

8:23

And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. Do you remember Matthew chapter 4, when Jesus finds His disciples they are fishing? They are mending nets and they are in a boat. That's the last time Matthew tells us anything about a ship and Jesus tells them, "Follow Me." Just think that through. The question one must ask is, "Is this really a message from Matthew?" I mean, what is he trying to get us to see here? The last time he shows us anything having to do with Jesus, the disciples, and a ship, He's actually calling them to leave that ship. So the only thing as audacious as being asked to leave a ship when you'd probably rather stay is being asked to board one when you'd probably rather not. They were happy with the first one. It meant security. It meant something they were ok with. Dad. Business. Future. So let me say it again. It was already audacious. It was already with audacity that Jesus invites the disciples to leave the ship that they wanted probably to stay in. And then He tops it off by asking them to get into a ship that they'd probably rather not get into.

All they knew was, "I stuck to Jesus when the scribe didn't. I stuck to Jesus when that dude right there, who was just waiting for dad to die, didn't. I feel pretty committed." And Jesus introduces them into something called a storm. Jesus wouldn't do that, would He? Was He omniscient? Would He really send His disciples into a ship that was heading into a storm? Would Jesus really do that? I'm afraid so.

Wasn't it God the Holy Spirit sent down from the Father onto Jesus? Wasn't it that same Holy Spirit, that after He comes upon Jesus, "It is not time to go on tour. It is not time to speak to coliseums. It is time to go into a dry and lonely desert." "You mean to tell me You anointed Jesus to send Him into a desert?" Given the Godhead's desire to make you and I like Jesus, isn't it at least within the realm of possibility that God would tell us to get into a boat that is heading towards a storm? Many of our theologies don't allow for that. Many of our prayer lives don't allow for that. We cannot fathom having better motives than the scribe perhaps, and better motives than this other disciple, only to be rewarded with a storm. Maybe they were thinking, "Here we are, willing to be homeless." Maybe they were thinking, "Here we are, ready to let the dead bury the dead."

8:24

And, behold, there arose a great tempest this comes from the same Greek word that we get our word "seismograph" from. There is a great shaking on that lake when the cool air coming up over Mount Beatitude, Mount Hermon, and all the mountains on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee and mingles with the hot air, or the warmer air, of the Sea of Galilee and it just created a horrible, shaking tempest in the sea.

in the sea. Inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves. Oh my. The One who sent them into the storm, what is He doing? **But He was asleep.** One of Matthew's purposes is to compare Christ with the greats. And so let me show you something quickly before we close.

*Matthew 12:38 Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as **Jonah** was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here.*

Now I wonder, who is that sleeping in the boat? Because the last time I read about someone sleeping in a boat he was running from God. His name was Jonah. And the only way to get the storm to calm was to take the sinner and pitch him in the water. Jesus doesn't immerse Himself in the water to stop the storm. He immerses Himself in our humanity, sleeps in the boat, gets up and stops the storm. Behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

8:25

And His disciples came to Him. This was a little different than the last time the disciples came to Him.

Matthew 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him.

And then Jesus gives them hard lessons and hard teaching for three chapters. Yes, the multitude was watching. The multitude is always watching when Jesus speaks to His people. Mark that down.

*John 13:35 By this **all men will know** that You're My disciples, because you love one another.*

The multitude is always watching. They're watching. Please don't think that all 1,700 friends of yours on Facebook are Christians. They are watching you. All of your complainings about the president; they see it, but the focus here is on the disciples coming to Jesus, and what does He do in 5:1 and following? He does what we would like for Him to do. He gives us a Bible study.

But here, in 8:25, when they come to Jesus they're not hoping that He teaches them anything. Things were not as surreal. Now see, in today's world we think that everything can be fixed with buying a book about "fill in the blank - raising kids, having a marriage, finances, you name it. Witnessing better, better prayer life..." We think everything can be fixed in our life when it comes to discipline, by sitting through one more series. And certainly you know that this pastor thinks there is a purpose for pastoring, which means "to feed." Of course I think that. But all of a sudden we realize that discipleship is not just about hearing great teaching; it's about also learning in the storm.

and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. Now presumably the "us" and the "we" are the same people. Presumably. If they're the same, let's think through this a minute, if they are the same and Jesus is not a part of the "us" then this is completely irrational. For if you stay with the One who is not in danger of perishing that would mean you yourself cannot perish. Let me say that again, in just a moment. If the "us" and the "we" are the same, and Jesus is not a part of the "us" and Jesus is not a part of the "we" then this statement from the disciples is irrational. Because if Jesus is not a part of the "us" and He's not a part of the "we" then He is not in danger of perishing. And if they, in danger of perishing, are in the same boat with He that is not in danger of perishing, then indeed this is most irrational. So really, I suppose the answer is stay with the One who's not in danger.

