

Jesus Commands the Winds and Waves

Call to Worship: Psalm 31:1-5

1st Scripture: Luke 8:22-25; Mark 4:35-41

2nd Scripture: Matthew 8:23-27

Introduction

As our Lord, once again, gets back into the boat (with His disciples), this time, sailing over the Sea of Galilee to the country of the Gergesenes, we will find Him, yet again, revealing the glory of His Person, power and authority, while dealing with a providential dilemma that comes upon them en route.

I. Jesus Commands the Winds and Waves

And so, we are told, “Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him” (vs. 23). Now, what’s interesting is that in Mark’s Gospel, we are also told that “other little boats were also with Him” (Mk. 4:36). And so, some from among the multitudes that followed Jesus, apparently, had gotten into boats to follow Him across the sea. And we are told that these were “little boats,” indicating that the boat that Jesus was in with His disciples, was at least bigger than these little boats. What makes this noteworthy, is that, what happens in the narrative is experienced by all who were in these boats, such that, they all must have suffered from the dangers that the storm had brought (if the bigger boat was in danger of being compromised and sinking, then the little boats surely were, as well), and furthermore, they would have witnessed the power and glory of Christ, when He had calmed the storm and the waves. And so, Mark’s Gospel does add this bit of “increased dimension,” concerning the scope of all that had happened on this occasion.

Moving on then, here in Matthew, we are told, “And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves” (vs. 24a). In Mark’s Gospel, we are further told that the waves (being shoved hard by the winds) were beating against the boat, not only threatening to damage the boat, but especially, coming over the top and filling the boat with water, which, if left unchecked, would ultimately sink it.

And as the disciples are fighting to stay afloat, Matthew then adds, “But He (Jesus) was asleep.” Again, Mark, adding a few more details, states that Jesus was in the stern (the rear) of the boat, sleeping on a pillow. Clearly, Jesus was in a portion of the boat, which was in some way, shielded and protected from the elements, such that, He was able to get much needed rest. Judging by the constant labor that the Lord was doing, and the lack of sleep that He had gotten on many occasions, along with the utter confidence and rest He had in the sovereignty of His heavenly Father, we can understand why the heavy shaking and swaying of the boat still did not awaken Him from His deep sleep. He was like a baby in his crib, amidst the storm.

Contrary to the Lord, as the water continued to fill the boat, quicker than the disciples could cast it out, they were frantic and full of anxiety, fearing for their lives. Seeing their cause as helpless and desperate then, they quickly run to the Lord and awaken Him. In verse 25, we are told, “Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” In Mark’s Gospel, we have the addition of the words, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” (Mk. 4:38b). And so, there is a sense here, that the disciples were not only looking for help, but they were also shocked that the Lord was so calm, as they were all on the verge of sinking. To them, it seemed so contradictory that the One who had healed so many people, and the One whose heart was of the tenderest, kindest and most compassionate sort, should sit by, idle and aloof, as they all sank to their doom and drowned.

Our Lord then, graciously turning the tables on them, as it were, shows that the problem had nothing to do with His lack of concern, and everything to do with their lack of faith. Did they not know Him by now? Have they not seen the glory of His power and majesty already, over the elements of the created order? Should they then think that somehow, the winds and the waves are outside of the jurisdiction of His power and authority? And so, we are told in vs. 26a, “But He said to them, ‘Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?’” [i.e. water to wine, loaves]

And so, our Lord gives them a gentle, but clear rebuke, for their lack of faith here. Notice, He doesn’t condemn them or badger them, but He does indicate that by now, they ought to have understood who He was, and even that the winds and waves do not act independently, but simply follow the orders of our sovereign God. Indeed, the same God who had parted the Red Sea, brought water from a rock, rained down manna from heaven each morning, and has

always provided for His people in the context of humanly impossible circumstances, was right there in the boat with them. The very One who designed this world and brought it (and everything in it) into existence, was there with them in the boat. And even if they couldn't grasp the fullness of this reality just yet, they had overwhelmingly seen the power of God upon Him, throughout the entirety of His public ministry.

And then, finally, in spite of their little faith, the Lord acts to deal with the fierce storm. We are told in verse 26b, "Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a ***great*** calm." The way this is worded is profound, because it gives you the impression that our Lord addressed the storm like an owner might address his noisy, barking or growling dog; the implication being that the Lord is Lord over the storm. Though the storm is lifeless, it growls, threatens and beats upon the boat, and then our Lord gets up and simply says, "Quiet, or Stop, or be still!" And immediately the raging winds and the thrashing waves come to a screeching halt, and all is absolutely calm! It must have been absolutely profound for the disciples to witness the transition from fierce, rough storm, to calm, peaceful, serenity, all in but a moment, as the Lord spoke. Now, after the fact, there is hardly a ripple in the water, as it were, or even a mellow gust of wind. And so, it is certainly understandable that we are told these words in verse 27, "So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" And remember, those who were in the other, smaller boats, had witnessed this as well. And so, once again, the glory, power and authority of Christ were revealed, further affirming His Messianic calling, teaching and ministry.

