

(Matt. 8:23) - *“AND WHEN HE WAS ENTERED INTO A SHIP, HIS DISCIPLES FOLLOWED HIM”* -

Leaving the multitudes, our Lord and His disciples set sail from the heavily populated western side of the Sea of Galilee for the sparsely inhabited eastern side. As the faithful Leader, He went ahead of His followers onto the ship. The Good Shepherd led, and His sheep followed (John 1:43; 10:4,27; 12:26). Mark wrote that more disciples followed in other ships (Mark 4:36). As stated in Matthew 8:16, it was late evening when the journey began (cf. Mark 4:35). The Sea of Galilee, also known as the lake of Tiberius (John 6:1), and the lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1), was fresh-water lake, thirteen miles long and eight miles wide at its largest point. The point is that large bodies of water were generally thought of as mysterious and dynamic, moving forces that were to be feared and considered dangerous. Isaiah compared the wicked with *“the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt”* (Isa. 57:20). Twice in the book of Revelation, John mentions a “sea of glass” near the throne of God (Rev. 4:6; 15:2). John does not elaborate much about what this sea of glass actually is, but it is calm, clear, and near the throne of God. It is not something to be feared. The Sea of Galilee was a perfect setting for the next miracle of our Lord showing that, as God manifest in the flesh, He has sovereign power over all creation.

(Matt. 8:24) - *“AND, BEHOLD, THERE AROSE A GREAT TEMPEST IN THE SEA, INSOMUCH THAT THE SHIP WAS COVERED WITH THE WAVES:”* - This great (unusually fierce and terrible) storm that brought waves so high that they could have destroyed the ship and drown all the passengers (Luke 8:23). This is certainly indicative of our natural spiritual condition in this world. By nature, we are drowning in a sea of sin - *“where sin abounded”* (Rom. 5:20). Sin overflows us to the point that we cannot save ourselves from condemnation and death. *“BUT HE WAS ASLEEP”* - Even amidst this terrible storm, our Lord was peacefully and restfully asleep. Our Lord knew Who He was (and is). He knew His power to save and to control this earth with all of its dangers. He was calm amidst the storm. And although there were times that it was said that He was troubled (John 11:33; 12:27; 13:21), it was always due to the sinless infirmities of His humanity over the pain and sorrow that accompanied His life on earth with sinful people and the pain He anticipated in His flesh as He was going to the cross. But as to the salvation of His people, He always knew that *“where sin abounded,”* grace would *“much more abound,”* (Rom. 5:20), and *“that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 5:21).

(Matt. 8:25) - *“AND HIS DISCIPLES CAME TO HIM, AND AWOKE HIM, SAYING, LORD, SAVE US: WE PERISH.”* - As the Lord slept peacefully during this storm, the disciples, on the other hand, were afraid and disturbed fearing they would die. They awoke Him with their loud cries, “Lord, save us, or we perish!” This shows their great fear in understanding that they could not save themselves from this storm. They knew their limitations and their condition. They saw no hope of survival by their own power, works, schemes, natural and rational methods. They knew they had only one hope - *“LORD, SAVE, ELSE WE PERISH.”* What a tremendous picture of true Holy Spirit conviction of sin when He reveals our true natural condition. Without Christ and His power and grace to save us by His obedience unto death as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer; without Christ in His grace and power to put away our sin, satisfy God’s justice and establish righteousness for us; without His grace and power and love, we would be condemned by the law and remain spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. Just like the disciples in this storm, without Christ, we would all perish.

(Matt. 8:26) - *“AND HE SAITH UNTO THEM, WHY ARE YE FEARFUL, O YE OF LITTLE FAITH?”* - Mark wrote, *“How is it that ye have no faith?”* (Mark 4:40). Luke wrote, *“Where is your faith?”* (Luke 8:25). By this time, Christ had revealed Himself to His disciples that He was “the Son of Man” (Matt. 8:20), a title that only the Messiah, the Savior of sinners, could claim. He told them that He had come to redeem His people from their sins and establish righteousness by which God could justify the ungodly. He had shown them His power to do many miracles. Yet, when the storm came, they were “fearful” (faithless). We do not know at what point in their lives that the Lord granted them true God-given faith that brings a sinner to believe in Christ and repent of dead works and idolatry. We do know that the Lord called His disciples unto Himself, and they followed Him. They were kept by Him providentially throughout His earthly walk. All but one of the twelve (Judas) were His true sheep for whom He died and who followed Him as they were kept by Him. But the point is this - Even true believers, those whom God has brought to true faith in Christ and true repentance, those who have been given spiritual life and new hearts (born again by the Spirit) are but sinners saved by grace and very imperfect in themselves. We who are born again do possess a perfect righteousness, but this righteousness is not in ourselves. IT IS IN CHRIST ALONE; IT IS HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED TO US. And our faith within us is yet imperfect, not because the Holy Spirit imparts imperfection to us, but because of the ever-present and remaining corruptions of our sinful flesh (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:17). And like the disciples in this storm, when trouble comes, there is a sin *“which doth so easily beset us”* (Heb. 12:1), and this sin is unbelief and doubts. We are in a constant battle with our own flesh which always causes us to look away from Christ and look to ourselves. This is why the only victory in this warfare of the Spirit against the flesh is *“looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”* (Heb. 12:2).

“THEN HE AROSE, AND REBUKED THE WINDS AND THE SEA; AND THERE WAS A GREAT CALM” - Behold the authority and power of our Savior over the wind and the waves! Nature yields to the word of King Jesus. When He spoke, there was great calm. It reminds us of the time when our Savior was on the cross suffering and dying for our sins imputed to Him, and He cried, *“IT IS FINISHED”* (John 19:30). The veil in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. God’s justice was completely satisfied, and His wrath was spent upon the body of our Savior. The righteousness that God has imputed to all of His people was established by Christ. As prophesied by Isaiah in *Isaiah 32:17-18*, *“the work of righteousness shall be peace”* with God; *the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever.*” And God said, *“And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”*

(Matt. 8:27) - *“BUT THE MEN MARVELLED, SAYING, WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS, THAT EVEN THE WINDS AND THE SEA OBEY HIM!”* - Notice the bewilderment of the disciples. Mark wrote that they *“feared exceedingly”* (Mark 4:39). Was this the fear that comes from faith or from ignorance and unbelief? Well, Luke wrote that *“they, being afraid, wondered”* (Luke 8:25), which means they were filled with admiration and amazement. Having been taught by Christ Himself, they knew the Word of God, and perhaps they were familiar with passages like *Psalms 89:9* - *“Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them”* (cf. *Psa. 107:23-31*). But now they were experiencing these things and seeing them for themselves as they were being fulfilled by the Son of Man, the Son of God Who has all dominion and authority over these things. *“What manner of Man is this?”* What unusual qualities, perfections, and powers this Man has! Surely He must be more than a mere man. He must be the Son of God incarnate!