

One Mightier Than the Storm

Gospel According to Luke

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If you will, look with me in your Bibles to Luke 8 and I want to read for us verse 22 down to verse 25 and speak with you about "One Mightier Than the Storm." I know there's a lot of preaching about the storm just like there's a lot of preaching about the lost sheep or the lost coin, but in reality it's about the Seeking Shepherd and it's about the One Who seeks and finds. Here, yes, it is quite a storm but it's about the One Who is greater than the storm and so may the LORD enable us to so see.

Now here in Luke 8:22,

22 Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. 23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

We have to remember these were fishermen, they were used to troubled waters from time to time, but here was one beyond them.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish.

That's an interesting contradiction of terms, isn't it, to call Him Master. He said, "Why call ye Me Master when you don't do the things that I tell you."

Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

I believe just as much as there was a storm unlike anything they had ever seen, here was a calm unlike anything that they had ever experienced, such is the LORD's power and glory. When the LORD does something, you know it. That's all. It's such a peace and quiet, a peace the Scripture says that passes all understanding.

25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered,

And that's an interesting combination too because fear, the fear of the LORD, is a wonderment but there is a fear.

And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this!

You notice "manner of man" is in italic. Another way of just reading it is, "Who is this?" Like the children of Israel when they saw the manna, that's what manna means, manna means "what is this?" It's a picture of Christ.

[What is this] for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

Do you see why I said it's more about Him than the storm? Sometimes we get our eyes fixed on a storm and there's our problem. Now it's by His Grace, having our eyes fixed on Him, so we have in this portion that I've just read for you, verses 22 to 25, the proof, again, of Who the LORD Jesus Christ is. Not that we need any proof but the confirmation for those of us that are the LORD's, but also next time down in verse 26 and following even as here His power over the storm, we see there His power over the devils, Satan.

Is there any aspect of this world or struggle or conflict whether externally or internally in our hearts that the LORD Himself is not the Victor, not the Master? Is there any case too hard for the LORD? I hear people all the time talking to me about this particular weakness, that particular thing with which they struggle. Well, you know why they're struggling, it's because their eyes are on the problem and not on the One Who is...there's no case too hard for Him. If you find nothing else in Scripture about the LORD, may the LORD direct us to find that. This thing is not up to some little peanut decision of man somehow that determines what Christ does, that's not the Christ of Scripture. He's Almighty and we see that even demonstrated here in His power over these winds.

I'm not sure we ever really get away from a stormy season. It seems like we get through the winter and then here come the tornadoes and then the next thing you know they're announcing, "Well, it's hurricane season all the way through November." Everybody's just paying big bucks to watch something they have no control over but it's fun to track, give them names and all these things. Mary was asking me the other day, "When did they start naming winter storms?" I didn't know but now they give them names and, of course, equality, they all used to be named after women, I'm not saying anything there, but now they alternate them; women, men, women, men, women.

But in reality, what does man have to do with it? All we do is observe and that's true in the world but it's true in God's dealings even in the heart. The LORD said that to Nicodemus, that the work of the Spirit is like the wind and you see the effects of it but you can't determine whether it comes or whether it goes. But also we know from

Scripture as Nahum said in his first chapter when people get talking about, "Well, I don't think the LORD would've done that," whether it's a tsunami or whether it is a tornado that wipes out an entire town, you'll hear religious men standing up trying to defend god and say, "Well, god wouldn't do that. He's a god of love." Well, that means there's something taking place that's pretty disastrous and outside of his directing and providence? What kind of god is that? But Nahum, you read it in chapter 1, verse 3, he said God has His way in the wind and the storm. Job said it. You think Job would have stood up with all that took place in a day and all that he lost and stand there and somehow think, "Well, I don't know why you're doing this, LORD, because you said I'm an upright man." No, he bowed, opened not his mouth; he sinned not in the things that he could have said and thought and did.

So let that be established. If we're still fussing and arguing over Who God is and Who Christ is, then it's clear that we're still in ignorance. Now He is God and that's demonstrated here not only in His power over what men call nature but over the spirits, so things seen or unseen, and let's keep that in mind. There are many things seen out here in the world, because we live in a fallen world, that trouble us. Just watch the news. Now more than ever, they've got all kinds of new illnesses and syndromes by which doctors now are going to start making lots of money because people are watching the news and getting troubled and they've got to go get a happy pill again because they're unsettled. What if this? What if that? Those are things seen when in reality the most serious enemy we have is right in here, it's the things not seen, the trouble in this soul, the weight of our sin, being depraved, these things that ultimately do condemn sinners unless Christ has paid their debt. That's why the LORD said, "Don't fear what man can do to the body, but fear Him that is able to cast body and soul into hell." That's God Himself. But I can tell you whether seen or unseen, if we're the LORD's there's a reason to rest and there's a reason to rejoice and if nothing else, may the LORD grant us that peace.

