

“Master, the Tempest is Raging”**Luke 8:22-25**

Gordon Lightfoot’s epic musical saga of the
Edmund Fitzgerald moans the loss of ship and crew
“when the gales of November come early.”

Concluding some terms with a couple steel firms
When they left fully loaded for Cleveland
And later that night when the ship's bell rang
Could it be the north wind they'd been feelin'?

The wind in the wires made the tattle-tale sound
And the wave broke over the railing
And every man knew, as the captain did too
T'was the witch of November come stealin'

The dawn came late and the breakfast had to wait
When the gales of November came slashin'
When afternoon came, it was freezin' rain
In the face of a hurricane west wind

The captain wired in he had water comin' in
And the good ship and crew was in peril
And later that night when his lights went out of sight
Came the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald

Many a ship has been lost due to fierce storms.
Stand with me to honor God’s Word as we read our
passage from **Luke 8:22-25**.

The disciples peril is unmistakable
The disciples plea is urgent
The Savior’s power is unleashed
The disciples perplexity is unfounded

I. THE DISCIPLES PERIL IS UNMISTAKABLE – v. 22-23

Once again Luke leaves us to wonder about the
timing of this event. His concern is not for us to
know the dates and times of such events, but to
learn of the power and love Jesus displayed.

The passage takes place on a certain day and Jesus
instructed His disciples that they should go to the
other side of the lake. Mark 4 gives us some
additional details about this incident.

Mark 4:35

Mark tells us that it was at the end of the day in the
evening that Jesus gave the instruction to leave for
the other side of the lake. Jesus had spent the day
teaching the multitudes about the four soils and the
lampstand that should not be hidden along with
other parables. Teaching is exhausting work and
Jesus did it day after day after day.

It has been said about Charles Spurgeon that he
preached so hard on Sundays that Monday was
spent in a fit of depression. .

Some of you have said to me “Pastor, I don’t know
how you do it, coming up with a sermon each
week.” I know it’s only by God’s help. And don’t
let anyone ever tell you that preaching or teaching
comes easy to them. It may be something they
enjoy, but it is hard work and Jesus had spent a long
day teaching and now He wanted to head out across
the lake for another opportunity of ministry.

The lake that Luke is referring to is the Sea of
Galilee and Jesus said **“let’s go over to the other
side.”** It was not to get away from the crowd, but as
we will discover in next week’s message, He had a
divine encounter with a demon possessed man that
awaited Him.

So they got into the boat and headed out. While
they gave up the fishing business, one of the
fishermen either kept a boat or had easy access to it.
Mark also adds that several other smaller boats had
joined them in this evening trip.

Those of you who have been to Barakel know that
its lake is relatively small. It’s about ½ mile long
and maybe a couple hundred yards wide. The
conservation department lists it at 20 acres. On

three sides are fairly steep hills that taper to flat land on the north end of the lake. At times the wind can whip up the lake with some pretty good white caps. Something I enjoyed while living at Camp was going out onto the lake in the evening. The water was usually very calm, almost glass like. It was a great time to be out on the lake.

Maybe that's what the Sea of Galilee was like as they began their boating trek across the waters. It's much larger than Shear Lake at 13 miles long and 7 ½ miles wide. It sits in a depressed basin 680 feet below sea level surrounded entirely by hills. And as they sailed, Jesus fell asleep. The combination of gentle rocking by the waves and the exhaustion He must have felt from a long day of ministry added to His fatigue and the need to get some rest. We don't know how long they had been sailing, but instantly a storm hit. Had there been signs evident to the fishermen among the group before they launched out they would have voiced their concern, but it seems that there was no visible evidence a storm was brewing.

Violent storms can erupt instantly on the Sea of Galilee caused by cool currents from Mt. Hermon to the north colliding with the warm air of the sea. Taking a trip in the holy land Warren Wiersbe asked the guide as they sailed across the Sea of Galilee if he had ever been in a storm there. The guide related that there had been one storm that was so severe he hoped never to experience it again.

In 1992 it was reported that the Sea of Galilee had 10 foot waves.

