

The Stilling of the Storm

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This morning's lesson is taken from Mark 4:35-41. There are two other parallel texts which cover the same material: Matthew 8:23-37 and Luke 8:22-25. I will restate Luke's account in the Revised Standard Version. It is as follows:

35. On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."

36. And leaving the crowd, they took him with them, just as he was in the boat. And other boats were with him.

37. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

38. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?"

39. And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?”

41. And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?”

We are all familiar with this account of Jesus in the ship. A beautiful spiritual has been written called “Peace Be Still,” as a result of this story. This account is pregnant with possibilities—and these possibilities have a name—that name is **HOPE**. And like a woman ready to deliver in her ninth month, a child who has been forming all along, HOPE is ready to deliver the salvation long hoped for.

1. The confrontation of the situation (Matthew 8:24; Mark 4:37; Luke 8:23)
2. The conflicting of the spirit by the situation (Matthew 8:25, 26; Mark 4:38, 40 ; Luke 8:24, 25)
3. The crisis presented to a sleeping savior (Matthew 8:25; Mark 4:38; Luke 8:24)
4. The capability of the Savior’s power in dealing with the situation (Matthew 8:26; Mark 4:39; Luke 8:24)
5. The certainty of salvation from the situation (Matthew 8:27; Mark 4:41; Luke 8:25)

The five areas are indicative of what we go through each time we face situations—especially 1 and 2. There is the problem which confronts us and the trouble it causes our spirit. The difficulties of life and the many forms in which they appear are served daily at a table we find ourselves. The server of this meat and drink is life. Clad in dark trousers and a white shirt, with an apron around the waist and a napkin draped over the arm, life brings in the tray filled with things we have not ordered nor would desire to order. We cannot refuse. It is the rules of the house that we must eat before leaving. Peter said in his epistle, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (I Peter 4:12, 13.)

I would like to look at the text this morning as a means to define the term **PEACE** by using an acrostic. An acrostic is formed by allowing each letter of a word to represent a word. The **P** would stand for **Providence**, the **E** for **Embraced**, the **A** for **Actuates**, the **C** for **Calm**, and the **E** for **Environment**. Thus **providence embraced actuates a calm environment**. When we embrace God through a trusting mind, a calm environment comes as a result. This point is a fact in reality.

In a second acrostic the **P** would stand for **Power**, the **E** for **Equaled**, the **A** for **Always**, the **C** for **Conflict**, and the **E** for **Endured**. In this case, we find that **PEACE** would represent the existence of a **power equaled to the conflict we must endure**. This power is realized through faith. In Proverbs 3:5, we find a fitting text that fortifies. It reads as follows: “Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.”

The confrontation of the situation (Matthew 8:24; Mark 4:37; Luke 8:23)

Let us now consider the matter of the text at hand regarding then the first point—**the confrontation of the situation**. There are the three sets of scriptures that are dealing with the same matter. They are Matthew 8:24; Mark 4:37; Luke 8:23. I will list them separately.

Matthew 8:24-- Amplified Bible (AMP)

²⁴And ^[a]suddenly, behold, there arose a violent storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered up by the waves; but He was sleeping.

Mark 4:37-- Amplified Bible (AMP)

³⁷And a furious storm of wind ^[a]of hurricane proportions] arose, and the waves kept beating into the boat, so that it was already becoming filled.

Luke 8:23--Amplified Bible (AMP)

²³But as they were sailing, He fell off to sleep. And a ^[a]whirlwind revolving from below upwards swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in great danger.

In Matthew's and Mark's account, we find a description of the intensity of the elements surrounding Jesus and the disciples. In Luke's account, it says, “And they were in great danger.” Sometimes we get overwhelmed with the affairs of life where it seems like torrential rains--bills to pay, a job that pays too little, refrigerator stops working and the food spoils, rent is due, utilities are due, children in trouble at school, in trouble with the law, sickness steps in, and life steps out. When will it end? As we look at these things and try to get a grip on them, we find that our hands are too small, our grip too weak. Facing these things takes a fortitude we do not often possess. We are frightened by what confronts us. Is there nothing we can do? Are we just to be beaten down by these things? Why must life be so difficult? Job's analysis of life is penetrating in its truth. “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble (14:1).” Now the decision is ours as to how deal with issues. We can confront them like Joshua and Caleb did when they were of the minority who believed that they could take the land of Canaan. They knew that God was with them. We can be as the ten spies who were fearful and unbelieving who focused only on the walled cities and the giants. They forgot about God.