But here, in this chapter, we see His power over the winds, those powers of the air that are such a terror to men, especially on the sea. There are a lot of people that won't get on one of those cruise boats because when it gets just a little bit of rocking, and those things are made to be comfortable, they're thinking, "Whoa, no." But we're talking about a ship here when it says that they went down into a ship in verse 22. It wasn't a cruise ship. This would have been a small one, and I've ridden on a few like this in my lifetime. I remember when my parents would take us down to go to the school that we attended in the rainy season and the road was always washed out, it was like a big lake, so they would get up early and drive us as far as they could and then there would be some people on the other side, you could see their lights, the trucks waiting and then they put us in these little canoes and you're in the dark going across. And I can remember many a time when we got into one of these canoes that we were given a little cup and told to keep bailing as we go because it was leaky. This ship was just like that. Think back in the days of Columbus, when these boards creaked, I mean, this wasn't any comfort and that's what we see here, the fear and the thought of dying, of death. These are things that preoccupy men's minds, even more so than the thought of the condemnation that we carry about in this body anyway, that even when it's calm and you lay your head on the pillow, unless the LORD calms that storm, you're still in the storm, still going through it.

We see here, first of all, and again, just as He is the Master of the storm, He's the Master of circumstances leading to it. How many times have we said, "Woulda, coulda, shoulda"? "Well, I shouldn't have left that early." No, you left exactly at the time that God purposed. Or, "Man, I was fortunate because I waited five minutes, came out the door, and lo and behold there's a wreck. That coulda been me." No, it couldn't have been you because the LORD kept you at home until that time. And that's what I see here when it says in verse 22, "Now it came to pass on a certain day," I love the word "certain." Some people read that as meaning just it's incidental, it doesn't matter, I read it, it does on that day. These are fishermen now, they're used to fishing and being on the sea but on this certain day. It's like the Scriptures say, "This is the day that the LORD has ordained, has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." We tend to rejoice when it's a good day but in reality if we truly give God the praise, good, bad or ugly, it's a good day because it's in the hands of the LORD.

So on a certain day, that He went into a ship with His disciples: and He said unto them, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." And what do you see there already? Many times we think that we're walking this path alone but in no case does the LORD ever just send one of His own down a path but what He goes with them. That's why it says there, even with Joseph when he was in prison, how many times it says the LORD was with him, the LORD being with him. I don't know about you, that's a comfort.

I remember one time traveling in the country of Benin in the middle of the night trying to get back to a flight, early morning. We had been way up in a remote area preaching and around 1 in the morning, flat tire. So I asked the driver, "Have you got a spare?" "Yeah, I've got a spare." You should've seen this thing, it had wires sticking out of it, but we put it on and went through this one kind of roadblock and wondered what was going on. Well, there was a headhunter during politics, elections out there, they sent out headhunters to try to trap people, cut their heads off, take the skull to some witch-doctor and then do some kind of voodoo to make sure their candidate wins. I have to chuckle sometimes, not that it's funny, but when we talk about exporting democracy to other countries, that's democracy. You want elections? Alright, you know, it's whoever's standing in the end that wins.

So they were chasing this guy that they had caught that was a headhunter and a whole mob going after him and I remember telling my driver as soon as I saw the mob move and the road open, I said, "Let's go!" We're not gonna stand and wait. We head out, around the curve it's dark as anything and guess what? We weren't even five miles from that incident when a flat tire, no spare. Out in the middle of nowhere. So the driver says, what? "Alright, we'll park it here. I'm gonna catch the next thing. I'm gonna grab the tire and catch the next vehicle that comes by, go into the next town." I didn't know how far that was. "I'm gonna get it repaired and come back. You stay here with the vehicle." You know, do you stay, do you go with him? I was looking at the vehicle and thought if anybody wants this thing, I'm gonna help them.

But anyway, he took off and I went up on, I got out of the vehicle, I wasn't gonna sit there, I went up in the woods and sat there and waited. This was like 3 in the morning and by 7 AM he still wasn't back. Flight, I'm thinking, "I've gotta get outta here." But you know, in the multitude of those thoughts, guess what? The LORD was with me. You couldn't have proved it by the way I thought or what I was thinking but in the end, here he comes back. Boy, that was the best sight in the world, him coming back with a tire pumped up and ready to go. And do you know what I was doing the whole way the rest of the way because it's a spare, it still wasn't worth anything, it was gone, we tossed it, so I was waiting for one more nail and here we go again, but the LORD purposed I got there and was able to get out.

