

“Jesus Calms The Storms”
Matthew 8:23-27

Before the recent Presidential State of the Union address one of the candidates running for that office was asked to give his evaluation of the state of our union. His answer was one word. He said: “TROUBLED.” Indeed, there are storms and troubles almost everywhere – storms which influence nearly every phase of our living. There are:

Storms of conflict – in our personal lives, our homes, schools, communities, and even in our churches.

Storms caused by diseases of so many kinds, many of which we may bring on ourselves by our undisciplined lifestyle.

Storms of doubt.

Storms of rebellion.

Storms of nature.

We all want to know how we can calm the storms we face in life. The truth is that we cannot apart from Jesus Christ.

To be sure, Matthew 8:23-27 is a text from God’s Word with a timely message which we all need to hear, heed, and share with others.

The location of the stormy event referenced in Matthew 8:23-27 is the Sea of Galilee – a lake located down in a valley between mountains. The winds in the valley were hot and cold. When they had a storm it was a real one – a severe one which usually came up very suddenly. The Greek word used for this storm is also the word for earthquake. Storms on the Sea of Galilee were usually violent.

Such a storm hit while Jesus and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was asleep. He was exhausted from the service of ministering to the people – using the boat as a platform from which to preach to the people gathered on the shore. Real preaching will make a person physically tired. My old preaching professor used to say that one twenty-minute sermon probably equaled forty (40) hours of physical labor. Jesus could sleep even in the midst of a terrible storm because He was physically tired and also because He was totally content knowing that in His life and ministry He was in fact doing the will of God. Knowing that you are doing the will of God brings contentment regardless of the circumstances of life.

When the frightened disciples called Jesus out of His sleep, He calmed the storm and they safely reached their destination. Many Bible interpreters agree that the real meaning of

this passage is more than just the fact that Jesus calmed the storm of nature of the Sea of Galilee. In my judgment William Barclay really gets it right when he says:

The true meaning of Matthew 8:23-27 is that wherever Jesus is the storms of life become calm. It means that in the presence of Jesus the most terrible of tempests turns to peace. It means that in His presence there is peace, whatever the storms may blow.

As a young pastor, I stood in a nursing home in Thomasville, NC beside the bed of a man in his seventies who was dying of cancer. For several years, this senior citizen had had a tremendous influence on my life. As death approached, my friend – even in a kind of unconscious state – began to speak. Nurses gathered around the bed ministering to my friend as he died. One said: “I wonder what he is saying!” And I said: “I know what he is doing. He is teaching the men’s Sunday School class which he has taught for more than forty (40) years. Mr. May lived and is dying in the presence of Jesus.”

No wonder William Barclay continues to write about Matthew 8:23-27:

The lesson of this story, the meaning of this story, the fact of this story, is that when the storms of life shake our souls Jesus Christ is there, and in His presence the raging of the storm turns to the peace that no storm can ever take away.

Thank God for Jesus Christ – for who He is and for who we can be when we are rightly related to God through our personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord of our lives.

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