

October 16, 2016

## “The Lord of the Storm”

Matthew 8:23-27

**FCF:** Panic when things are out of control

**PROPOSITION:** (magnet) Through Jesus’ miraculous calming of the storm,  
(anchor) we see we can truly trust Him.

### SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

Let’s talk about panic and fear for a moment. At some level, they are the common stuff of normal life. We feel it with word of job cuts, with the nervous look in the doctor’s eyes, with a daunting assignment with little training and preparation and high stakes. Which bring sleepless nights and irritable moods, exhaustion from our buckling down or depression from our giving up. All of which then leads to poor health and performance and strained relationships on all fronts.

Is there any cure for this? Is there anything that can go to the root of our panic and fear?

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Matthew 8:23-27

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

### SERMON INTRODUCTION:

It’s been a few weeks since the last time we were in this study of Matthew’s Gospel so it might be appropriate to ask, “Where are we?” Jesus has shown himself to be the Christ in word through his teaching in chapters 5-7 with the Sermon on the Mount. Now he begins to show himself to be the Christ in deed through the performance of miracles. In and with both, through word and deed, Jesus makes clear that the kingdom has arrived. And that he is the King.

A few weeks ago, we looked at the text just before where we are this morning and how that speaks to the cost of following Jesus. That is, there is a material and a relational cost. We saw that Jesus must be first and that we need to forsake all to follow him. Our text this morning is making clear who it is we are to follow. Or, put another way, why we can follow him. And must. What Matthew is driving at is this. Obviously, the calming of this storm was a miracle. It was not a normal everyday thing. We see that in the reaction of the disciples. This was a miracle. And through Jesus’ miraculous calming of the storm, we see we can truly trust him.

But how does this miracle shape our trust? What is it about this that should ground, impel, and fuel a trust, a dependence and reliance upon Jesus, this One who presents himself to us as the Lord of the storm? Three things that we will look at, each in turn. First, the identity of this King. Second, the certainty of his reign. And then, finally, the majesty of his ways.

### I. THE IDENTITY OF THIS KING

So, who is this? What is the identity of this King? And how does the text speak to that? As compressed as this account is, we get a glimpse into the mysterious dual nature of Jesus.

#### A) *Fully Man*

That is, he is fully man. He is every bit as human as any of the disciples. Or us.

### 1. The boat

There is much that is ordinary about this venture. It would have been roughly a two hour trip by boat. In fact, we likely know something about the boat. In 1986, a fishing boat from this period was found right in the area from which they left. It was built using techniques of the time, had undergone numerous repairs, and could hold 15 men. It's on display for the public in a museum.

### 2. The fatigue

Just an old boat, likely much the same as this one. All so ordinary, much like the fatigue Jesus was feeling. Traveling from village to village, long days, the demands of the crowds - it took its toll. We ask, "How can he sleep through all this?" He is fully man. And he was exhausted.

### *B) Fully God*

Yet, we see not just the ordinary but the extraordinary. He is fully man and fully God.

### 1. Power at creation

What Jesus does here points back to the power of God at creation ([READ Genesis 1:1-2](#)). This miracle points to the bringing of order to the chaos of the deep, the power of God at creation.

### 2. Power over creation

And the power of God over creation as well. Think back to what we read earlier in Psalm 107. God is the One who hears the cries of his people in distress, who stills the waves of the storm.

John Chrysostom, the 4th century bishop of Constantinople, summed it up this way ([READ quote](#)), "His sleeping showed he was a man. His calming of the seas declared him God."

### *Illustration:*

One Halloween many moons ago, I worked with some friends to create a haunted house. Nothing too elaborate. Just cheesy masks, sound effects, some lighting, and a few decorations set up at the front door. But, by the reaction of some of the kids, you would have thought we were the real deal. Which was so absurd we had to laugh. And so we kept saying to one another, "This is crazy. If they only knew, they wouldn't have any reason to run off screaming in terror."

### *Application:*

My friends, if we only knew. If we could just see through what frightens us, we wouldn't run off screaming in terror either. Think with me of some of the implications of this miracle.

First of all, we can know that Jesus has it. That is, there's no sweat on his upper lip. He always covers the spread. So we can relax. Yes, it's certainly appropriate to be aware of potential threats, harm, and danger. And to prepare for it. But not with a spirit of fear or worry.

For we know Jesus has it. And we know he gets it. That is, he understands, he knows what it is to be tossed about. He knows what it is to be in a storm, threatened, tempted to terror.

All of which, when taken to heart, can calm and quiet our troubled hearts. Through Jesus' miraculous calming of the storm, we see his identity. And that we can truly trust him.

## **II. THE CERTAINTY OF HIS REIGN**

The identity of the King shapes our trust in him. As does the certainty of his reign.

#### *A) The Mission*

What do I mean by that? Consider his mission, the task the Father gave to the Son.

##### 1. Description

Jesus came to reclaim what was rightfully his, to take back what Satan had grasped as a usurper and pretender. Jesus came to reclaim and to redeem a people, to deliver them from bondage.

##### 2. Origin

We see the origin, the first mention of that mission in Genesis 3, the first gospel promise (**READ Genesis 3:15**). Here it is declared what will come to pass. A Savior will come, a descendant of Eve, to destroy the enemy and be wounded in the process. It is declared and determined.

