

WHY ARE YOU AFRAID?

Bible Background – MATTHEW 8:23-27; MARK 4:35-41; LUKE 8:22-25

Printed Text – MATTHEW 8:23-27

²³ Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples.

²⁴ Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

²⁵ The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

²⁶ Jesus responded, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm.

²⁷ The disciples were amazed. “Who is this man?” they asked. “Even the winds and waves obey him!”

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

Believers and non-believers, all experience life’s storms. But believers are told that they can always trust God for deliverance and salvation. This lesson focuses on an event where Jesus’ closest disciples were terrified that they would lose their lives in a boat during a windstorm while Jesus slept peacefully, on the same boat. We will examine how some of life’s crises can cause us to fear for ourselves and our families and to respond to the promised presence of Jesus through all times, both good and bad.

Background: To show His power and authority over everything that He has created, the Lord will sometimes personally intervene and override the laws of nature. These miracles most often occur as a result of prayer when God’s people call out for help or deliverance. Scripture provides many examples of these kinds of miracles. One such miracle is God personally feeding the Israelites bread from heaven during their extended journey in the wilderness (Exodus 16:4). Another is when God slowed the rotation of the earth, allowing Joshua more time to completely defeat his enemies (Joshua 10:12-14). When calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus personally overrode nature at the request of His disciples.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 486

The Peaceful Savior

Matthew 8:23-24: Jesus had just healed many people and delivered many others from demons. He wished to get away from the crowds for just a while so they set sail in the small fishing boat to the other less populated side of the lake. For the Sea of Galilee is actually a freshwater lake about six miles wide and eight miles long. Because of the surrounding mountains and the Jordan River that connects it to the Dead Sea, the winds can sometimes create violent storms on the lake. This particular storm proved even too much for the disciples, some of whom were experienced

fishermen who were very familiar with the lake and how to handle the occasional storm. Even the Greek word that Matthew uses here for “storm,” is *seismos* which is usually translated as “earthquake.”

In the meantime, Jesus was so tired that he had dropped off into a deep and peaceful sleep, when He was awakened by the terrified disciples. (The fact that Jesus was so weary reminds us that He had the same physical needs and limitations that we have.)

◆ *How is Jesus able to sleep, even while a storm is raging?*

The Panicked Sailors

Matthew 8:25-27: The panicky disciples did not approach the Lord quietly or in a measured manner. Different accounts tell us that they shouted, “Master, Master, we perish: (Luke 8:24). And another, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” (Mark 4:38). And still another, “Lord, save us; we perish” (Matthew 8:25). These responses also describe our responses when we are overtaken by troubles in our lives. Do we sometimes feel that Jesus is not aware that we suffer? Or perhaps, in acknowledging that He is all-knowing, do we sometimes feel that He just doesn’t care about our particular troubles because the response that we want is not forthcoming? And ultimately, do we just cry out to Him that we are drowning, “please save me?”

Jesus was not upset that they had awakened Him, but disappointed that they were fearful, which indicated their lack of faith and trust in Him. Jesus had already told the disciples that they were going to the other side (Mark 4:35), so by His word alone, there should have been assurance that they would make it safely to the other side of the lake. What they seemed to have missed is that Jesus’ word is always backed up by His power. Their deliverance was already an accomplished fact.

After rebuking the men for their lack of faith, He turned to the source of their fears and rebuked that too. Mark 4:39 tells us His exact words, “Peace, be still.” As soon as the Lord spoke these words, the winds stopped, and the sea was calm. They were quite astonished that Jesus had such control of the forces of nature. What peace and assurance we can have when we trust that Jesus is with us when we are overwhelmed by life’s storms and that we can trust Him to calm the waters.

◆ *Why do we wait until we run out of options before we call on the Lord?*

Conclusion

Although we have experienced the Lord’s hand working in our lives during very difficult times, we can still fall into fear when God’s response to life’s storms is not immediate, or according to our timetable. We must hold on to faith, not fear and trust His timing, and recognize His sovereign power. We can remember that when Jesus moves, He moves quickly on our behalf and restores order and calm to our lives.

Sources:

Ogbonnaya, A. O. (Ed.). (2019). Practice Justice. *Precepts for Living*, 22(Spring Quarter), The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021. 483–490.

Parson, E. *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002.

Lesson for Next Week – June 20, 2021

Healed by Faith

Bible Background ♦ MATTHEW 9:18-26; MARK 5:21-43; LUKE 8:40-56

Printed Text ♦ MATTHEW 9:18-26

Devotional Reading ♦ PROVERBS 3:1-8

Monday

Fringe, Aid to Remember God's Commandments
(Numbers 15:37-41)

TUESDAY

Disciples and Family Witness Girl's Healing
(Luke 8:40-42, 49-56)

WEDNESDAY

Woman Testifies to Jesus' Healing Touch
(Luke 8:42-48)

THURSDAY

Jesus Opens Eyes of the Blind Man
(Matthew 9:27-31)

FRIDAY

Jesus Restores Speech to Mute Man
(Matthew 9:32-34)

SATURDAY

Join the Lord's Harvest Today
(Matthew 9:35-10:1)

SUNDAY

Faith in God Heals Many Ills
(Matthew 9:18-26)