

Bible Studies

Calming the Sea



Read Matthew 8v23-27

This incident is also recorded in Luke 8v22-25 and Mark 4v35-41. It is important to remember that this is not a parable, but an actual event that Matthew records.

Several of the disciples were experienced fishermen.

Galilee is a lake about 21km by 11km. Galilee is usually a placid lake, even in the late afternoon when the wind changes bringing with it choppy waves. At times it does get sufficiently rough to cause trouble. The boats used for fishing in Jesus day were quite low to the water and could have been swamped in such conditions.

Why do you think they were afraid?

Do you think experienced fisherman would be given to panic?

Matthew records that the storm was sudden and furious. Some people have taught that this storm was sent by the enemy, to destroy Jesus. They find significance in the fact that Jesus *rebuked* the storm, a word generally reserved for combating Satan.

Who's idea was it to cross the lake? 8v21, Mark 4v35, Luke 8v22

Jesus was asleep in the boat. **How did the disciple interpret Jesus sleep?**

Is there any other way to interpret it?



What accusation did the disciples make against Jesus? Mark 4v38

Do you think they blamed him for getting them in this mess?

Did Jesus care?

Jesus was not asleep because he did not care.

Did Jesus think they were going to drown?

Why did He rebuke their lack of faith?

Does this mean they really had no faith?

Faith drives out fear and fear drives out faith. D.A. Carson

Do you think this statement is true?

Is this what happened to the disciples?

What did Jesus do to the storm?

Why were the disciples amazed?

*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. Psalm 89v8-9
He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. Psalm 107v29*

What do you think Matthew intended us to understand from this account?

Remember it is not a parable. He wanted us to understand just how powerful Jesus is.

The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" Matthew 8v27

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!" Mark 4v41.

In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him." Luke 8v25



Would you like to answer the disciples question, *what kind of a man is this?* Colossians 1v15-20

Why is it important for us to grasp this point?

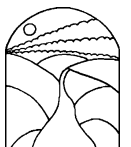
The Gospels want us to understand that Jesus was not just an ordinary man, he was, (and is) the Son of God, God incarnate. Without this fact, the whole system of salvation, presented to us in the Bible, falls apart.

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Our Storms

What do you think the storm represents?

What do you think the boat represents?

Some people say the boat is the church, I prefer to look at it as each of our lives. The storm represents the troubles, difficulties and crisis we face. Some of the sufficient to swamp our lives.

Can you think of any examples?

Two Lessons



Jesus can speak to the winds and the waves in our lives and make them still. Just like Jesus was in the boat with the disciples, He is in your life.

What did they expect Jesus to do when he woke up?

Clearly they knew that waking Jesus up was what they needed to do. But they were fishermen and Jesus was a carpenter, so I can't imagine it was help with the boat they wanted. Consciously or subconsciously, they were looking for a miracle.



The problem was solved when Jesus took charge

The problem was solved when the fishermen knew there was nothing left they could do. Their experience and seamanship was not enough.

How does this apply to us?

We too need to call for help. We too need to realize that our own skills are not sufficient. The disciples were frustrated because Jesus was asleep. *"How can you be sleeping when we are in such dire straits?"*

Have you ever felt, in the midst of one of your storms that Jesus was asleep?

Why do you think this is?

Is He asleep? Psalm 121v4

According to this passage, what should we do when face with a storm?



There is another thing we need to learn from this.

Were the disciples in real danger?

Clearly they thought they were.

Did Jesus share their opinion?

What was Jesus reaction to being woken up?

He seemed unimpressed. Jesus didn't share their sense of imminent disaster or their panic.

If Jesus was in the boat was it ever going sink?

We need to realize that Jesus in us, makes all the difference, our lives are secure, not because of the stability of the boat, or the skill of the sailor, but because of the presence of Jesus. Jesus is always with us in the storm.

Does this mean we are never going to get wet?

To extend the metaphor, Paul says; *three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 2 Corinthians 11:25* But Christ was in the boat and God saw Paul through, safe onto dry land.

According to this explanation, what should we do when face with a storm?

Sometimes Jesus will miraculously calm the storm, other times He will bring us through the storm, but whatever happens, He is in control.



What fault did Jesus find with the disciples?

"You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Matthew 8:26

"Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Mark 4:40

"Where is your faith?" Luke 8:25

What do we learn from this?

How should we react in times of fear?

Sometimes you can hear Jesus speaking through the wind and the crash of the waves, and into our storm, *"why are you afraid?"*