

Wil Owens  
The Calm After the Storm; Matt 8:23-27  
GPBC  
4.14.19

Introduction – Today’s text is not the usual one for Palm Sunday. It’s not the picture of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a lowly donkey surrounded by throngs cheering Him as the Messiah. Today’s text is a picture of Jesus riding into a storm in a little boat surrounded by disciples that are full of fear. I thought we might just keep plugging along in our study through Matthew today because of its clear-focused message about Jesus. Before we walk to the cross on Good Friday and stop by the Empty tomb on Sunday, we would do well to see Jesus in a storm.

The calm after the storm. Typically, the saying goes “the calm before the storm.” That phrase is used to describe the strangeness of weather patterns. It’s typical to observe beautiful days at the beach while a massive hurricane is swirling toward land. Or metaphorically, we describe how easy-going life seems to be one minute before it erupts in the next.

But in today’s text the emphasis falls on the calm after the storm. And the stunning breath-taking display of the power and authority of Jesus is a tremendous life-giving and faith-building sight to behold. For the first 3 points of the sermon, let’s just walk through the events of the passage, and then for the final point let’s allow the main point of application to sink deep into our souls.

- I. A Great Storm and a Sound Sleeper (vv23-24)
  - a. V23 says the disciples followed Jesus into the boat. They are exactly where they need to be. That’s what disciples do – they follow Jesus. Now they have no idea that a great storm awaits them on their journey, but it is no surprise to Jesus.
    - i. Jesus is leading them right into a massive, deadly storm. Sometimes Jesus takes us right into where we would never go on our own, and when He does, He has a grand purpose.
    - ii. The best place to be when a storm hits is wherever Jesus is.
  - b. v 24 says “behold” that means “Wo this is big!” This wasn’t a little summer afternoon shower or a passing thundercloud. This was a swirling, churning storm at sea. The wind was rocking the boat. The

waves were crashing in the boat. This storm had the potential to sink or capsize the boat. This was a dangerous, life-threatening storm.

- i. BTW – listen carefully, the bigger the storm, the greater the lesson. Jesus is not leading these disciples into a life-threatening storm just to watch them shake with fear.
- c. V24 says “behold” not just due to the fierceness of the storm but the peaceful sleep of the Savior. The boat is tossing, the sea is churning, the wind is howling, the disciples are shaking, and Jesus is sleeping.
  - i. Dear friends, let the picture of the peaceful rest of the Savior in the middle of a raging storm remind us that when life overwhelms us and when our circumstances seem to swallow us and when our crisis appears insurmountable, as huge and as difficult as it may appear to us – it’s nothing to Jesus!
  - ii. The Savior who loves us and keeps us and is saving us is not frightened, not threatened, not doubting, not fretting – He’s sleeping. When you’re caught in the storm, God is bigger than the storm! When the storm’s got you, God’s got you and the storm!
  - iii. Don’t misread the sleeping Savior! That Jesus is sound asleep does not mean that He does not care about the disciples. It means He has confident control of the storm.
- d. There was a great storm, but our eyes need to be on the sound sleeper not the raging storm.

## II. An Urgent Plea and a Gentle Rebuke (vv25-26)

- a. V25 we hear the urgent plea – “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.” Now that’s exactly what we need to cry to the Lord, it just wasn’t for the right reason!
  - i. We need to cry, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing” when it comes to our state of sin before a holy God. We need to recognize that we are perishing in our sin apart from Christ. We need to recognize that He is Lord. And we need to cry to Him to save us.
  - ii. We need to cry to the Lord to save us because we are perishing when we come to the end of our rope, when we are sinking in despair, when we are entangled in sin.

- iii. But when we are with the Lord and right where He has led us to be, we don't need to fear; we need to trust. "Save us, Lord, we are perishing" should be a cry of faith, not of fear.
    - iv. There is a time for the urgent plea, and there is a time for quiet trust. You see if Jesus is resting, then we can rest in Him!
  - b. So we see in v26 a gentle rebuke. Note with me that before Jesus boldly rebukes the wind and the waves, He gently rebukes the disciples.
    - i. "Why are you afraid?" In other words, Jesus is saying, "I am with you and you are with me. There's no need to fear." Hear the Savior today speak this gentle rebuke to each and every one of us. There's no need to fear when we're with Jesus and Jesus is with us.
    - ii. You see Jesus had purposed to get to the other side, and no storm, no matter how fierce, can alter the purpose of God. The safest place to be in the world is right where Jesus wants you to be.
    - iii. "O you of little faith." Now at any stage in our lives, the very same could be said of us couldn't it. In fact, when the least little storm erupts, we tend to lose heart and shrink in our faith.
    - iv. Here Jesus pinpoints the root of their fear. It wasn't the largeness of the storm; it was the smallness of their faith.
    - v. So now we are beginning to see just why Jesus led these disciples into such a massive, life-threatening storm. He means to bolster and grow and deepen and strengthen their faith in Him!
  - c. It is very often the case that is why Jesus walks us right into the path of adversity and obstacles and trials. He means to uphold us. He means to teach us to look to Him. He means to deepen our hold and faith in Him!
  - d. What a tremendous lesson. His purpose wasn't their fear; His purpose was their faith. He wasn't out to frighten them; He was moving to build them.

### III. A Marvel-causing Miracle and a Marvelous Revelation (vv26-27)

- a. Amazing. The power and authority of Jesus not only extends over every square inch of our physical existence, as we've already seen Him heal various sicknesses in ch8. It not only extends over the spiritual realm, as He has cast out many evil spirits in ch8. His power and authority extends over every square inch of the natural realm as well. The point: Jesus holds power and authority over every square inch of His creation.
  - i. Abraham Kuyper – There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!
- b. V27 we see this marvel-causing miracle reveals a marvelous revelation. He is a man – He was asleep in the boat. And yet He is much, much more than a mere man because even the winds and sea obey Him.

#### IV. Applying the Storm-calming Power of Jesus to Our Lives Today

- a. The usual point of application for this miracle narrative goes something like this: Have faith in Jesus because He can still any storm in your life. Now that's true, and I've basically been making that application throughout our perusal of this passage.
- b. But may I suggest if that's all we get out of this passage, we missed the main point. That wasn't the disciples' conclusion was it? They didn't say, "Well if Jesus can still this storm, then fellas, He can take care of whatever we face in life."
- c. No, the disciples marveled. They were taken back at such power and authority. These guys have already seen the incredible power of Jesus. And yet when they saw this, they marveled.
- d. And their point of application was not what Jesus could do with storms in their lives. Their point was what He just did with this storm. "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey Him?"
- e. In other words, with stunning, startling clarity it was impressed into their souls at this very moment that they were in a fishing boat with God in the flesh. This man is without any doubt, Almighty God, in the flesh!
- f. Of all the miracles they had observed Jesus perform, this one pressed that truth deep within them. They knew what the Bible says about God. Psalm 89:9 says, "You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves

rise, you still them.” Psalm 107:29 says, “He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.” And they marveled!

- g. You see the point is not so much about seeing the miracle as it is about seeing the Miracle-Worker!
- h. The point of this passage my friends is this: Jesus is God!
  - i. You see if that sinks down in our soul, we already know He can handle the storms in our lives. If that sinks down in our soul, then we already know when Jesus leads us into storms He means for us to marvel once again that He is God!

Conclusion – Let that be our Palm Sunday lesson. The Son of God is on the way to Calvary and the Son of God will rise! If that is true, then Jesus is Life and Salvation! And that is the most wonderful news of all.