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**Matthew 8:23-27**  
**Christian Discipleship in A Storm!**

Intro: Jesus has demonstrated His power over disease, distance, and demons. Now, Jesus demonstrates His power over natural elements. The demonstrations of miracles reveal Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 3:17; 17:5), He is sent from God (John 3:17; 34), He is One with God (John 10:30), and He is the Mediator between God and mankind (1Timothy 2:5-6).

The enthusiasm and excitement had become very great; all the city was gathered together in wondering expectation. Some theologians propose the crowd of people were wishing, like the five thousand after the miraculous feast, to take Jesus by force to make Him their King. Jesus was a King, but His kingdom was not of this world; Jesus would not use earthly means for the accomplishment of the Divine purpose; He would not avail Himself of Jewish enthusiasm, the fanaticism of an excited multitude. He separated Himself and His disciples from the crowd.

Matthew begins saying; “Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.” The word “follow” connects this passage with the one that just precedes it. In the previous passage, two men had sought to follow Jesus, but they were made to stop first and count the cost of following.

One man said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go”, but Jesus let the man know that He didn’t even have a place to lay His own head (vv. 19-20). The other man offered to follow; and asked to be excused first, saying, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” But Jesus let the man know that He demanded to have an even greater priority in the man’s life than his own father (vv. 21-22). Both men had to confront the difficult challenges that come with “following” Jesus.

To be a “disciple” of Jesus means to be a “follower” of Him. it means to go where He says to go, do what He says to do, and believe as He says to believe. Not everyone, after they count the cost, is willing to accept the challenge of following Jesus. But, twelve men Jesus called to follow Him apparently did. When He got into the boat to cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, they “followed” Him. They were identified as “disciples” because they followed Jesus wherever He went.

Following Jesus does not exempt us from experiencing storms in life. On the contrary, we encounter storms because He is in the ship. Storms may come – even though we are following Jesus very faithfully.

There are times Jesus leads us into storms. As followers in training, we need to get caught in some storms now and then. Storms allow us to know Jesus in an experiential way. Through storms we learn to trust Him even more. Storms afford us opportunities to watch Jesus supernaturally handle the natural occurrences of life. Storms are perfect pictures of Jesus’ power to overcome satanic opposition. Storms give us new perspective on the Lord and how He works. Storms get our attention. Storms bring us to repentance (Jonah 1:1-17). Storms equip us for Christian service. Storms demonstrate His love. Storms remind us who is in control. It is safe to say that storms are purposeful for the students of Jesus Christ. The disciples who followed Jesus

into the boat needed this storm. Brothers and sisters, we need to experience our storms. We are in a storm now. The Covid-19 aka corona virus has caused a worldwide storm. We are learning who to trust. We are learning who's in control of the universe.

The Lord and His disciples entered a boat to cross over to the other side.

- I. Suddenness of the Storm:** Suddenly a violent storm swept down upon the lake; the boat was covered with the dashing waves. Some theologians believe that this storm was excited by Satan, the prince of the power of the air, who, having got the Author and all the preachers of the Gospel together in a small vessel, thought by drowning it, to defeat the purpose of God, and thus to prevent the salvation of a ruined world.

Several things to notice from verse 24...

- A. The Panic of the disciples: the twelve disciples were in panic mode. I don't read in verse 24 of the disciples being asleep during the storm. Instead of being relaxed and restful the disciples were terrified. They were terrified because the boat was swamped with water. The water that was supposed to be under the boat, was inside the boat. The boat was treading drowning. They were panicky because of thoughts of death. Thoughts of perishing cause panic.
- B. The Perfect peace of Jesus: Jesus was at peace in the midst of the storm. He could sleep in the midst of the storm because He knew the storm was under His control. He also knew it was not His Father's will for Him to die on a boat in a storm.

- II. Salvation is in the Lord Jesus Alone:** Verse 25 says the disciples went to Jesus saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." Save, Lord; we perish! The statement is an acknowledgement of their weakness and acknowledgement of their inability to save themselves. Their skill and their long experience of those waters now failed them. They had no hope of escape from the death that was already overtaking them except through Jesus. Only Jesus can save, keep safe and sound, and preserve in times of danger of destruction. Jesus saves!

Brothers and sisters, we too must acknowledge our inability to save ourselves in the midst of sin storms, satanic storms, health storms, pandemic storms, financial storms, etc... storms are too great for us to handle with our finite strength.

The storm gave the disciples a reason to seek Jesus for salvation (deliverance). The word "save" in verse 25 is **sozo** which means to save, keep safe and sound, to preserve one who is in danger of destruction.

- III. Setting of the Storms:** Verse 26 says, "*He said to them, 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' Then He rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.*"

Before Jesus rebuked the external storm, He rebuked their internal storm. Their internal storm was fear. Fearfulness is a sign of little faith.

- A. Jesus rebuked and calmed the spirits of His disciples. The winds and waves were mastering their spirits. Faith plays a significant role in spiritual growth. The disciples had little faith. Little faith gives way to frantic frustration in storms. Jesus taught them concepts of the kingdom and preformed miracles before them. Jesus' expectation of their faith was dissatisfied. They were to have faith that says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). It is necessary for our faith to grow. Faith is like a muscle; it grows by lifting weights. Weights are storms, resistance, battles. The Lord does not keep us from situations that causes our faith to grow.
- B. Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea. The sea was only the effect of the wind. It was necessary to remove the cause of the disturbance, that, the effect might cease. When Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea—there was a great calm.

Verse 27 ***But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!***

The phrase "What manner of man is this?" indicates the slightness of their knowledge of His character. Jesus' power is beyond humanity. He commands storms. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh!