

Gospel of Matthew

8:23-27

What Kind of Man?!



Vs. 23,24 – Jesus decides to cross the Sea of Galilee. A terrible storm suddenly descends upon the big lake. High winds drive the waves higher, and then higher still! Jesus was sleeping soundly while the disciples worried and fretted about the very real possibility of being swamped and everyone killed! The disciples had a number of fishermen among them, men who had faced many a storm on the Sea of Galilee. They knew how to handle a boat, but they couldn't handle the fury of this particular storm! The boat was bottoming out and cresting the waves in a dizzying pattern like a bobber in blender! The disciples soon realized this wasn't getting better anytime soon, so they woke up Jesus and told the sleep-groggy Christ that they were all going to die! I do not think that they could ever begin to imagine what would happen next!



Jesus looked at them like they were from another planet! He was like, *“Where have you been while I was working the most amazing*

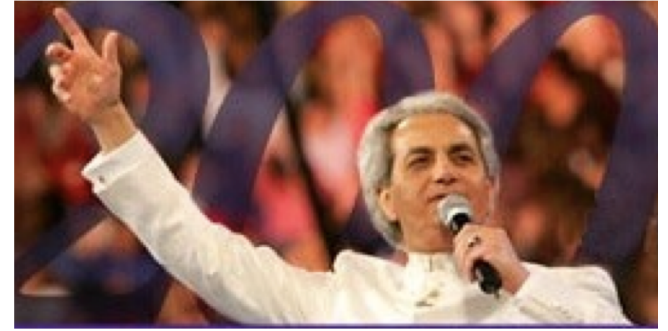


miracles? Where were you when I healed the fevered, the blind, the lame, the paralyzed, the diseased, the demon possessed!”

You see, He had demonstrated His mastery over creation. It was obvious He had, at the very

least, the approval of the Creator. Would the Creator then allow Jesus, the Chosen One, to be killed in a storm on a lake?! It was a preposterous thought! What the disciples did not know, yet, was that Jesus WAS the Creator. They had the One who had, in the throes of Divine genius, conceived of the elements - air, water, land, fire, and all the laws of physics that governed them. He who had commanded them into existence – it was He, the very One, who was in the boat with them! They had no concept until later how ridiculous was this great, fearful concern they had for their safety and for His! But at the time they were “what have you done for me lately” type of people.

In a hundred thousand-plus pulpits over the years, this story has been used as a metaphor. They say, “Jesus is in the boat of life with you. *“Don’t fear! Nothing is going to happen that He does not plan!”* People have long taken that to mean, *“don’t worry, nothing is going to happen”*. We Christians love our myths! It is an easily provable fact that bad things happen to Christ-followers with the same frequency and intensity as non-Christians!



But our advantage is two-fold – That we do not go through the storm alone as so many others do. We have the Creator in our corner! Secondly, our life goes on with Jesus, either in this life or the next! This is not all there it for us! While many look forward to death, we look forward to LIFE!

The metaphor runs true and deep only if the storm is part of the focus. You see, Jesus was in the boat, but that didn't stop the storm from quickly building up and crashing down upon them! Neither does Jesus, being in *our* boat, stop our disasters from crashing down on our heads! We live on a cursed and fallen earth along with the rest of humanity, and the fact is that we are as susceptible as any other person to the factors that can cause great injury and/or death! This is easily provable! So what we can legitimately take away from this story is simply the fact that Jesus is in the boat with us! That in itself is a great thing and not to be downplayed! In Christ, we have eternity!



Most people do not have that advantage! They are on their own! They have no hope! They have to endure the same things all humans must endure, but they must do it alone! They may have human hands to hold, and those *are* comforting,.. but those human hands of loved ones and friends are also absolutely powerless. The person without God has no steadying hand of God involved in their life! They have no anchor, no future, nothing solid, no hope! They think that if they die, everything just fades to black – they just cease to exist. Some of them look forward to non-existence. Will they ever be surprised!

Jesus, the living Christ, demonstrated that He cared about His friends. In this passage, he has recently come from his disciple, Peter's home, where He had healed Peter's mother-in-law. We know that when His friend, Lazarus, became ill and died, Jesus cried! He "wept", it says, even though He must have known that He was going to go to the tomb of Lazarus and resurrect the man! He was touched by the grief of the man's sisters and friends! That excites me! God, the God of the Universe, was "acquainted with grief"! He didn't have to get that close to humanity. He could have remained aloof – kept a safe distance – not been hurt or even affected by human suffering. But He didn't do that! He touched the people no one else would - lepers and the unclean, the poor, the unfortunate! He told the story of "the good Samaritan", humanizing and elevating a man that the Jews of that day would have pre-judged as the scum of the earth!