I'm not one of them, but some people actually like to chase storms. They brave hurricanes and tornados to show us the devastation. I like to be safely inside and watch from a distance. The word used in the Greek is *lailaps* and while translated storm it means whirlwind or hurricane. This gives you a picture of how severe the storm was that

whipped up instantly on this boat and band of men somewhere in the middle of the Sea of Galilee.

Luke records that **“a squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.”**

They were in jeopardy. The boat was quickly taking on water and about to capsize. The storm has the sea stirred up in a frenzy causing the boat to pitch and heave as water poured over the sides. I envision a chaotic scene of frantic men scrambling to keep the boat from sinking.

Theologian and pastor Robert Munger shares a similar stormy experience of what it must have been like. **Being assaulted by winds and walls of waves and a wildly tossing sea was like being run over by a train in a dark tunnel. We knew the typhoon was coming, but I for one hadn't expected it to pack such a wallop. Everything was battened down as we prepared to take a direct hit. Those of us who were on deck had our slickers on- similar to the old yellow slickers used by New England fisherman. Being a novice to things of the sea, I'd hung mine up by a hot pipe a few days before and the heat had melted all the oil from the fabric. Now my slicker leaked like a sieve. It wasn't much good but it was all I had to wear as the ship shuddered and pitched into huge mountains of brine and foam.**

It was fast approaching midnight. As I made my final rounds on deck, everything I saw brought on physical terror. The lights of the ship reflected only a few feet out over the water. Each wave became visible only as it reared to crash. More than once, I thought, “what if I were washed overboard while making my rounds? No one would even know. I would be lost forever in a violent, angry sea.” The possibility of death was enough to focus my mind. But almost as terrifying as drowning was the fear of falling into darkness and death all alone. No one to see. No one to hear. No one to report. The blotting out of life. Caught. Trapped. Right there in the eye of the storm.

Even the seasoned fishermen, with all their experience, knew they were in great danger.

Maybe some of you have your own stories of storms you have encountered maybe on land, maybe at sea, maybe with ice or rain or snow. Storms come in all shapes and sizes and times of the year and even though the weather channel may give warning, they seem to be worse than expected. No one can guess what they will do because it is the force of nature.

Some suggest by the wording used to describe this event and the fact that they were heading over to a place where a demon possessed man resided that this storm was brewed up by Satan himself. But let's be reminded that God is the one who is in charge of the forces of nature.

Who brought the storm up when Jonah ran from God and then calmed the sea after he was tossed overboard?

Job acknowledged that God is the one who establishes the force of the wind and measures the waters, commands the rain and the path of the thunderstorm. **(Job 28:25-26)**

Isaiah states that God directs the scorching wind with His hand. **(Isaiah 11:15)**

The psalmist adds that God looses the east wind from the heavens and leads the south wind by His power **(Psalm 78:26)**

Psalm 107:25 states that God **“spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.”**

Psalm 135:6-7 “The Lord does whatever pleases Him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths. He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from His storehouses.”

Psalm 148:8 concludes that the lightning and hail, snow and clouds and stormy winds do His bidding.

If God created it, He can control it. As we see in the case of Jonah, God uses storms to discipline some. As we see here God can also use storms to draw people to Himself, to build their faith.

What storms of life are you facing today or have faced that were so severe you felt in danger of being swamped physically, emotionally, or spiritually? And they come without warning, don't they. The peril is unmistakable. **Where do you turn in times like that? What do you do? Who do you go to?**

Let's take a look at verse 24 and notice the urgency of the disciples plea.

II. THE DISCIPLES PLEA IS URGENT – v. 24a

Jesus was a sound sleeper on top of being thoroughly exhausted. He was sleeping right through a violent storm. Shouting. Crashing waves. Doused by water. It took the urgency of His disciples pleading to wake Him up. We don't know how long they labored to keep the boat afloat, but if there was anything that the disciples did that was right during the storm they went to the only person who could handle it, they went to Jesus.

The NIV uses the word **“drown”**. The KJV uses the word **“perish”**. It means to destroy and is the same Greek word used in **John 3:16** and **II Peter 3:9** describing in a spiritual sense God's unwillingness that any should perish but if we don't place our faith in Christ as Savior we will perish.

