

“Lessons from a Storm”

January 12, 2020

Luke 8:22-25

I. Introduction

By now the disciples have been with Jesus for more than 2 years. During that time, they’ve heard Him as He declared Himself to be the Son of Man (Luke 5:20), the Son of God (John 10:36), the Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5). In Luke 5:20 He claimed to be able to do what only God can do when He claimed the authority to forgive sins. Even Jesus’ enemies understood what Jesus was claiming, in John 5:18 John wrote, “For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.” The Apostles, and the other disciples who followed Jesus, had seen Him demonstrate His deity through His many miracles—up to this point, Luke has recorded Jesus casting out evil spirits, healing many who had various diseases, healing a man with leprosy, healing a paralyzed man who had been lowered through a roof to get to Jesus and raising the widow of Nain’s son. The rest of Luke and the other Gospels record still more miracles and signs, John 21:25 says, “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

This calming of the storm is the second so-called *nature miracle* in the Gospel of Luke—the 1st one was the large catch of fish in Luke 5:1-11. This kind of supernatural power over creation belongs to the Creator Himself—there is no other explanation. Writing about Jesus, John wrote in John 1:3, “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” Paul wrote about this, too—turn to Colossians 1:15-18. The miracles of Jesus were just a small glimpse of His infinite power as the Son of God.

For 2 years, the disciples had had intensive personal training from the Master Himself. What they didn’t realize was that *faith must be tested before it can be trusted*. Satan doesn’t care how much Bible truth a person learns as long as he doesn’t live it. Truth that is only in the head is purely academic and never will

get into the heart until it is put into practice. For the disciples, that was about to happen—Jesus knew the storm was coming. The storm was part of the day’s curriculum—there were lessons from a storm.

Many people have the idea that storms come into their lives when they have disobeyed God, but this isn’t always the case. True--Jonah ended up in a storm because of his disobedience, but the disciples got into a storm because of their *obedience* to the Lord. Luke began his account of “The Storm and the Calm” with the setting.

II. The Storm and the Calm

A. The Setting Mark added more detail to this situation—turn to Mark 4:1-2, 35-41. For Jesus, it had been a long day of preaching to a large crowd of people along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The crowd had been so large that Jesus “got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge.” Mark wrote that “when evening came,” Jesus and His followers “got into a boat and set out.” Jesus said, “Let’s go to the other side of the lake.” Luke 8:26 adds that “They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee.” Here Jesus and His disciples—those in His boat and in the other boats that followed, would be able to escape the massive crowds. Plus, unknown to the disciples, Jesus had an appointment to keep—two demon-possessed men needed healing (Matthew 8:28).

The Sea of Galilee is a large freshwater lake. It is about 13 miles long and 7 miles wide at the widest point. Sitting at about 690 feet below sea level, it is both the lowest body of freshwater on earth and the most significant geological feature of Galilee. Most of its water comes from the Jordan River which comes from Mount Herman in the north. (After entering and exiting the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan continues on to Dead Sea where it ends.) Because of its shape and location in this rift valley, the Sea of Galilee is prone to high winds which can cause sudden, violent storms to develop on the lake.

When Jesus and the disciples began their cruise, conditions on the lake were ideal. Luke wrote that they were sailing along, i.e. there was a steady breeze, so no one needed to row. After a long, hard day of teaching and explaining, Jesus was given the honored place in the stern of the boat with a pillow upon which to rest. Lulled by the motion of the boat, Jesus fell asleep. Though He was fully God, Jesus was also human.

He became hungry ([Matthew 4:2](#)), thirsty ([John 4:7](#)); and tired ([John 4:6](#)). That He needed to sleep was just another indication of His true humanity. Then the storm came.

B. The Storm The peaceful journey across the lake ended suddenly as a storm quickly descended on the sea and those sailing on it. Matthew wrote in his account in [Matthew 8:24](#), “Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat.” The winds came down off of Mount Hermon and whipped across the surface of the water, turning the surface into a collection of raging waves that were breaking over the boat so that it was rapidly filling with water.

Mark added that in the midst of this hurricane-like storm, “Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.” As the storm raged and the boat rocked, Jesus remained asleep. Probably soaked to the bone, Jesus slept soundly on the hard-wooden planks with just a small cushion as a pillow for His head. Here the humanity and the deity of Jesus were both displayed—the One who was so exhausted after a day of intense ministry that He slept through this storm would soon stop it with a word.

Despite their bailing, the boat was filling with water. The storm was so fierce that it frightened these experienced fishermen. That they were terrified by the wind and the waves emphasizes the extreme nature of the storm. To these veteran fishermen who had grown up on the sea, it became obvious that their own efforts were no match for the powerful storm beating on them and they panicked.

Frantic and afraid, the disciples came to Jesus, “woke him saying, ‘Master, Master, we’re going to drown!’” They were shocked, confused, and, perhaps, a little angry that He was still asleep, seeming not to care about the danger that threatened their lives. In their terror, they forgot all that they had seen Jesus do. They had heard Him teach the Word and they had seen Him perform miracle after miracle and yet their faith and trust were replaced by fear and doubt. It was their unbelief that caused their fear, and their fear made them question whether Jesus really cared.