But, if Christ is a part of the "us" who needs saving from perishing, if Christ is part of the "we," in other words, the disciples are coming to Him saying, "Lord, wake up, or we, including You, are going to die," well, if that's what they meant then they haven't been paying very good attention. Because certainly the One who can heal people who are corrupted, see in the Old Testament they feared that you would be corrupted if you were good, and no, no, no, Jesus reaches out and touches lepers because they wouldn't be lepers long. He touches people who have the fever because they won't be fevered very long. He speaks and overcomes the spirit world by casting out devils. He speaks and heals sickness. These are all things a Creator does because man does not live by bread alone but by every word of God. So when someone speaks and things happen like that, you mark her down, it is God. Well then, if Jesus is a part of the ones who are in danger of perishing then they haven't been paying attention. In either case, the storm was assisting them in being without any kind of rationale or without any kind of logic. Storms do that to us. We say things we never would have dreamed we would have said. We do things we would never have dreamed we would do.

Oh, and by the way, here's the most mind-tormenting thing about it all: the storm is Jesus' idea. Already, He has dealt with disease with a leper, doubt with a centurion, delirium with the fevered, demons, and with the scribe and this other disciple, the deceived. Saving them from their sins, that is the theme of Matthew, right? Are you all with me? You've been in here with me for 25 weeks in this series. Matthew 1:21. You will call His name Jesus for He will save His people from their sin. "Well Jesus, we see that You're dealing with disease, doubt, delirium, demons, and the deceived, how will You deal with

disciples?” And Jesus’ response, “How will I deal with My disciples?” “Yes Lord, how will You deal with Your disciples?” Jesus says, “I will get them into a storm when they are very tired. That’s how I will save My disciples from their sin.”

Because I can really fake it well when I’m rested. When I have money and to spare I can fake it very well. When I have lots of people that tell me, “Great sermon,” I feel pretty good about the ministry. I can fake things really well, back in Capernaum. But on the boat, in the middle of a storm... I don’t lose faith when my finances are troubled. I show that I wasn’t building my faith very well with a walk with Christ, when my finances are troubled.

8:26

And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? In this parallel passage in Mark or Luke it says, “Why is it that you have no faith?” So really it was so little that it might have been accounted as negligible, or none. Now I suppose my first question is, “Why, Jesus, are You deciding to sleep when I’m upset?” Probably the display of His humanity in sleeping is trumped only by the display of His deity in stopping the winds, because surely this Jesus proves in just a moment that He is just as much God in the storm as He was before you got on the boat.

We’re on the boat. We have decided, “God, it will be uncomfortable but I will let the dead bury the dead, if that is what You want.” And we get on the boat and we think, “Well then, the big commitment has been made and that’s that. Off we go to the next ministry stop. I’m sure they’ll be waiting on us with banners.”

O ye of little faith Then, I want you to notice how skillful Matthew is by aid of the Holy Spirit. I do want to remind you these are Jewish disciples, and they are men who are well versed in the Scriptures, and He calls them, “ye of little faith,” when just 16 verses earlier Jesus described, in verse 10, a Gentile centurion. And He says, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” Now think about the comparison. God is clearly showing us the faith of those who should have it with the faith of those who probably shouldn’t.

Do you see how He both heals a servant and calms the storm by speaking the word? I want to point out to us please that the one who had great faith in all of Israel, his servant was healed by the speaking of the word. And those who had **little faith**, who should have had vast amounts of faith—their storm was taken care of by the same mouth that healed the centurion’s servant. Jesus is not the One that changes. Do you think, that the One who made these waters and the chemicals that comprise them is going to be swallowed up by them? I mean, do we really think that? “Jesus, You’re in danger of perishing.” No, the One who made the waters is asleep on the boat.

Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. That word behind **great** there is *megas*. And the only thing I can say from that is the calm is not in proportion to the faith. What is confronting them in the ship is a great storm (8:24). The story ends with them experiencing a **great calm**. The only thing that is not **great** in this story is our faith. The calm that He brings to the storm is not in proportion to our faith. It’s in proportion to the storm He sends us into. I’m going to say it again: The only thing small in this story is our faith. The storm: it’s big, we don’t want to be in it, it’s displeasing; we’re always waiting for the timing of the sleeping One in the boat. By the way, the difference between Jesus and the disciples is Jesus trusted His Father.

Jesus is not going to leave you alone in the storm. He leaves us in the storm while He’s in the ship. And He leaves us in the storm long enough for us to take a look at our faith. And then He brings a calm in grand proportion to the storm He brought into our life. Now, let me just throw this at you. Do you want to experience **great calm**? I do too. Are you equally as willing to experience great storm? Because it appears from this story, this true account, that you cannot have one without the other.

All the while, while Jesus is marveling at the faith of a centurion in 8:10...

8:27

But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey

Him! In the story of the centurion you have great faith and Jesus marvels. But when people really have an opportunity to marvel at God is when He brings calm into a life despite the lack of faith in the believer. Because then we can't say, "The reason God brought a great calm in your life is because you are a man of amazing faith!" God gets a lot of glory if He decides to bring calm to our great storm despite our un-great faith, and people step back, to include us, and **marvel** at what the Mighty Christ we serve. So God uses even our failures in faith to bring praise to Himself.