

Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

Sermon Title: Our Storm Calming God Teaches Us Never to Be Fearful

September 22, 2019

Today's Scripture: See insert

Series Theme verse: Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)

Introduction: At the Unity Foundation lunch this past Friday, Mark Herringshaw spoke of his own death and resurrection. Irene was there. She can tell you how dramatic a story it was. Three blood vessels that supply blood to his heart had become so clogged the heart could no longer beat. He suffered a massive heart attack. For 25 minutes his heart was not pumping on its own power. His wife gave him CPR until the paramedics arrived and they took over. They rushed him to the U of MN hospital, one of only 2 hospitals in the country that can perform multiple stints in record time. Only 5% of all who suffer the type of heart attack he had survive and all of them continue to suffer with brain damage. Prior to that he and his wife took in their premature granddaughters. . .who were almost taken away from them by the state because they believed in Jesus Christ and said so. Both Mark and his wife could have feared that the state would take away their granddaughters, and Jill could have feared she lost Mark forever at a time when she needed him the most, . . . but God was teaching them both that he never left them for a millisecond.

Main point: If our Lord is omnipotent, why do we fear anything?

Context:

Exegesis:

1. This storm was an intentional divine test (as all storms are) of their faith.
 - Just as Job's trials were a test put forth by God so all of our tests pass through God's hands. **Job 1:12** And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (ESV)
 - **Job 1:18–19** While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, [19] and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you." (ESV)
 - All circumstances and trials in life are filtered through God's wise control. **Lamentations 3:37–38 [37]** Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? [38] Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? (ESV)

- Greg Boyd, pastor of a Converge Church called Woodland Hills has written books to take the blame away from God for the pain people suffer. When a woman asked if God could have protected her from sexual abuse, Greg offered the thought that God did not know it was going to happen so there was nothing He could do to stop it. This led to his heresy of Open Theism and the denial of the sovereignty of God. Is it true that God's hands are tied when it comes to the evil intents of ungodly people or even Satan? I don't want to worship a god like that. Instead I prefer to believe the truth of
 - **Isaiah 45:5–7 [5] I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, [6] that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. [7] I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things. (ESV)**
 - But, God is not malicious. He uses the evil of this world to bring about good and he says
 - **1 Corinthians 10:13 [13] No temptation (peirasmos = trial) has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (ESV)**
2. The disciples failed the test in two ways. 1) they thought they were going to die and 2) they didn't ask God to still the storm themselves.
- 1) Thinking they thought they were going to die was a lack of faith because Jesus had already promised them a future ministry. **Mark 1:17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (ESV)** They hadn't yet become fishers of men so if they had been men of faith they would have known Jesus keeps his promises. We are not going to die before he makes us fishers of men. He didn't promise us that we would be fish food at the bottom of the Sea of Galilee.
 - 2) They should have already known that they had been given authority to ask for miracles from the Father and he would grant them. Even the Roman Centurion knew this fact and had greater faith than the disciples. **Matthew 8:13 And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment. (ESV)**
 - If they knew God wanted them to be future fishers of men, and that this storm was powerful enough to capsize the boat, which it was, they should have prayed to the Father then and there to calm the storm themselves or asked the Father to transport the boat instantly to a safe harbor.
 - This is huge. If you know a promise of God for your life and you see a threat that is in the way of that promise, your faith should be by know sufficient to ask the Father to remove that threat so you can carry on with your duty. Discuss this in Second Hour.
 - This storm was likely demonic or Satanic in origin. The disciples should have known by now they have power over the darkness and could have commanded the demonic forces, even Satan himself, in the name of Jesus, to depart.

3. Jesus did not draw on supernatural strength to keep from getting tired. He was totally human, totally exhausted and totally familiar with every human weakness we struggle with.
 - Hebrews 2:17–18 [17] Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (ESV)
 - Hebrews 4:15–16 [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (ESV)

4. The disciples interpreted Jesus' relaxed and delayed intervention as being uncaring and unloving. **Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?"** (at least help us bail!)
 - Just like Martha and Mary perhaps thought Jesus did not care enough about Lazarus' illness to get to Bethany on time. **John 11:21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. (ESV)**
 - On the contrary the delay brought greater glory to God and greater joy to the sisters. Which makes them dance more, a fever broken or a dead body come back to life?
 - Therefore, delayed answers are many times intended to bring greater pleasure and greater glory and greater lessons.

5. Jesus' question about why they were afraid was sincere. He was asking a serious question requiring a serious answer and the disciples probably thought he was out of his mind.
 - Let's say it was Philip who asked the previous question and Jesus said why are you afraid you of little faith? Philip I am sure would have liked to have responded "Are you kidding? We're dying or will soon be drowning. What kind of question is that?"
 - But Jesus was serious. He could have said, and probably meant, "Are you afraid of these 70 mph winds and 10 foot waves? How silly!" By now they had seen him turn water into wine, raised people from the dead, healed paralytics, and demonstrated that he has power over all creation. There is no excuse for them to revert to fear.

6. Stilling hurricane force winds and producing immediate calm on the surface of the water (which would require enormous physical energy to stop since a wave that size equals nearly 5,000 kilowatts of power behind it) is child's play for the God who made the sun and all the suns.
 - When Hezekiah was facing death and God granted an additional 15 years of life, Hezekiah asked for a sign and Isaiah told him to ask for something difficult. He wanted God to make the sun (actually the earth stop spinning and go backwards) for 10 hours. Is that all? Small potatoes as we say for God. The shadow on the steps went back ten steps or ten hours so God had to take our entire planet, stop it's rotation, then move it back nearly half a day's rotation and start it up again.
 - **2 Kings 20:10 And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to lengthen ten steps. Rather let the shadow go back ten steps." (ESV)**

7. The disciples were awed and impressed with this display of power so that their knowledge of

Jesus and His divinity became deeper.

- Would your knowledge of Jesus' power and divinity be deeper if you had been there? It shouldn't. The word of God is sure and trustworthy. If the disciples and all the other boats traveling with them saw this and testified to it then we should believe it as if we were there in the boat.

Application

1. The storms of life reveal how much or how little faith we have. They are faith gauges. The more we worry and fret, the more our faith needle is hitting red on empty. It is time we get on our knees and get to know our sovereign Savior better.
2. The storms of life reveal our inner motives. Are we afraid for our own safety and comfort? Or are we concerned that if crushed people may see less of the glory of God?