The conflicting of the spirit by the situation (Matthew 8:25, 26; Mark 4:38, 40; Luke 8:24, 25)

The crisis presented to a sleeping savior (Matthew 8:25; Mark 4:38; Luke 8:24)

The sudden realization that what we have confronted is far beyond our ability to endure creates panic! In the case of the disciples they went to the one who was asleep on a cushion—Jesus. He was unbothered by the storm. They ask him a question. “Do you not care that we perish?” Now think about their question. Now think about the man to whom the question was asked. This man cared about the possessed man of Mark 1:23-27; he cared about Simon’s mother-in-law in Mark 1:29-31; he cared about the many afflicted in Mark 1:34; he cared about the leper of Mark 1:40-42; he cared about the paralytic man in Mark 2:3-12; and he cared about the man with the withered hand in Mark 3:1-5. They knew this. Yet when the storm came they raised the question—“Do you not care that we perish?” When there is a conflict in the spirit, judgment is affected. When we speak, we often do not study what we are saying. When we are faced with a problem, Jesus has a remedy for us. “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. **But take heart! I have overcome the world** (John 16:33).” God has said, “**Never** will I leave you; **never** will I forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).” There is another timely text that fits this—“**I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.**”¹⁴ **Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD (Psalms 27:13, 14).**”

The capability of the Savior’s power in dealing with the situation (Matthew 8:26; Mark 4:39; Luke 8:24)

There are two certainties that we must always remember in our Christian life—Jesus **IS** and Jesus **CAN**. In Hebrews 11:6, we find the words, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” No one who is a fervent Christian will doubt the truth of this text! Will we doubt the truth of Matthew 28:18, 20? Is it unreasonable to believe that the two texts are related? Consider with me now II Corinthians 12:7-10.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10--Amplified Bible (AMP)

⁷And to keep me from being puffed up and too much elated by the exceeding greatness (preeminence) of these revelations, there was given me a thorn (^[a]a splinter) in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to rack and buffet and harass me, to keep me from being excessively exalted. [Job. 2:6.]

⁸Three times I called upon the Lord and besought [Him] about this and begged that it might depart from me;

⁹But He said to me, “**My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for My strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and ^[b]show themselves most effective in [your] weakness.**” Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may ^[c]pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me!

¹⁰So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; **for when I am weak [^[d]in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful ^[e]in divine strength).**

Paul's distress was comforted by the Lord's grace—which is always sufficient for our every need. It is my firm belief that the conclusions drawn by Paul in II Corinthians 4:8, 9 were based on the same confidence that he had in the Lord in II Corinthians 12:7-10.

⁸We are hedged in (pressed) on every side [troubled and oppressed in every way], **but not cramped or crushed**; we suffer embarrassments and are perplexed and unable to find a way out, **but not driven to despair**; ⁹We are pursued (persecuted and hard driven), **but not deserted [to stand alone]**; we are struck down to the ground, **but never struck out and destroyed**. The words in **bold** print let us know that when all is said and done, this is where we are by the grace of God. Jesus is more than capable of helping us. But know this (which is just as if not more important), he is willing to help us! The evidence for this is found in Hebrews 4:14-16.

Hebrews 4:14-16--Amplified Bible (AMP)

¹⁴Inasmuch then as we have a great High Priest Who has [already] ascended and passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [of faith in Him].

¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning.

¹⁶Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God's unmerited favor to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].

The certainty of salvation from the situation (Matthew 8:27; Mark 4:41; Luke 8:25)

We know and are confident that when Jesus is present in our situation, there will be deliverance. In the boat, the Lord was asleep because (being human) he was tired. He had been with a multitude of people. The disciples were never in any danger of perishing because the Lord had a work for them to do after his ascension. When he arose, he rebuked the wind and the rains, and quiet resulted. The Lord is not I the flesh now nor does he need sleep. He is always vigilant. ^{Peter} said, "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with God), and His ears are attentive to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who practice evil [to oppose them, to frustrate, and defeat them] . (I Peter 3:12).

If the Lord is in the boat with us, there will be nothing to fear. Listen for the voice which is ever so soft and gentle. Listen for the words from that voice which will bring peace to our distraught souls. "Peace! Be still!"

