

Jesus Calms the Storm

Introduction

- Talk about unexpected happenings. Ask group about their experiences.
- Unexpected things are sometimes funny, sometimes serious.

Newspaper article:-

‘A woman who was applying hairspray some years ago ran into a little mechanical difficulty. The aerosol container refused to stop spraying. The woman solved the problem by simply spraying the stuff into the toilet until the container was empty. Then she left the bathroom.

Shortly afterward, her husband entered the bathroom and seated himself on the toilet. He happened to be smoking at the time, and when his cigarette burned down to a stub, he did the natural thing—he parted his thighs and dropped it into the bowl.

The toilet exploded.’

Read Mark 4:35-41 and parallel passage Matt 8:23-27

- Unexpected storm in the disciples’ life. Matthew says (v24) it was ‘without warning’.
- This was not just a little spring rain – it was a ‘furious squall’ or ‘furious storm’.
- Matthew calls the storm a *seismos* in Greek, which is the word for an earthquake. The waves were so high that the boat was hidden in the trough as the crest of the waves towered over them. (William Barclay in ‘The Daily Study Bible’ Matthew volume 1 pg 316-317)

‘The Sea of Galilee is small; it is only thirteen miles from north to south and eight miles from east to west at its widest. The Jordan valley makes a deep cleft in the surface of the earth, and the Sea of Galilee is part of that cleft. It is 680 feet below sea level. That gives it a climate which is warm and gracious, but it also creates dangers. On the west side there are hills with valleys and gullies; and, when a cold wind comes from the west, these valleys and gullies act like gigantic funnels. The wind, as it were, becomes compressed in them, and rushes down upon the lake with savage violence and with startling suddenness, so that the calm of one moment can become the raging, storm of the next. The storms on the Sea of Galilee combine suddenness and violence in a unique way.’

- The seasoned fishermen were used to the storms on Galilee but this was something extreme to make them panic for their lives.
- (Some commentators think this storm could have been Satanic in its nature with Satan trying to kill Jesus and the disciples.)
- Jesus suggested that they get into the boat – why? (To rest, get away from crowds.) Sometimes seemingly good things can turn bad.
- Why did Jesus go to sleep? (He was tired. Totally at peace with elements.)
- Disciples said “Don’t you care?” Whatever the circumstances we never say Jesus doesn’t care. His care may not be obvious initially.
- Wasn’t Jesus a little hard on them for being afraid? Why did he say “still have no faith”?
- At the end it says they were terrified – afraid again – what was the difference from the first fear? (Awe of God. Power over elements. Jesus had shown power over sickness, now over nature, next in chapter 5 over demons. Jesus power was complete in all realms.)

Reflection

- How does this apply to us? Be more cautious next time you go on the boat on the Thames?!
- What kind of storms do we experience?
- You may feel all is plain sailing now – but storms will come. Are you going to wake up Jesus or leave him asleep in the stern?
- Jesus left one side of the lake to go ‘over to the other side’, to a new situation and face the demons in the possessed man. The disciples faced that situation with faith, not fear.
- Sometimes storms in our life can prepare us for doing greater things for God.
- What do you want to remember the next time your life seems out of control? (Wake Jesus up—bring him into your life through prayer and Bible study. God may be preparing me for something better.)
- Ultimate storm of death. Need to realise that the vast majority of people around us will face death without Christ.
- Let’s pray regularly this week for the needs in our lives but also for those who aren’t yet Christians.