

Peace Out Of Chaos

Matthew 8:18,23-27

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What is peace, a biblical peace? It is not merely the absence of outward conflict. Two people may call a truce to hostilities while they yet despise one another. However, they are not reconciled together. The enmity between them has not been removed. Nor is biblical peace a union of two opposing parties at any price. For example, when the Pharisees and the Sadducees joined hands in order to destroy Christ, we would hardly describe that union as one of peace. They were foes, but came together to fight a common foe—the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a confederation is not a biblical peace; it is a conspiracy to do evil. Biblical peace is removing that barrier, that problem, that sin which separated opposing parties by way of repentance and forgiveness, so that the two opposing parties are reconciled and united in the truth of Christ and on the basis of mutual love for one another. Any other concept of peace is a false peace and an unbiblical peace.

Dear ones, Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace (in Isaiah 9:6). Why? Because He removed the sin which separated us from God and from one another, and He has imputed His perfect righteousness to all who embrace Him by faith. We, who at one time were God's enemies, were made God's dear children through Jesus our only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). Before the world will know true peace, it must first know Christ, the Prince of Peace. All other attempts at peace (whether political, sociological, educational, or biological solutions) are doomed to failure and will result in confusion and destruction rather than in peace.

Let us consider this Lord's Day, how Christ, the Peacemaker, brings peace out of chaos. The main points from our text are these: (1) The Promise (Matthew 8:18,23); (2) The Chaos (Matthew 8:24-25); (3) The Peace (Matthew 8:26-27).

I. The Promise (Matthew 8:18,23).

A. The Lord Jesus had been drawing large crowds as He taught and performed many great wonders in healing the sick and in delivering those possessed of demons (Matthew 8:16). Such miracles were a fulfillment of prophecy concerning Christ and confirmation that He was the Savior who would come (Matthew 8:17). The miracles of Christ were important and necessary, but hear me closely. Miracles become lying signs and wonders, if the prophet or teacher does not speak what is taught in Holy Scripture. In other words, a miracle is only as good as the teaching of Scriptural truth that proceeds from the mouth of the prophet or teacher (Deuteronomy 13:1-3; John 20:30-31). The miracles performed by Christ and the apostles were true confirming miracles sent by God in order to confirm their teaching. However, the Lord makes clear that many who claim to be teachers and prophets within Churches that profess to be Christian will make such a claim to Christ on the Day of Judgment (Matthew 7:15-16,21-23). Therefore, we are admonished by the Apostle John to test those claiming to have such spiritual gifts (1 John 4:1). Like the Bereans, who tested even Paul and Silas according to the written Scripture, so are we to do so (Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:20).

B. Now as great multitudes gathered on this particular day to hear Christ preach, He was so pressed by the multitudes that He stepped into a nearby fishing boat, and taught the crowds on the shore while sitting in the boat (as we see in Mark 4:1). Now as the evening begins to fall upon them, the Lord desires to take the boat (from which he has been

preaching) to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 8:18). The precise words of the Lord are stated in Luke 8:22, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." Now, dear ones, that is not a mere suggestion, but is actually an imperative, i.e. a command from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Now was there any hint in these words of the Lord that they would NOT make it over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee? Did Christ say, "Let us TRY to make it over to the other side"? He did not merely say, "Let us set sail", and then omit any reference to making it to the other side. Dear ones, there was no doubt in Christ's command when He said: "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." In fact, the certainty of this command actually leaves the disciples with a very firm promise (albeit an implicit promise) from Christ: "We shall go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee." Regardless of what may intervene by way of trials, adversities, or even threats of death, the disciples were assured by the knowledge of Christ, by the power of Christ, and by the truthfulness of Christ, they would pass over to the other side. Was it possible in light of the One (the Divine Son of God), who made that promise, that they would sink or drown before reaching the other side? Unthinkable! He would first have to deny Himself for such a promise not to be realized.