II. Concluding Applications

1) Simply note, how once again, we find a profound display of both the humanity and deity of our Lord here. Our Lord faced exhaustion. He was so tired that he slept in the stern of the boat and was not awakened by the heavy swaying of the boat. Our Lord was fully man. Consider that for a moment, brethren. The almighty and eternal Son of God, had become a man, with every limitation that belongs to men, worn out, lying fast asleep on a pillow, in a boat, on the Sea of Galilee with twelve sinners. What a profound reality!

And the same arises and simply speaks a few words and brings the wind and the waves to a complete calm, revealing the glory of God in flesh. One Christ; one Person, two natures, fully God and fully Man. Only capable of saving us because He is both God and Man, bearing our nature (so as, to redeem the fullness of our nature) and bearing the nature and worth of God (so as, to exhaust the infinite debt against God). Oh, what a glory it will be, to see this Jesus, face to face, for all who know Him in truth! [Note: Importance of believing in both natures/1 Person]

2) Consider again, brethren, the scope of our Lord's authority. If He had such authority to command and tame the elements, to cast out demons, to heal all manner of diseases, to raise the dead, and all of these, *before* His death and resurrection, what does His authority consist of now, as He reigns from the right hand of God, having been given authority over all things in heaven, on earth and under the earth? He exercises authority over every single individual star and grain of sand, directing their course and every movement; providence itself is his hand maiden, our very life and breath are in His hands, every atom is held together by the Word of His power, and all things are subject to His approval for any motion or movement in time and space. In short, nothing was, nothing is, and nothing will be, apart from His will and design. The utter chaos, confusion and corruption that sweeps through the air of our entire country, all, ultimately move unto the accomplishing of His perfect will. He who commands the wind and waves, commands all things, and this leads to a third very important application then, brethren:

3) Every detail of your life; every time of peace, and every time of trial (from the minutest detail to the largest milestone) are all beneath the authority and power of Christ. And to this end, the storms of life may be beating against you; the water may be filling up to a level that is higher than your head even; what is impossible for you may have been long surpassed, but He will accomplish His good in you, compelled by His love for you, by these very means, leading you to cast your confidence on Him and not yourself. And when He is finished with His work, He will rebuke the storm, and bring about the peace that you long for. It may even seem like He is sleeping, as you are struggling to hold on and to push forward, but He is always right there with you, in the trial (as He was in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego), such that no providence will affect you, any more than He has ordained to accomplish His perfect will in you. And should it be your time to pass beyond the grave, He who is the "resurrection and the life,"

will carry you safely to the other side, and in the end, He will raise up the body that once suffered so dearly, unto its final, incorruptible and perfect glory!

3) And brethren, to this end, let us be encouraged to strive to rest in Christ, no matter what providence comes our way. Let us strive to act upon what we know about our God, and the real power and authority that we know belongs to our blessed Savior, by trusting Him, and by speaking into the chaos of our world, the Words of life. And let the world see by our actions that we really believe what we claim to be true; that we are confident that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, and that we are most certain that He is the One who reigns over this world, and that when the smoke clears, all that will remain standing is this Blessed Savior and the people who have entrusted their lives to Him. Do we struggle with fears and doubts, at times, brethren? Yes, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. But again, we have no need to fear or to doubt. For, He Himself has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us, and that He will be with us to the end of the age. And praise be unto God, that even when we are frantic and find ourselves struggling with fears and doubts, that none of that changes the certainty of His plan, and the ultimate control that He has over all things.

4) Finally, let me exhort you this morning, if you are not united to this Christ by faith, to seek Him now before it is too late. Seeing the chaos that fills our country; concerns about national debt, economic instability, potential civil war, loss of freedoms, international threats, crime, and just the constant general reality of the fragile and temporal nature of life, ought to terrify you...because this is all you have, and then you will soon face God. If your peace is bound to this world, then you are most to be pitied, because this world is a sinking ship. It has already been compromised by the sin of our first parents, and it is filling up with the water of judgment as the storms of life beat upon it. Your grave awaits you, much sooner than you think. And you can carry nothing with you beyond that great filter of death. And you will stand before God and give an account for the offenses that you have committed against Him; all of your high crimes against His Law will be brought to account. And you will be cast into outer darkness, forever, conscious of every bit of agony endured there, wishing you had never even been born. Such is the case, if you die in your sin, and outside of Jesus Christ. But...the Gospel!!!

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25