

The Peace-Bringer

In our lessons for today we will be talking about the idea of the...
We are going to be looking at this thought from two view-points.

1

2 1) The Natural World

2) The Spiritual World

Matt 8:23-27

3

23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. **24** And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. **25** And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" **26** He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. **27** The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

In the parallel passage from Mark, we read...

Mark 4:39

4

39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

The KJV reads "Peace" be still. Here Jesus is illustrating His power and control over the physical elements, the winds and the waves, and the great storm. This brings us to the first area that we want to look at in our discussion...

5 1) The Natural World

The definition of "A Miracle," is the suspension of the natural law. Christ performed many miracles during His ministry, so much so that John closes his Gospel with...

John 21:25

6

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.

John also tells us the purpose of the miracles and signs that Jesus did...

30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

In the miracles that Jesus performed we see Jesus being illustrated as the...

8

Prince of Peace

The idea of "Peace" here comes from the Hebrew...

9

Shalom OT:7965, "peace; completeness; welfare; health."

Calmness, welfare, health, completeness. These thoughts all speak to being whole. Whole in body, health; Whole mentally, welfare; Whole in unity with the world, calmness; and ultimately Whole spiritually and with God, completeness.

We see this in three areas;

10

- 1) The material
- 2) The supernatural
- 3) The moral

He stills the tempest, casts out demons, and forgives sins, quieting nature, calming spirit, and salving conscience.

The Sea of Galilee is often subjected to violent storms. The following is an excerpt from biblearchaeology.org...

The Sea of Galilee is known for its violent storms, which can come up suddenly and be life-threatening for any on its waters. These tempests are caused by the situation of the lake in the Jordan Rift with steep hills on all sides. The cooler air masses from the surrounding mountains collide with the warm air in the lake's basin. Winds sometimes funnel through the east-west-oriented valleys in the Galilean hill country and rush down the western hillsides of the lake. The most violent storms, however, are caused by the fierce winds which blow off the Golan Heights from the east. One such storm in March 1992 sent waves 3 m (10 ft) high crashing into downtown Tiberias and caused significant damage to the city.

Now imagine being in a fishing boat common to the era of our text from Matt 8, and picture that boat, typically about 20 to 25 feet in length, 6 to 8 feet wide, and with a gunwale depth of about 4 feet, this comes from what archeologists have found in and around the lake. A boat like that,

caught in the midst of one of those storms that often hit the lake, would have been in serious danger of being capsized by waves and wind generated by the storm. So when we read in verse 25 of them coming to Jesus and saying that they were perishing, really makes a lot of sense. When Christ chastises them for being afraid, that is real fear that they were experiencing. Fear of losing their lives. That is what we see in Matthew's description when he says the boat was covered, verse 24. Having been out in a small boat during high winds and waves I can appreciate what they were feeling, and I had an outboard motor to help me. Mark describes the desperate situation when he says

11

“The boat was filling”

Now note Christ's sleep in the middle of this storm. His calm slumber is contrasted with the intensity of the storm and the alarm of the disciples. I can see in this a sign of His calm acceptance of the authority God has given Him. Christ sleeping through the storm shows that He did not fear the calamities of this world because He knew that this world could not harm Him.

That sleep may have a symbolical meaning for us. Even though Christ is present, the storm still comes, and He sleeps through it. Lazarus dies, and Christ weeps for the loss of His friend. The Lord has the power to overcome any trial or tribulation we might face in this world. He has the power to save us from whatever we might have to face in this life. The boat may be covered with the waves, and He might appear to be sleeping on, but He will wake before it sinks. He will calm the waters of life and still the winds of despair if we will just ask Him to.

Then, comes the cry of alarm, the cry of fear. The urgency of their appeal reveals the danger of the situation in the eyes of these fishermen. They knew this lake, they knew these storms, and they knew the capability of their boat. Their cry is a curious mixture of fear and faith.

12

“Save us”

Is the language of faith;

13

“We perish”

Is that of fear. This strange blending of what might appear to be opposites is often repeated by us. The result of faith suppresses fear. But the motivation of faith is often found in fear, and we are driven to trust just because we are so afraid. A faith which does not suppress fear, may still be real; but the deepest faith comes from the understanding that unless Christ helps, we perish.

Rom 5:1

14

I Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Paul really sums up this thought here. Faith, obedient faith, justifies us, and through that justification we are made whole, complete through Christ and in Christ we have peace with God.

Therein is the message of the Gospels. That is the wonder and beauty of the love of God revealed in Christ to us. That is the comfort and strength that helps us through the trials and difficulties of this life. Christ hears our call of faith, and our cry of fear as we face these trials and He calms the storm of our lives with simple...

15

“Peace, be still”

This brings us to the next point of our lesson; Christ is the bringer of Peace not only in the natural world, but He is the bringer of Peace in...

16

2) The Spiritual World

Matt 8:28-32

17

28 When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. **29** And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" **30** Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. **31** The demons began to entreat Him, saying, "If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." **32** And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.

It's hard not to feel that the stilling of the storm, which revealed Jesus as the Peace-bringer in the realm of the Natural, is justly followed by the casting out of the demons, which revealed His authority and established Him as the Lord and Master of all that isn't. Christ is the Peace-bringer to everything that pulls us away from our relationship with God.

James 1:14-15

18

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Here then is the real crux of what we all face...

Rom 3:23-25

19

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.

We all fall prey to our lusts, our desires, our anger, our jealousies, all the temptations of this world that draw us like moths to the flame, we all sin. Because we all sin, we all have a desperate

need for Peace to be brought into our lives, we all have a need for Christ to repair our relationship with God and to make us whole.

The winds and seas, still at the voice of the Lord. The storm disappears in the face of His authority. Demons heed His word and obey.

It is my belief, and please understand this to be my opinion based on what I see in the scriptures, primarily 1 Cor. 13, in Paul's discussion of the cessation of spiritual gifts when that which is perfect, the Word of God, comes, that when the spiritual gifts ceased then so did Satan's power to send his minions, the demons, to forcibly take control of men. That is my belief, but that said, when I read of the battle that men had with the demons of old, it strikes me that we have very much a similar battle in our lives today. We have our own demons within that we fight on a daily basis. We struggle with maintaining our faith when the world seems to fall apart in the space of a heartbeat. We fight to keep our emotions under control when our anger overwhelms us or the pain in our hearts seems more than we can bear when we lose a loved one or face financial difficulties. We strive against ourselves to control our flesh...

Rom 7:18 20

18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

Paul writes that his flesh desired the things of the flesh. I am convinced that is what he is speaking of in...

2 Tim 4:7 21

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

The journey with Christ to eternal life is not easy, and it was never promised to be easy. In fact, Christ says that the way is...

Matt 7:13-14 22

13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. **14** For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Christ is the Peace-Bringer. Only through Christ can we find the Peace that will restore us to our covenant relationship with God. Only Christ has the authority to say...

23

Peace, be Still