#### *B) The Question*

That's the mission. But this storm raises a question. Can this mission be stopped? Yes, this promise has been made. But can this Savior be snuffed out before his task is completed?

##### 1. From the beginning

From the beginning, forces were massed to bring that about. Cain's killing of Abel, Pharaoh's slaughter of the Hebrew babies, the Canaanite resistance and corruption, the exile to Assyria and Babylon. Even as recent as Herod's slaughter of the innocents and the wilderness temptations.

##### 2. Even at that moment

And now we get a glimpse of this (**READ Matthew 8:23-24**). It's described as a great storm, a "seismos", a shaking. For the Jewish mind, a storm meant chaos, hostile uncontrollable forces. And the topography of the land certainly makes for this, sudden tempests that can come in upon that lake still today. This one threatened to swamp the boat. Perhaps it's more than just a storm.

So that's the question. Can this mission be stopped? And the answer is emphatically, "No." There is a certainty to the reign of this King. The outcome of his work, his rule, is sure.

#### *Illustration:*

It helps to know the outcome of an event when you're watching it unfold. Some years ago, I watched a rebroadcast of a football game between Virginia Tech and Clemson from the year the Hokies made their National Championship run. I remember watching the first half thinking, "This seems close. Did we win this game? I know we went undefeated. We had to have won." I had to look it up to be sure. "Yup, we won 31-11." Which helped me to settle in.

#### *Application:*

It helps to know the outcome of an event when you're watching it unfold. It makes all the difference. How so? I mentioned the cost of discipleship earlier, the need to forsake all and put Jesus first. Which can then raise a question, "What will I have after losing it all?" And the answer is everything. What is to come will be worth it all. So we need hold nothing back now.

We don't need a bucket list. We may long to visit some faraway place. Whatever wonder that spot may hold for you is but a glimmer now of what it will be then. We may pine for some thing or experience. But whatever we are seeking in that is but a reflection of what is to come.

We don't need a bucket list. We need hold nothing back now. Through Jesus' miraculous calming of the storm, we can see the certainty of his reign. And why we can truly trust him.

### III. THE MAJESTY OF HIS WAYS

The identity of the King. The certainty of his reign. And, then, finally, the majesty of his ways. That is, the wonder of Jesus' workings shapes and compels our trust in him as well.

#### A) *His Providence*

We see signs of the Lord's providence here. What do we mean by that? The Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it this way ([READ WSC:11](#)): "God's works of providence are his, most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing of all his creatures, and all their actions."

##### 1. The promise

This then is Jesus' promise. Not that his followers will never encounter a storm. That's pretty obvious from our text. It's not "no storms" but that Jesus is with his followers in every storm.

##### 2. The purpose

That is the promise we have. With the certainty of the Lord's purpose. That is, there is no chance or randomness at work here. Even this storm was for the disciples' good. How? Well, at the least we can say that, without it, they would have been without this opportunity to learn who Jesus is as Lord of the storm. That was, in the end, a gift for them. And, years later, for us.

#### B) *His Graciousness*

So we see the providence of the Lord at work here. And his graciousness as well.

##### 1. The panic of the disciples

Consider the panic of the disciples ([READ Matthew 8:25](#)). What's happening here? It's not that they had strong faith or no faith. It was "little faith" - not of quantity but quality. Their faith was ineffective, defective, and deficient. The kind of thing you want to take back to the store.

##### 2. The response of Jesus

What is Jesus' response? ([READ Matthew 8:26-27](#)) He could have unloaded on them and let them fend for themselves in the storm. Or he could have stilled it and said nothing to them. But instead, he addressed both needs - working towards their spiritual growth in asking the question and working to ensure their physical safety by stilling the storm. He graciously did both.

That's the majesty of his ways - the providence and graciousness of the Lord.

#### *Application:*

And he is still working that way with us today. His providence still holds, without exception. It's true in every circumstance. In each one. All for his glory and all for our good.

And His graciousness holds as well. Our lives are filled with the contrast between what we deserve and what we receive, between our faithlessness to him and his faithfulness to us.

Through Jesus' miraculous calming of the storm, we see the identity of the King, the certainty of his reign, and the majesty of his ways. And why we can truly trust him.

### **CONCLUSION:**

What's at the root of our fretting and fear, our worry and anxiety? The belief that things are out of control. Which leads to what? To our trying to assert some control, if not take it. We exert our influence. We press and pull as best we can. And how does that usually play out?

Think of what goes through our minds while watching election returns. We see the colors of the states or counties trending in ways we don't like and say, "Come on, turn!" As though we could make that happen. Or think of sporting events - the golfer or bowler, the man at bat or the placekicker. As that ball is moving along or flying through the air, we contort our bodies in crazy ways and cry, "No, not that way!" Again, as though we could make that happen.

Well, my fellow contortionists and control freaks, I have good news. The events of this text clearly show us that we need contort ourselves and reach out to seize the wheel no more. We know we really can't do it. We're out of our league there. But not so with Jesus. He is God in the flesh. And through this miraculous calming of the storm, we see we can truly trust him.

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