get hurt, in a relationship or a situation, would you love less? Would you love at all?

The only answer -- because life: we don't know everything in advance. With life, things are always going to change. So, if we didn't know, would you really love and invest yourself as fully and freely as if you knew you were being safe? And so, the choice here is to live. The choice is to love anyway. To put your heart in it, to be present, to be fully engaged in what you're doing, even though you know you might lose it and it may not last.

So, he got hurt. His heart got broken. It's a part of life. You know, life is meant to be experienced and not distorted by fear and not distorted by worry or unworthiness. He -- even though he got his heart broken -- had the opportunity to love wildly.

And so the message is for all of us in our lives is to live fully. To try and reach; to dare; to risk; to put ourselves out there. To open our hearts and to not hold back, but to go out on a limb. You know, to go after our goals, to go after our dreams and really step in and step out of the boat of our comfort into whatever good possibility we might be seeking or desiring.

Life is meant to be experienced. And some powerful Scriptures are, *"Faith without works is dead."* We can sit around and have faith all day, but we've got to put it into motion and into action. That's why after the four Gospels, the next book in the Bible is ... Okay, I'll tell you, it's the book of Acts. Acts: put it into action; put it into motion. And we need to demonstrate those things to bring them alive in ourselves and into the world.

So, here's an interesting thing. So Peter -- Jesus said to him, *"You are the rock upon which I will build my church."* And then you remember when they were in the storm? And Jesus called him out of the boat. And Peter stepped out of the boat. And for a minute, as he's looking at the Christ, he's able to stay and walk on water. And as soon as he switches his focus from the Christ to the crisis -- the wind and the storm -- he sinks into the water. And he crawls back and gets into the boat.

And Jesus says, *"Oh, ye of little faith."* Couldn't you ... did you have to doubt? And I'm like, *"Hey, Jesus, take it easy on the guy. He's doing his best!"* But anyway, the point I'm trying to make is, so even though Jesus said he was the rock, and then he failed at this, he still believed in him, because he was willing to demonstrate his faith. He didn't stay in the boat of his comfort. He stepped out in faith. He was willing to demonstrate this and to live this and embody this. And that's why [Jesus] had so much faith in him.

That, for us, it's to be out there living. To be out there loving. To put ourselves out there and embrace and live life more abundantly and fully. Because it's a huge difference of thinking and talking about stuff and really putting it out there and going and living and bringing it to life.

Have you ever done that? Talked about something that you really want to do, but ultimately you didn't make any plans to do it? Anybody ever do stuff like that?

So, I remember when I was in North Carolina -- it was the first ministry I served -- we were at a new member meeting and people said, *"Hey, what's one thing you'd like to try sometime?"*

And I said, *"Hey, I want to try skydiving!"*

And so, at the end of the meeting, a guy comes up and says, *"Hey, I'm Joe Roberts. I'm the captain of the U.S. skydiving team. And if you'd like to go skydiving, I could take you this afternoon."*

And I'm like, *"Ah, ah, ah, ah [stammering]. No, no, no, no ..."*

And so, I couldn't get away from it. So, two weeks later, I went skydiving. And it was a fabulous and amazing experience. And the amazing thing is: two months later, my mom came. And it was Mother's Day and she was going to be 75. And I took her skydiving. We went skydiving together, which was the coolest thing in the world.

And the point I'm making is: sometimes we like to say things, but it's really in the doing. You could have described to me what skydiving was like. But there is no way it would compare to the experience that I had. Life is calling us all.

And I want you to think of something now. What's something you've been talking about -- *"Hey, I want to do this"* -- that you really haven't done yet. And would you be willing to do it and bring it to life?

Unity teaches that the soul evolves through experience. There's no failure. There is only experiencing and learning. We are not here to avoid life. We are here to live life, to experience it, to taste it and enjoy it.

So, the message from this first point is: don't hold back. Don't let your fear stop you. That if you want to live a more abundant life, you've got to choose to live. You've got to choose to step out there.

The second thing I think it teaches us is to **CHOOSE TO LEARN**. You know, in the song, they cover his fears and his successes, his failures, the ups and downs he experiences. Because, in life, we are all being called to learn, to grow, to expand, to be a fuller version of ourselves.

Let's go to one of the verses. He says:

***Well, those drifters days are past me now  
I've got so much more to think about  
Deadlines and commitments  
What to leave in, what to leave out***

And the Scripture that came to mind for me was 1 Corinthians. It says, *"When I was a child, I spoke as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things."*

And so, this is saying clearly that we are all being called to mature in our faith; to mature in our love; to mature in our understanding; to mature in our discipline and following through with our spiritual practices. I truly believe that we are all called to be more responsible and take charge of our lives, and to make the most positive choices we need to make.

Like, what are the things in life that you want to say yes to? And what are the things you want to say no to? What are the things you want to leave in? And what are the things you want to leave out? What are the things you want to keep? What are the things that you want to release? Because those are important things on being the fullness of who we came here to be.

So, one of my favorite quotes is from a guy called Havelock Ellis, and this is the quote. He said, *"All the art of living lies in the fine mingling of letting go and holding on."* [Repeats] All of the art of living lies in the fine mingling of letting go and holding on.

How many people ever held on to something you should have let go of? And how many people ever let go of something you should have held on to? Holding on and letting go is an important thing. This is a powerful thing. When he says what to leave in and what to leave out, it's asking ourselves to make a decision. Is this who I am or is that who I am? You know, who am I and who am I not? You know, what do I stand for? Who have I come here to be?