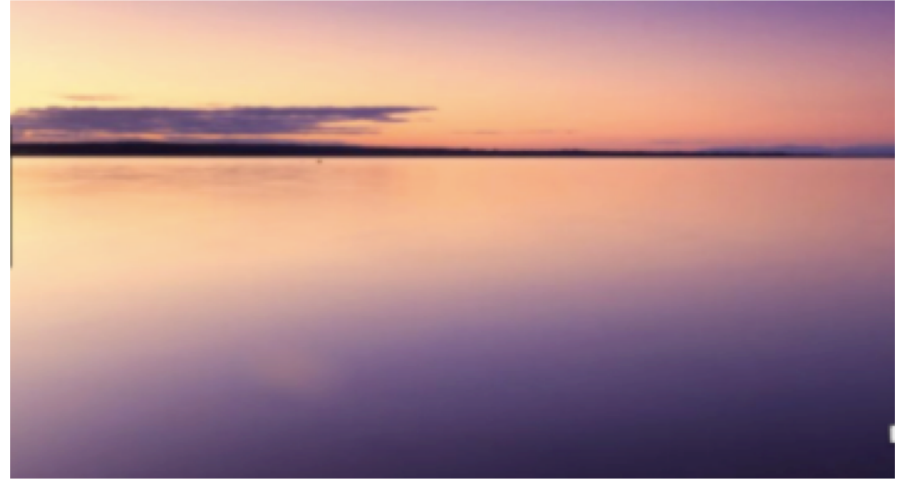
This is the God that desires us, that longs to rescue us and bring us close - to nurse us back to life, health, and strength!

But there is always an ulterior motive with Jesus. He cares, yes, but He is a completely purpose-driven God who intends on capitalizing upon what He has done in our lives. He uses those He heals. we will sing His praises and spread the good news with added authenticity, fervor, and sense of urgency! Out of gratitude His healed ones will proclaim His Name and promote His good reputation! Other's will be saved and brought into the love of God because of what He did in *our* life! We will want others to know Him as we know Him!



So He does not help and heal just because He loves you or me. He does it *because He loves the world*, and in healing you or me, He has created a motivated witness to His goodness and trustworthiness, who will tell the world that He is wonderful Savior!

In our text, Jesus did a most amazing thing! He did something that shocked even those that had seen Him do many previous miracles! He delivered them all from great harm by standing in the bobbing, twisting boat, in the middle of the seething seas, and, talking to the storm, told it to settle itself down! And it did – quieting immediately! In an instant the chaotic scene changed to tranquil – no wind and no waves! It was a dramatic switch, that is for sure! But why?! What happened because of it? What happened was that these men arrived at their destination on the far shore as freshly motivated men! They told what they had seen to many - who must have thought they had lost their minds!



This is usually the response when we tell someone about Jesus. If they are not actively seeking answers, or are not in the process of spiritual inquiry and investigation, they could quite likely conclude that they have encountered a possible crazy person! That is hard on a Christ-follower. No one likes to be looked down upon in that way! But that comes with the package. If you are talking to someone that knows Jesus, there is an instant bond and fellowship connection. If you are talking to someone who *doesn't* know Jesus personally, there is almost always an instant wall that flies up – a barrier of suspicion! That's hard, made especially so by the fact that you care about them (like you care about *everyone*) and NEED to share your spiritual journey to Jesus with them so they might have the option of knowing Him too, as you do!



JESUS IS _____.

“What kind of man is this?”

They were blown away! Jesus had no precedent!

That is the problem with Jesus. People have differing ideas about who He is! To some, He is a nice, loving, soft, sweet, Savior – kind of marshmallowie guy who just wants to love and never judge people! To others He is a wise teacher, a philosopher! To others He is a revolutionary – one who fights for the poor! To some He is a guy who died on a cross - a terrible thing, but they have no idea why He was on a cross. To still others He is just a curse word.

But He is who the scriptures reveal Him to be – the One whom the wind and waves obey! He is the ultimate authority. When He commands, everything obeys! We all think that is amazing, right! The question then remains, the wind and waves obey Him, *but do I obey Him when he commands?!*