Those are all His mercies and I give you that as an illustration because of what's written right here in verse 22, "He went into a ship with his disciples." I don't care, when we talk about the LORD being greater than the storm, He is in that storm with His disciples. That's a picture of substitution and I'm so thankful that it's not how we perceive Him that is our salvation because if that was the case, they failed on every test, even down to where He says to them in verse 25, "Where's your faith?" Now why did He ask them that question? It wasn't that He needed an answer. He was bringing out of them that if salvation truly did depend upon their faith and believing, they would be a goner. So would we. All these preachers preaching up faith, that's not our salvation but on the other hand too when He says in verse 25, "Where is your faith?" Christ is their Faith and what He's doing is saying, "Don't look to yourself, look to Me." That's where peace, that's where rest comes from.

So His ordering His disciples to put to sea here, it wasn't to test them. The LORD knows what we are by nature. Someone said a sheep is so dumb it doesn't even know that it's a sheep, and isn't that what most of the LORD's sheep struggle over, whether I'm the LORD's or not? I would say you wouldn't be struggling over it if the LORD hadn't given you His Spirit to cause you to question yourself and it's a good thing to question ourselves, but not Him. If you ever get feeling good about your profession or about your faith or about your walk or about your talk, you're in trouble. No, a sheep is a sheep. It's dumb and that's why it needs a shepherd.

All of the salvation is in the Shepherd. It's not in this boat. It's not in their expertise. It's in the One Who masters the storm and He masters it because He not only calmed the storm but He's the one who sent it. You see, He gives Life because He is Life but He also brings death. He's the One Who gives Life, He kills. He sends the disease and heals. These are things that typically men because in their minds they've got the world separated between good and evil. It's a dichotomy that, you know, if anything good happens by my definition, then God did it; if it's evil, then Satan did it. And if it was modern religion, you know what they would be doing, they'd be in this boat casting out Satan. They'd be saying, "Satan, be gone!" But this is the Master Who brought it.

He went with them and when it says in verse 22, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth." Notice, "let us." This is how Christ prayed in His High Priestly prayer to His Father, I in them and Thou in Me. You know, our lives if we're

the LORD's, are hidden in Christ to such a degree that there's nothing that touches any one of us but what has already touched Him. He's One Who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. In other words, that He's not ignorant. He's not indifferent but in all things, it says, was tempted, tried such as we are, but what? Yet without sin. Who is the Perfect One in this story? The One with a perfect reaction. You can resolve all you want to and say, "Okay, next storm that comes, I'm gonna do what the LORD did." You know, like people like to wear that on their little bracelets, "What would Jesus do?" Well, I'll tell you what, if you think that somehow that's gonna help you do what Jesus did, you're desperately mistaken.

No, the Perfect One here is the LORD and the proof is, you know, how many times have we said, "Well, I've learned my lesson. That's it. I got it so that's not gonna be a problem from here forward." Until when? The next storm. All the way through the Gospels, it's just like all the way through the Old Testament, it's not God picking them up and laying back and saying, "Okay, let's see how you do." No. They perished. They fell. They were given over to their own desires and lusts. That's the last thing in the world you want God to do, leave you to yourself.

No, "If I go, go with me," but the reality is He does. It's like Moses, he said, "Don't move me from here unless You're please to go up with me." And that's our prayer. But the reality is He does. We don't have to ask Him to do it like some, you know, if they get into a serious situation they go back and say, "Oh man, I forgot to have my time of prayer this morning and that's why all of this is happening." No, it's not. Everything, it's not dependent upon you, this life or your course, it's laid out. Do we need to look to Him? Well, if we didn't then, He's gonna make sure we do at some point. He'll never leave us to ourselves.

So He went into the ship with them and yet His presence went with them. I love how that is. "Let us go over unto the other side," but the reason was that He had something to show them, something to teach them. I can remember as a little boy when my dad would say, "Son, let's go ride in the car." I knew it wasn't gonna be a joyride, I knew it wasn't just gonna be, you know, to show me this or that, we were gonna have a talk, and sometime's we'd drive around and when he was done, he'd take me back and say, "Okay." That's what the LORD's doing here. This is His schoolroom.

