

Series: John

Title: Lord of the Storm

Text: John 6: 16-21

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John 6: 16: And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17: And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18: And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 19: So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20: But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. 21: Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

After the Lord fed the multitude they wanted to take him by force and making him an earthly king.

Mark 6: 45: And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

So it is with all God's elect. It is by Christ that we are brought into fellow ship. Like they began crossing the sea, we are going to the other side, crossing this sea called life. In the first hour and every hour, Christ constrains us by his love. Christ's Wisdom, Christ's word, Christ's Power, Christ's love separated his disciples from the multitude and put them together as fellows in the same ship. So it is with all who believe in our day.

The Lord of glory was doing two things. One, he was protecting them from the multitude and sending them into another test. That is what our Lord is always doing for his people: protecting us and teaching us. Two, he is teaching us more about himself, more about ourselves, every day. He is growing us in grace and knowledge of him. By his grace Christ is growing us up into him and down in ourselves. He is growing us in faith to trust him more and teaching us to trust sinful selves less and less.

John 17: 15: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16: They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17: Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

ANOTHER TRIAL

John 6: 17...And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18: And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 18: And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 19: So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs,...

It was now dark. Most everything is more difficult to do in the dark except sin and being afraid.

What was their greatest darkness? *And Jesus was not come to them.* Christ is the Light. Without his presence all is darkness. The poor sinner who is yet dead in sins has no light. All is darkness. We have to first have Christ the Light to know the darkness of not perceiving his presence. So this was even more troubling to the disciples because the disciples had just enjoyed a season of great joy with the Lord *and now it is dark and the Lord Jesus was not come to them.*

Then the sea arose *by reason of a great wind.* They rowed from sundown. It was now the fourth watch which is around 3 am. So for 10 hours they rowed. But they only went 3-4 miles because the storm was contrary to them. Mark says they "toiled" in rowing. It was wearisome, hard rowing in Christ's absence. When he was with them, I picture them singing as they rowed as the boat glided across the smooth sea. But without him it was an impossible struggle in the dark against the wind.

We see three things in this rowing.

One, before Christ came to us and called us to faith we may have rowed but we could do nothing to save ourselves. It is not by works of righteousness which we have done. Christ justified the elect and called us all by his free and sovereign grace.

Two, after Christ called us, it is still impossible to row our way out of the storm. Christ said, “Without me ye can do nothing.” Isn’t it good that Christ keeps us knowing this!

Three, these disciples continued rowing together though they made little progress in the storm. They were doing what Christ told them to do. So they did not quit. They did not give up. Christ keeps his people persevering in faith through every storm.

What do you think that made them do as the storm began to kick up? I picture them peering out into the darkness looking for their Lord. With earnest they were waiting for him. They probably called for him. That is the Lord’s purpose in our trouble. The trial is to make us see our need of him. It is to make us desire him more. He sends the storm to make us cry more earnestly for him. It is the stormy trial that makes us appreciate his presence more.

CHRIST EVER-PRESENT

Remember, after Christ sent them over the sea, Christ went up to the mountain alone to pray. Christ is now risen into heavenly Zion. He accomplished redemption for his people. Every chosen child of God is his by purchase. He paid his precious blood. On the cross, Christ laid down his life for his chosen people and paid the ransom for many. He arose from the grave and all his people arose in him. We are his purchased possession. He never loses even one of his possessions.

Mark 6: 48: And he saw them toiling in rowing...

He is both seated in the heavens now appearing in the presence of God for us and as he promised, "Lo, I be with you alway." Christ is with God and our Lord is with us. He sees you, believer. The Lord Jesus, in Spirit, is present. He is our ever-present Advocate with the Father in glory and our ever-present help as we pass over this sea.

He called them into this fellowship. The Lord Jesus sent them *“To go BEFORE HIM unto the other side.”* He called us, sent us and we are ever *before* the all-knowing, watchful eye of our faithful God and Savior. While we are going before him, Christ is also leading us the entire time.