2. Dear ones, we can read this account and understand how the disciples should have known that Christ had implicitly promised that they would pass over to the other side, and yet the same Christ that promised His disciples that they would make it to the other side has also promised us His forgiveness of sin when we come in faith, laying hold of Christ as our only Savior and Mediator and confessing our sins to Him (1 John 1:9); has promised us His imputed righteousness when we look away from anything in ourselves or done by ourselves as sufficient to make us righteous in God's sight and look to Christ alone for our righteousness (Romans 4:5; Galatians 2:16); has promised us that He will

fill the void left by the loss of every human relationship (Psalm 27:10); has promised us His Divine strength when we feel as though we cannot take another step, as we wait upon Him (Isaiah 40:31); has promised us wisdom when we ask in faith (James 1:5); has promised us only good things when we seek it from our heavenly Father (Matthew 7:11); and has promised us perseverance in the faith when we take Christ alone for our eternal salvation (Romans 8:35-39). These promises from God found in Holy Scripture (and many more like them) are as true as the one implicitly made by Christ to the apostles who set sail that evening to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, “Let us pass over to the other side” (Mark 4:35). Dear ones, why has Christ given us such amazing promises, if He does not want us to bring them before Him in faith, trusting in Him by faith and not by sight, believing that He cannot lie and that in His most wise and most perfect time, He will accomplish His promises.

II. The Chaos (Matthew 8:24-25).

A. But here comes the test to the apostles, who have just received the promise from Christ that they would make it over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee—a storm that threatened their very lives.

1. Did this deathly storm on the Sea of Galilee catch Christ by surprise? Of course not! The disciples rightly declared on one occasion (in John 16:30) as did Peter on another occasion, “Thou knowest all things” (John 21:17). Now think about this for a moment. The Lord could have taken His disciples by land all the way around the Sea of Galilee had the Lord desired to avoid this storm altogether. Moreover, if Christ had the power to subdue the storm once it manifested itself, He could have certainly prevented the storm from raging in the first place. Thus, we must see this storm as a divinely appointed trial of faith for the Disciples of Christ. Christ was bringing His disciples into a situation where it

appeared to the human eye that chaos and imminent death was in control.

2. As the boat in which Christ had preached set sail, a mighty wind was unleashed upon the sea. The waves crashed against the boat in which they were sailing. Water was pouring into the boat to such an extent that the disciples (some of whom were themselves experienced fishermen and had spent many years fishing on that very sea in many different circumstances) even feared for their very lives. Surely if anyone (from a human perspective) would be able to steer them safely through this terrible storm, it was these experienced fishermen. But all confidence in their own abilities to rescue themselves was now vanishing as death seemed more and more imminent. This was a desperate situation. The peace of the disciples had all but disappeared through their fear and unbelief. But Christ had to shake off all confidence of His disciple in their own ability to save themselves, before He would arise to hear their cry of saving faith to rescue them. And so Christ must do with each of us.

B. With all human hope of rescue now gone, with all trust in themselves vanished, the disciples turn from their own strength (and anything within themselves) to Christ, who is calmly asleep in the back part of the boat. They awaken Him with these words (according to Mark 4:38), “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” In other words, “Lord, don’t you even care that we are now in the process of dying?” “Death is imminent.” “Death is about to swallow us up.” Matthew’s Gospel (Matthew 8:25) states this: “And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish” (literally, “we are perishing” in the present tense). Can you hear the fear in the words of the disciples?

1. Perhaps you are wondering, how Christ was able to sleep through this nightmare? Was He really asleep, or was He just pretending to be asleep? The text says that Christ was asleep (Matthew 8:24), and that He was awakened (Matthew 8:25). For the purpose of testing the

disciple's faith, Christ was drawn into a very deep sleep, so that He was not HUMANLY aware of the trying circumstances around Him.

a. Here was the precise point at which the faith of the disciples was tried. Was Christ merely a man, or was He the eternal Son of God? While sleeping as a man, was He able to preserve them as the Almighty Son of God? You see dear ones, the disciples were looking at Christ as He was a man, and saw that He was sleeping, and concluded that while asleep, He could not bring peace out of this chaotic situation.

b. Furthermore, they had forgotten the promise of ultimate peace given to them before setting sail: "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." Their fear had shaken their faith in Christ, the Peacemaker, even though their faith in Christ could not be destroyed (for Christ prays for the faith of every child of God that his/her faith would not be destroyed, Luke 22:32). Their fear even caused them to question whether Christ truly cared for them at all, if He could sleep through such a perilous situation ("Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Mark 4:38). All they could see at that moment were the waves of that storm and their near destruction. They were walking by sight and not by faith in the promises of Christ.