This is the school of Christ and what we see here is a good example of life. There are days when you set out and it is calm. Beautiful day, things just...and what do we think in ourselves? "Man, if it could always be this way." Don't you know if it was always that way, that we would be the most obnoxious, cocky, presumptuous people? In fact, that's how we are in our flesh. When we're having a great day and someone else isn't or they're going through a deep trial, what comes to your mind? Be honest. It's, "Well, I wonder what they're doing wrong. You know, it seems like they're always in trouble. They must not be following the LORD somehow." That's how men reason but that's not it. This isn't God or Christ reacting to who we are and what we are, it's Him leading and directing all the way in the calm, but also in the storm.

And when it says there in verse 23, "as they sailed he fell asleep." Now we know that God neither slumbers nor sleeps so even as he fell asleep, he was still directing. You see, we can't. Once we're asleep, we're out of it, but He Who never slumbers nor sleeps, it says He fell asleep. He was sustaining the entire universe even as a Man by the Word of His power. That's what Hebrews 1 says. So He didn't give up control. It's not like a pilot leaving the cabin and going back and having to turn it over to somebody else. No, He is even here.

But the sleep, again is to show us that even as He is Almighty God, still He was man as if He were not God. One did not usurp the other. He didn't give up being God and yet His being on this earth, He was no less a man than we are. What do you do when you get tired? You sleep. That was part of His suffering in the flesh: He thirsted, He slept, He hungered. Those aren't effects of sin, that's just part of being human. You want a picture of perfect humanity, here it is in Christ. Everybody keeps trying to come out with a perfect man. You see it every once in a while, they come out with an article, what describes the perfect man. On earth there isn't any. There's only been One and that's this One here we're reading about, the God-Man.

And the fact that He slept is, to me, an indication of complete rest. You could say He was tired, but rest, that Scripture says the LORD gives His Beloved sleep. If you have a good night and you haven't been able to sleep and suddenly now you wake up and you find out you've been asleep for five hours, you're thinking, "Wow, that was the best sleep in the world!" I'll tell you, for us as sinners, any sleep is a mercy. We assume that God owes us a good night's sleep but He doesn't. We're serving a life sentence here. So if He wants to wake you up and rattle the cage and make all the noise, I mean, we don't deserve any better. Part of our rebellion is thinking we do, but the LORD, when it says He was asleep, it's a picture of the calm. That's what you do, you rest, and He was resting even all the while directing.

It says, "and there came down a storm of wind on the lake," as if it were nowhere else. I don't know. This doesn't appear to be something that happened over the rest of the land. You say, "Well, who determines that?" That's the LORD as well. Ever driven down the road and everything's just wind-blown and trees down and everything and here you are, you know, you left out early and nothing happening where you live but all of a sudden you come on this. The LORD determines these things in every way.

But it says here in verse 23, "they were filled with water." You know, "with water" is in italic. The King James translators assumed that the boat was filled with water but it says, "they were filled and were in jeopardy." So not just water, they were filled with fear, trouble, and the idea of filled is overwhelmed, shaken to the bone. That's what the LORD does. When He's gonna teach us of Himself, that means that He's gonna bring us low, strip us of any confidence in ourselves. If you wonder and I know I have these same thoughts. As much as I know about Christ and His death and what He's accomplished for sinners and I have the privilege of standing here and preaching for you, yet you know, there are times when this heart is filled with fear and unsettledness and doubt to the point where you think sometimes you can't even open your mouth to say anything and the

LORD purposes those times even then so that we be brought low, that we never put any confidence in the flesh.

You know, that's a danger of this flesh and I believe that's what we see here but we know that nothing happens, I don't care whether it's the wind, I don't care whether it's Satan himself, nothing happens but what the LORD ordains it. Not just permits it. Get rid of that. You don't find that word in the Scripture, "Well, the LORD permitted it." No, He ordained it. Ordained it and there's no conflict between what He allows or what He withholds as far as Him ordaining. He does both. Such is the One who's greater than the storm.

So He's asleep as a Man, and yet the one thing that is missed here because it says, "they were filled and were in jeopardy," they weren't in any more jeopardy for their lives at that point than they were sitting on the shore at home with a nice meal with their families. When it says, "and were in jeopardy," that's from their perspective. That's why they said in verse 24, "Master, master, we perish." Now that is an amazing little "we" there because He's in the boat with them so does this mean that Christ will perish with them? Who is "we" here? Have you ever had that conversation when somebody would start going down a road and they'd start saying "we" and "they"? Well, wait a minute, who's "we"? Let's sort this thing out. The only ones in trouble here, it's in their mind not in reality, but in their mind, "we perish."

The only thing to fear is fear itself, is what we've heard said. Where's our biggest conflict and battle from? It's not in Who Christ is because, I'll tell you, we're as safe as the ship where the LORD is. I've used that, I've read it years ago, it's not even mine but I love it. You have a ship crossing the sea, it hits a storm, you've got a strong man here, you've got a baby over here in arms. How safe is that baby compared to that guy with all the strength? Well, they're both just as safe as the ship and the one directing. You know, safe in Christ. He's not going away.