We become so troubled that all we see are the waves and the wind. It is impossible to comfort ourselves with this good news. But though we may not see Christ, Christ always sees his brethren. He promises I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Christ is able to comfort!

APPEARING AT THE RIGHT TIME

John 6: 19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

The Lord has a set time, his time, the right time, when he will appear to his people in the storm. They looked out through the wind and the waves and the GodMan, Christ Jesus, was walking on the sea right through the howling winds upon the waves. Christ already bore the storm of God’s wrath and satisfied justice for his people. He calmed the storm of God’s wrath by putting away our sin, making us the righteousness of God in him. He will draw near as calmly as can be through any other storm. All power is his as the GodMan in heaven.

He made the sea and controls the wind. He is the Lord of the sea as well as the Lord of the land; the Lord of the storm as well as the Lord of the calm; the Lord of the trial as well as the Lord of the good times.

Psalms 93: 3: The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. 4: The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters, *yea, than* the mighty waves of the sea.

Psalms 104:3: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

Job 9:8: Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. 10: Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

Those scriptures and our text had to have been Cowper's inspiration:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform:
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour:
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own Interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

The Lord Jesus was walking on the sea drawing near to the ship. Mark said, "*He would have passed them by.*" He made it appear to them he would. Job's experience sounds prophetic of that night.

Job 9: 11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him* not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

The disciples were afraid because they thought he was ghost. Mark says, "They considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened." What? The Lord had just tested Philipp and Andrew and all his apostles: they just saw the miracle the Lord worked; they just learned how they should have trusted the Lord was able to feed the multitude; they boarded this ship confident that our Lord is able! They probably said to themselves, "Now, our faith is strong now. We won't doubt anymore!" Then darkness fell. The Lord had not come. The wind kicked up then the waves then their fear then their hearts forgot everything they just saw the Lord do.

That is me! It is easy to have strong faith when the Lord is working mightily before us. When we have peace, when our health is good, when we have job security, when our bank account looks good it is easy to have strong faith. But how easily we trust those things. So in mercy the Lord makes the winds blow and the waves kick up. Then fear enters and we forget.

I want to learn this and really learn it. Things are never how they appear to our natural sight and carnal reason. It is never working bad for his child, always good. It is never to hurt his child, only to help us.

Psalm 103: 10: He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

We are saved by “Grace, grace, God’s grace, Grace that is greater than all our sin” and grace that is greater than all our unbelief. It never ends badly, it always ends better than the beginning because he makes us know more of Christ. He waits “to be gracious.” Therefore, happy are all they that wait for him.

In the end we see how wise in judgement, how powerful, how good, how righteous, how holy, how faithful our Redeemer is to us weak, doubting children. In the end he always grows our faith in him more, our patience more, our experience more, our hope more, conforms us to him more, purges more of our dross. The abundance of his love is shed in our heart more by the Holy Spirit.

HOW WILL IT END?

John 6: 20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. [what does his voice do?] 21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Christ spoke, said, “*It is I, be not afraid. THEN they willingly received him into the ship.*” This is what Christ does for a sinner when he first comes by his grace. He brings the storm *revealing our sin*. He makes us see we cannot row our way out of it: *not by works of righteousness we have done*. He makes us behold him on the cross bearing our sin as they beheld him and fear and thus he puts a godly fear in our hearts beholding him bearing our sin, personally. Then he speaks peace, “It is I, be not afraid.” His voice makes us willing to receive him. Through faith he enters into fellowship with us. Immediately we were delivered to dry land upon Christ the solid Rock, our desired haven.

Likewise, in every trial he does the same. He saved us. He is saving us. And he will continue to save us this same way until we reach the other side.

John 14: 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid...16:33: These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

I picture the apostle John writing of this experience in our text, putting it in the word exactly how the Holy Spirit told him to write it. I can hear John smiling, his heart overflowing, saying, “Fellows, if you can’t preach Christ from that then you need to shut the book and go home.”

Amen!