c. Dear ones, do we not find ourselves in similar trials of faith where we are tempted to say, "Lord, don't you even care that I am perishing, that I am struggling with this pain, that I am being attacked on all sides, that my marriage is being destroyed, that I am out of work, that my loved ones have turned their backs upon me, that my heart is in anguish over the death of this loved one, that this sin overwhelms me from within and without? Are you asleep, O Lord? My life is in turmoil. Where is the peace that Thou has promised even in the midst of chaos?" Yes, there will be such trials of faith in the lives of Christ's disciples (just consider the trial of Abraham who was told to sacrifice his son to the Lord, or the trial of David who fled for his life from Saul and then Absalom, or the trial of Jonah who due to his disobedience was caught up

in his own storm upon the sea, or of the trial of Peter who denied even knowing the Lord three times, or the trial of Paul who was buffeted in his flesh in order to keep him from boasting about the visions he had seen. Consider the words of 1 Peter 1:5-9.

III. The Peace (Matthew 8:26-27).

A. The Lord being awakened from His sleep, gives His disciples a loving rebuke, which should have brought them to shame, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” How we need the correction and rebukes of our loving God. They are evidences that we actually belong to Him (Hebrews 12:5-7).

B. The Lord Jesus then arose as the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and brought peace out of chaos, confusion, and fear.

1. Christ first rebuked the wind and said unto the sea (according to Mark 4:39), “Peace, be still”, or “be peaceful, be quiet.” And immediately there was a calm over the sea and a peace over the wind that just a moment threatened the lives of the disciples. Can you imagine being in the midst of a terrifying hurricane, and immediately there is no wind, no clouds, and no rain. That would likely be as terrifying (at least at the outset) as had been the hurricane itself. What a glorious Savior and God, who governs and controls even what we call natural events for His glory and for the benefit of His people who endure such mighty blasts against their faith. It is profaning the name of our great God and Savior to call the winds, the storms, the tornadoes, the hurricanes, the earthquakes, etc., Mother Nature. That is mere paganism, not Biblical Christianity.

2. Our text closes with the disciples standing in awe and wonder of Christ, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and

the sea obey him!” (Matthew 8:27). Dear ones, when was the last time, you fell before the Lord and from the deepest recesses of your soul cried out to Him in awe and wonder of His greatness and power, “How great and mighty thou art!” How big is your God? Oh, you may grant He is big enough to save and rescue the disciples from imminent death in that violent storm on the Sea of Galilee, but is He big enough to save you from your sins, is He big enough to rescue you from whatever the storm that may seem to be raging in your life right now? Dear ones, faith will not be placed in one that is viewed as weak as we human beings are. True faith will only be placed in Christ Jesus, when we sincerely believe His promises are true and that He is able to do what He has promised (Romans 4:20-21). And beloved, it is not ultimately the size of faith that is of supreme importance, but in whom that faith is placed. For Christ said that even one that has faith the size of a grain of mustard seed might say unto that mountain that stands in his way, “Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible to you” (Matthew 17:20). Dear ones, whatever the severe trial that you face today, Christ has commanded, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” And by God’s abundant grace in granting to you faith in Christ’s promise to save you from the sin, temptation, and trials of this life, you will pass over to that heavenly side of the lake.

3. Dear ones, as I close this Lord’s Day, I would have you also understand that the faithful Church of Jesus Christ is like that boat. It is severely tested and tried by every wind of doctrine and by the spirit (or wind) of every false prophet (1 John 4:3). The spirit (or wind) of Antichrist and the False Prophet has and will stir up the waters of persecution against Christ’s faithful Church. But Christ promises that His Church will pass over to the other side and that the gates of hell will not prevail against her. For He as the Prince of Peace will turn the raging nations who swell up in chaos against Christ’s faithful Church and would destroy her into a calm and peaceful sea (Psalm 46). The nations will then cheerfully

bear the Church upon their shoulders rather than seeking her destruction. This too, the Prince of Peace will accomplish by His almighty power. There is no other hope of peace in your life, in your marriage, in the church, in the nation, or in the world. Jesus Christ alone is the Prince of Peace. Reach out and receive Him by faith even now.

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