

=MIRACLES OF CHRIST=

Lesson 4

The Stilling of the Tempest

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 8:23-27.

AIM: to teach my pupils the truth concerning the miracle of the stilling of the tempest.

POINT OF CONTACT: Discuss with the class for a while the subject of storms. Maybe you could talk about some storms we have had in the Calumet area. There may be someone in the class who has been out on the water during a storm. Perhaps some will mention flooding that has taken place in our area at times. This would be a way to get everyone's attention.

INTRODUCTION: Though this miracle is a brief one as far as the number of Scriptures is concerned, it is certainly an important one and teaches us not only a lesson of salvation and of service, but it is a tremendous lesson on the comfort of the Saviour. Let us look at its teachings.

I. SALVATION IN THIS MIRACLE. (Matthew 8:23-27)

1. In verse 24a, notice the words, "great tempest in the sea." This pictures the condition of every unsaved person. The word "tempest" here carries with it rain, quaking or shaking, darkness, and is even sometimes used for an earthquake, though it is doubtful that an earthquake is mentioned here. At least there was a shaking of the sea, hard rain, and darkness. All of us have seen such storms. This represents the condition of the unsaved man—darkness, unstable life, stormy path, etc.
2. In verse 24c, notice the words, "but he was asleep." Christ was present, but they had not called on Him yet. All they needed to do was call on Him, and they could be saved. If they refused to do this, however, they could have been destroyed. People do not go to Hell because Christ is not available; they go because they do not call on Him.
3. In verse 25a, notice the words, "And his disciples came to him." They could not save themselves. They were helpless and had to be saved by Jesus. Man cannot save himself from his sins. Man's good works cannot save him; the joining of a church cannot save him; the doing of good deeds cannot save him; the performing of ordinances cannot save him; becoming religious cannot save him; turning over a new leaf cannot save him. There is nothing that man can do to save himself and nothing that one man can do to save another. Only Jesus could save them, and only Jesus can save us!
4. In verse 25b, notice they were saved by calling upon the name of the Lord. Compare this with Romans 10:13.
5. In verse 25c, notice the words, "we perish." Compare this to John 3:16. The only alternative, apart from trusting Christ for salvation, is to perish. Explain here the fact that people who do not trust the Lord Jesus for salvation must go to Hell. (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 14:11; 20:14, 15; Psalm 9:17)
6. In verse 26a, notice the words, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" They had not much faith, but they had enough faith to wake up Christ. People often say, "I cannot be saved," "I am afraid I am not good enough," "I am afraid I cannot hold out," or "I don't have enough faith." If you have enough faith to realize that you are in trouble and that Christ alone can save, then that is enough faith to save a person. Recall the words of Jesus when He said that if we have faith the size of a grain of mustard seed (which was the smallest seed known), we can remove mountains.
7. In verse 26b, notice the words, "Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea." This is what Jesus does when we trust Him. He alone can bring salvation. Calling upon Him can save us.
8. In verse 26c, notice the words, "and there was a great calm." When Jesus saves, He does it right, and sweet calm assurance follows!
9. In verse 27, others saw the work of Christ. It seems that there were other ships on the sea, and the people in those boats saw what Christ did in answer to the disciples' call. In other words, they saw the work of Christ. The greatest testimony in all the world is for others to see the salvation that Christ has wrought in us. A changed life is the greatest publicity that Jesus has and the greatest testimony to the Gospel of grace.

II. SERVICE IN THIS MIRACLE. Not only does this miracle have a tremendous teaching as to the plan of

salvation, but it also teaches us service.

1. It costs to be a blessing. Immediately following this miracle, Jesus is casting out demons in Gadara. To reach Gadara, He had to cross the sea and go through the storm. Many people would like to cast out demons in Gadara and be a blessing to others, but there must be the storms in our lives first. When God decides to use a person for His glory and to be a blessing to others, He invariably sends the person through the storms. The great preachers of history have all had their storms. Charles Haddon Spurgeon saw seven of his people killed and many injured in a tragic fire in the Surrey Music Hall in London. It was a crushing blow. The great George W. Truett killed his best friend accidentally in a hunting misfortune. He never got over it. John Bunyan spent many years in prison, and on milk bottle stoppers, he wrote the great Pilgrim's Progress. Jonathan Edwards was voted out of his first pastorate. Charles G. Finney was disowned by the pastor that ordained him because he thought he was fanatical. Others, such as Wesley, Whitefield, Luther, etc. went through great trials. If we would be a blessing, we must first cross the sea of storm and tempest.
2. His disciples followed him. (Matthew 8:23) The only way we can be a blessing is to follow Jesus. To be sure, we may follow Him into the storm, but He will be able to rebuke the storm and calm the storm for us.
3. His Word was all that was needed. (Matthew 8:26) We too may find strength for service in His Word. Jesus did not need an instrument of power, as the great servants of old had needed with which to do His mighty work. He did not need a rod as did Moses. (Exodus 14:16, 21, 22) He did not need a mantle as did Elijah and Elisha. (II Kings 2:14) He did not need an ox goad as did Shamgar. (Judges 3:31) All He needed was His Word. The power of service for Christ is in His Word. Let us learn it, read it, use it, teach it, preach it, love it, and memorize it.