I heard this expression a long time ago as well and the LORD has used it. It would be sooner thought that Christ should ever step down from the throne and cease to be the Son of God than for Him to lose one for whom He paid the debt. So when we're overwhelmed with our sin, we ought to be, if the LORD left us without a Ransom, without a Representative, I'll tell you what, even one sinful thought would be enough to cast us into hell and yet He said, 'Of all that the Father has given Me, I'll not lose one.' And this is what He's teaching them. This example of the storm is just that, it wasn't to see whether or not they would truly believe. No, but bringing this test to these, the strongest of men, it was to show them that there's no hope apart from Christ Himself.

He's the One greater than the storm and so when they cried there in verse 24, "Master, master, we perish," you know, this is the LORD's doing to bring out of us the very cry. That's why I love to read the Scriptures because you won't find a perfect man in all of Scripture. You read the Psalms it's, "I can identify with that," and thank the LORD He has given us that to read, to understand as the Scriptures say, there's no temptation taken us but what is common to man, but with it, God provides the Way of escape. The Way of

escape is Christ. It's not necessarily getting out of it. There are some that the LORD has put them under a life-long trial. When it first started, they thought maybe this is just temporary and then as time goes on they realize, "The LORD is not letting His hand off me." But even in that, the LORD is present and doing His will.

But I'll tell you, there's no relief for poor souls that are under the sense of guilt or fear of wrath than for the LORD to draw those cries to Him. I've told you about the lady over here at Landmark Nursing Home back in the day when Ms. O'Dell, some of you remember her, asked me to go down there and preach every week and one dear lady that every week they'd wheel her in and when I'd get preaching about forgiveness of sin and comfort to the LORD, she cries. I don't give anybody just a blank assurance, I point them to Christ and if Christ paid your debt, there's reason to rest. But I still remember, you know, week after week crying out, "Not me! Not me! I've sinned too much, not me!" I don't know whether the LORD ever turned her heart in her last days or not. I don't know but it's a pitiful cry, to hear one that cries recognizing the guilt but can't look to Christ, never given eyes to see.

But thank the LORD that here with His disciples He gave them eyes to see and that's what He did. This is His business, to lay those storms to rest, and to give peace to His children, and when it's all over, like it says there, "Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm." You could put a whole message right in that particular statement because that's what the LORD did with our greatest storm, which is our sin. He rose. He came from that throne above, left it and came down and He rebuked the wind and the raging of the water.

Remember, He was going through the storm with them but it wasn't going to be calmed until He said so, and so it is with our sin. When He cried, "It is finished!" it wasn't finished until He said it's finished. When you rebuke the wind and the storm it's, "Alright, you're done. You've accomplished My purpose and now calm," and the picture you see there it says, "and there was a calm." Don't you like calm, rest? Think, if you're the LORD's, that's what He did, He paid the debt and therefore there is calm, there is rest in Him.

Then in verse 25, you can see as He, again, rebukes their fear in saying, "Where is your faith?" you know, He's not turning them back to themselves. Faith is like a muscle, at times it can be weak, sometimes it's strong, but it's not our salvation. Faith is that that has as its object and rest the LORD Jesus Christ, and without it, we tremble, but if the LORD's pleased to strengthen it, we stand, Scripture talks about whereby doing all to stand, to stand, that's by that faith, it's strengthening of that faith, but where is faith strengthened? When the LORD opens your eyes to see. In their flesh, all they saw was a man sleeping but now with their eyes open and Him having spoken and seeing then the calm, they see Him completely differently and therein their rest.

That's why He said, "Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered." I would say to you that my prayer would be we'd never get over that. I know we always want to, "LORD, if you just get me to a point where I'm not unsettled." No, it's in the unsettling

times, it's in those times when He's weeding His garden and cultivating these plants that He has planted. Every plant that the LORD God has planted can never be uprooted but every one that He hasn't shall be, and if through these even through the shaking down, the being brought low, we're brought low at Christ's feet and brought to acknowledge Him, I will tell you, that's the greatest mercy above anything you could ever want and have in this life, and to be brought to say even as they did, "What is this? Who is this?" Not just His manner but His person and in that they give Him the glory.

It's a good thing when we being afraid wonder. Let us be afraid of ever being left to ourselves but we don't fear Him, that when He speaks peace, it is well with our soul, and that's why the Scriptures say, "Who is a God like unto thee, the pardoning God?" Such a God is worthy of our worship.