C. Two Responses At the end of the story, we see two responses:

1. First, we see Jesus’ response. Responding to the frantic cries of His disciples, Jesus “got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.” In the same way that He

created the heavens and the earth—with just a word—Jesus stopped the winds and calmed the waves. In the same way that Jesus rebuked the evil spirits and told them to be quiet, Jesus commanded the elements to be quiet.

The results were instantaneous. In a moment, “the storm subsided, and all was calm.” The winds and the waves didn’t gradually diminish—they both disappeared immediately. The storm may have come up suddenly, but it vanished even faster than it came. Mark wrote that “it was completely calm.” Once again, Jesus proved that He is God—only God can calm a storm; [turn to Psalm 95:3-5](#). In [Psalm 8:3-4](#), David wrote, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” But Jesus, the Son of God, truly cared for His disciples—for us; He came to die in our place.

With the storm gone, Jesus turned to address His astonished disciples, He asked them, “Where is your faith?” The greatest danger wasn’t the wind or the waves, it was the unbelief—the lack of faith—in the hearts of the disciples. They knew Jesus possessed divine power—they had seen Him perform miraculous healings for many others, but this was the 1st time that one of the Lord’s miracles had directly involved them. The disciples had looked around and saw danger; they had looked within and saw fear, but they failed to look up by faith and see God. Faith and fear cannot dwell together in the same heart.

Jesus intended this storm to teach the disciples a critical lesson: they could trust Him even in the most treacherous and helpless situations. They already knew that He had the authority to forgive sins, to cast out demons, and to heal diseases. Now they had learned that He even had authority over the wind and the sea. This meant that they had no reason ever again to be afraid—they never needed to wonder whether or not He cared for them. Years later, Peter wrote in [1 Peter 5:7](#), “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” The writer of Hebrews wrote in [Hebrews 13:5-6](#), “God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So, we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”

2. The disciples' response Following the calm after the storm and after the disciples got over their shock, there came the disciples' response: **"In fear and amazement they asked one another, 'Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.'"** There was only one explanation for what they had just witnessed. Jesus' explanation of His parables or even the miracles they had witnessed hadn't prepared them for what they had just experienced. They had lived through other storms on the sea, but none of them had ever experienced the kind of supernatural power that Jesus had displayed on that day.

The realization that the Creator was in their boat was far more frightening than any terror they might face outside the boat and they were terrified! They knew only God possessed such power—what they had seen was so baffling and unique that they weren't quite ready to accept the answer yet. They would need more tests, more examples. They may have been slow, but are we any different?

III. 3 Lessons from a Storm

As God, Jesus permitted the storm so that He could teach His disciples—then and now—some lessons: **A. First, Jesus is God.** **Psalm 89:8-9** says, **"O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them."** God controls the elements. At this point in His ministry the disciples hadn't really figured out who Jesus was—even after this miracle they still asked in **verse 25**, **"Who is this?"** To be fair, I doubt we would have been any better. Jesus was unique—there has never been anyone like Him and there will never be another. This was all new for the disciples. It would take almost 3 years of training before they would learn, as John wrote later, after Jesus death and resurrection, in **John 20:31**, **"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."** Notice, too, just like in the healing of the leper, Jesus didn't just calm things down a little at a time or gradually diminish the storm—it became instantly, completely calm. He was in complete control. Jesus spoke and it was done. Only the almighty Creator God could do this.

As we finish cleaning up our Christmas decorations, we need to remember that Jesus was more than just a Baby in a manger; He is more than just a good Man—paraphrasing what Doubting Thomas said in [John 20:28](#), “Jesus is ‘Our Lord and our God.’” Lesson 1: Jesus is God—our God.

B. Lesson 2: Jesus’ second lesson was—and is: “**Don’t make prayer the last resort.**” We aren’t told, but it certainly appears that the disciples had done everything humanly possible to keep from going under the deluge of the storm, but it wasn’t enough. Having run out of human solutions and fearful of death, they finally turned to Jesus. How much better would things have gone if they had turned to Jesus in the beginning of the storm? Where was their faith in the One they had seen heal so many people? Was it swamped by the trouble they saw?

Like the disciples, we need to keep our eyes on God and make prayer—coming to Him—the 1st step not the last. In [1 Thessalonians 5:17](#) Paul wrote, “**Pray continually.**” If we are praying continually, we won’t forget to pray when things start to go wrong. We will already be talking to God.

C. Lesson 3: The 3rd lesson was: “**Obeying God doesn’t mean there will always be smooth sailing.**” The disciples had done exactly what Jesus had told them to do. The storm came because they obeyed the Lord not because, like Jonah, they disobeyed. The disciples would have never seen His power over the elements if the sea had remained calm throughout the trip. They would never have learned to go to God first. They never would have learned that Jesus is God.

Sadly, if we never had any problems in our lives, many of us would never go to God at all either. We listen best and learn best when we are forced to go to Him. God allows trials to come so that we might grow—[James 1:2-3](#) says, “**Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.**” But when trials do come, Christians can rest confidently in the promise of [Romans 8:28](#), “**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.**” [Turn to Philippians 4:4-7.](#) If Jesus is your Lord and Savior “**He is near;**” you can have this “**peace of God**”—just trust Him.

When trials come, we should never yield to the thought—the doubt that God doesn't care for us. Nothing can separate us from God and His love—**Romans 8:38-39** says, “**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” When the storms of life come, we aren't on our own, Jesus is there with us--Jesus promised in **Matthew 28:20**, “**Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**”