III. SOLACE IN THIS MIRACLE. Not only does this miracle teach the salvation that Christ offers and the way of service for Christ, but it also teaches the solace or comfort that Christ gives to us in the storm.

1. We can expect the storms. Life is going to have the storms. Maybe you have not experienced them yet, but they are coming. The dark days are coming. The shakings are coming. The rain is coming. Let us realize that life must have its storms. These men knew of the storms of this sea. These men were exercised to the sea from their youth. They were familiar with all the changes of that lake and would not have been scared by a mere shadow of a danger. This was a real storm. Life has its real storms.
2. Notice where Jesus was in the storm. This story in Mark 4:38 says, "And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow...." Jesus was not roused by the tumult, and the confusion did not bother Him. When we trust in Christ, the confusions and storms of life will not bother us. The tempest may be raging, war may be threatening, Communism may be coming, and yet we will have peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. We can have peace only if we call on the Master. Notice Matthew 8:25, "...Lord, save us...." In Luke 8:24, He is called on twice: "...Master, master...." This double usage always marks a special earnestness on the part of the speaker. In other words, they were in dead earnest. They were trusting Christ for comfort during the storm. If we will turn to Him, we too can have comfort during the storms of life. In sickness, in death, in bereavement, in heartache, in heartbreak, in loneliness, in perplexity, in problems, in unanswerable questions, etc., we can have peace and be "in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow" if we call unto the Lord Jesus Christ to help us.
4. Jesus not only can calm us, but He can calm the storm. He spoke first to His disciples, calming their agitation with a word. Having quieted the disciples, He then quieted the outer elements. Oftentimes Jesus has to quiet us during the storm before He quietens the storm. He has some kind of seasoning or pruning to do to us by letting the storm rage, but He gives us quietness during the storm. When the Apostle Paul was in prison at midnight, God gave him grace to sing praises and testify in prison. Then God let him out of prison. God will guide us through the storm, and once we find peace in the storm, often He will still the storm.
5. Jesus was asleep in the boat during the storm. The tragic thing about many of us is Christ is in us, but we have not roused Him to help us in the storms of life. Many people go perplexed, worried and fretful all through their lives, not realizing that Christ is in them asleep. Rouse Him and say, "Master, master we perish!" He will awaken. That is, your faith will return to you and abide with you. When Christ is awakened, though the tempest beat, yet the water will not fill the ship. Your

faith will command the winds and the waves, and the danger will be over. Let us trust Christ during the storms of life.

QUESTIONS:

1. The tempest in the sea pictures the condition of every \_\_\_\_\_ person.
2. Jesus was in the boat with the disciples, but they were afraid because He was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The reason people go to Hell is because they do not \_\_\_\_\_ on Christ to save them.
4. The disciples were saved from the storm by calling on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord.
5. After Jesus rebuked the winds, there was a great \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In order for Jesus to get to Gadara, He had to cross the \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Before we can \_\_\_\_\_ Christ, we must often go through trials in our lives.
8. Jesus gave the disciples \_\_\_\_\_ while they were in the storm; then He \_\_\_\_\_ the storm.

- T F 1. Only a few of us will ever experience storms in our lives.
- T F 2. After we are saved, there will be no more storms in our lives.
- T F 3. Sometimes Jesus will give us peace to stand the storm, but will not remove the storm or still it.
- T F 4. We can see Jesus stilling the storms in the lives of others.
- T F 5. All that Jesus needed to calm the storm was His Word.
- T F 6. If we are not saved, we must either call on Christ or perish.

MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 8:26b, "Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."