So, what people in your lives currently and what habits, what mindsets is the time for you to release and let go? And who are the ones to keep and who are the ones to add?

You know, one of the great spiritual gifts that we've been given -- one of the 12 powers -- is discernment. And we need to discern: Am I living the life I'm meant to live? Are these the people? Are these the things or the way to think that I should be to lead me to the fullness of who I am? Or is there something that needs to be changed? Is there something that needs to be released?

And we are here to grow in consciousness. And consciousness expands through experience, not avoidance. It is through our choices. It is through our actions. It is through our intention. I mean, even our missteps and our regrets. And the difficult lessons that we learn are sacred teachers for us.

In Ecclesiastes 3, Verse 1, it says, *"For everything there is a season."* And there is a season for when we don't know or are not supposed to know. And then there is a season for when we are supposed to know. That they're all good seasons! Not better or worse; they're different seasons that give us different

experiences and ideas and perspectives and strengths than the other one. And they're not better or worse; they're just a part of the unfolding nature of our spirit.

Life is unfolding and it's calling us to live, to learn, to expand, and to grow. So, when we're facing the wind, we should be asking ourselves a question: What is this here to teach me? How is this calling me to grow? How is this helping me to heal? Or guiding me or awakening me? Or transforming me? If we want a better life, if we want to tap into the greater wisdom and the goodness in us. We need to choose to learn, to learn, to learn!

And then the last one is to **CHOOSE TO BE RESILIENT**. So, the last verse was:

***I'm older now but still running against the wind***

***I'm much older now and still running***

***Against the wind***

And he's saying: the truth is that life all the way -- for young and old -- that we're here to keep learning, to keep expanding, to keep growing and unfolding. The song is saying: be resilient, because life will always test you. Life will always challenge you. Things are always going to call us higher. And things are always going to say, "*Hey, what is it time to let go or change?*"

The word "resilience" to me is what this song is really about. Being resilient is being able to adapt to adversity. It's bouncing back from setbacks. It is developing a mental well-being, even with stresses all around us. Because we're going to lose jobs. There are going to be divorces. There's going to be illness. There's going to be all kinds of challenge that we have the opportunity to grow through and grow from.

And life isn't easy. You know, there are some people I looked up. You know, Shania Twain was working at eight years old because her parents couldn't pay all the bills. And then when she was 21, they both got killed in a head-on crash. And she was responsible for her three younger siblings and took care of them until they all finished high school and were all settled. She was resilient.

Charlize Theron. Had probably one of the worst things anyone could imagine -- of seeing her mother kill her stepfather in self-defense. She was like 15 years old. And went on, obviously, to be an amazing actress and to win a couple Oscars, I think. Or at least one Oscar. And she's a mom of two adopted kids. I mean, an amazing and wonderful life.

Frida Kahlo, you know, was a Mexican painter. And she -- even with an injury that her leg from a bus accident was in so much pain -- painted some beautiful, beautiful art that was renowned.

Abraham Lincoln lost so many elections and had so many tragedies. And he was resilient and became the president of our country.

Book of James, Chapter 1, Verse 2 and 4: "*Count it all joy, brethren, when you face trials of various kinds. Know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance*" -- or we could say resilience -- "*but let that perseverance have its work in you so that you may be whole, complete, and lacking in nothing.*"

Again, emphasizing the importance of these difficult things in our lives are there to shape us, not to break us. They are there to make us wiser. They are there to make us stronger and clearer and to feel a deeper connection with God.

And, at times, we all have to make a choice of: How am I going to show up in life today? How am I going to show up in my relationship? How am I going to show up in my own self-care? And that we can choose to show up as peace in conflict; to show up as compassion in resistance; to show up as love in fear; to show up as generosity in lack; and to show up as joyful in an energy that is cynical. So, how are you going to choose to show up to be more resilient for yourself? In your relationship? In your work? In your family? In your world?

Three guys die, and they go up to heaven and the pearly gates. And St. Peter says, "So how would you like to be remembered at your funeral? What would you have liked the person doing your eulogy to say?"

And the first guy said, *“Well, I would have liked to have heard him say that I was a great doctor and a great man, and I really did a lot for my community.”* And St. Peter was pleased.

And the second guy said, *“Well, I would like to have heard them say that I was a wonderful husband and a great teacher and a good friend to all.”* And he nods his head, St. Peter.

And he says, *“What about you?”*

And the third guy says, *“Well, I would have loved someone to have said, ‘Look! He’s moving! He’s moving!’”*

So how would you like to be remembered?

You know, the song carries a nostalgic tone, but I feel like the song is a song of strength and hope. That I'm still running against the wind. That I'm still determined. That I'm engaged. That I want to keep living. That I want to keep learning. That I want to keep on trying.

Like the bison, we’ve got to push forward. You know, we’ve got to move through it fast, because there's gifts and blessings and so much of life still left to live.

*“I am resilient.”*

Together: [with congregants] *“I am resilient.”*

*“I choose to meet my life with openness, courage and love.”*

Together: [with congregants] *“I choose to meet my life with openness, courage and love.”*

*“I am a bison.”*

[Congregants:] *“I am a bison.”*

*“I am resilient.”*

[Congregants:] *“I am resilient.”* All right.

And we all have challenges. We all have storms in our lives. The question is: How are we going to show up? So, I encourage us all to choose to live; choose to learn; and choose to be resilient. And that is the message from the song, *“Against the Wind.”*

God bless you.