They frantically woke Jesus exclaiming that they were about to die and according to Mark's account wondered aloud if He really cared about their peril. They had no reason to be afraid, but they were and **Warren Wiersbe reminds us that “Faith and fear cannot dwell in the same heart.”** Those are the only

two options. It's either one or the other. We either choose to trust God in the storm or not. There is no partial faith or half faith.

There is an old hymn from 1874 not found in our hymnal, but its words from the pen of Mary Baker echo the panic of the disciples and the plea to Jesus. Think about some of your own storms that you have encountered as I read the lyrics.

Master, the Tempest is Raging

Master, the tempest is raging!
The billows are tossing high!
The sky is o'ershadowed with blackness,
No shelter or help is nigh;
Carest Thou not that we perish?
How canst Thou lie asleep,
When each moment so madly is threatening
A grave in the angry deep?

Master, with anguish of spirit
I bow in my grief today;
The depths of my sad heart are troubled
Oh, waken and save, I pray!
Torrents of sin and of anguish
Sweep o'er my sinking soul;
And I perish! I perish! dear Master
Oh, hasten, and take control.

Do those lyrics bring back some memories of storms you faced? Sometimes our panic is so great we feel about to be overtaken and we're fearful of the storms the Lord has allowed. We must learn in those moments, especially because we don't know how long the storm will last, that the only place to run to is the Lord.

Read through some of the Psalms and you notice immediately the sense of desperation with which the Psalmist called to the Lord in his peril. Storms were a part of his life.

"I sought the Lord..." Psalm 34:4

"This poor man called..." Psalm 34:6

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?" Psalm 42:5

Maybe like the psalmist you too have called out to God to help you because you were about to perish.

How many of us today would say that is the plea of our heart, the urgency of our soul because of some storm we are facing?

If that's you today, let's take a look at the response Jesus gives. It's a twofold response. We see in our text that the Savior's power is unleashed.

III. THE SAVIOR'S POWER IS UNLEASHED **– v. 24b-25a**

There are two things that the Savior does. The first thing He does is rebuke the winds and waves. It is a demonstration of His great power. The word means to reprimand, to force back.

One of my favorite verses that reminds of the power of God is **Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah Lord God, Thou hast created the heavens and the earth with Thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for Thee."**

Here is the refrain to that song "Master, the Tempest is Raging" and the final stanza.

Refrain

*The winds and the waves shall obey Thy will,
Peace, be still!*

*Whether the wrath of the storm tossed sea,
Or demons or men, or whatever it be
No waters can swallow the ship where lies
The Master of ocean, and earth, and skies;
They all shall sweetly obey Thy will,
Peace, be still! Peace, be still!*

*They all shall sweetly obey Thy will,
Peace, peace, be still!*

Master, the terror is over,
The elements sweetly rest;
Earth's sun in the calm lake is mirrored,
And heaven's within my breast;
Linger, O blessèd Redeemer!
Leave me alone no more;
And with joy I shall make the blest harbor,
And rest on the blissful shore.

Jesus has power over our storms.

Psalm 89:8-9

I have to admit that I am still trying to remember that the Lord is with me in the storms. I have often said that if *God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.* **Do we agree that is true? Doesn't that require faith on our part then?**

Let's go back and consider the conclusion of those verses I just read.

Psalm 34:4 (circle the word "all" there)

Psalm 34:6-7 (circle the word "all" there)

Psalm 42:5

Psalm 23:4 (say it with me) **"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou are with; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."**

Remember when Paul was sailing as a prisoner to Rome and that great storm that lasted 14 days? In the midst of the storm Paul had confidence that God would see him through it. He had faith in God.

"Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you. So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.'" Acts 27:23-25

Sounds like Paul was going from one storm into another but He was filled with confidence because He knew God was with him in whatever storms came to him. The common thread that runs through these passages and throughout Scripture is to trust in the Lord because He is always with us.

The reason Jesus could soundly sleep in the storm is that He was confident in the will of the Father. His plan for Jesus was not that He would die in the storm, but that He would go to the cross. **Are we confident in God's will for us so much so that we trust Him and have faith in Him?** We often quote **Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them**

who are the called according to His purpose"

claiming that all these storms are meant to bring us into the image of Christ. **Do we truly believe that or is it just a nice platitude?**

When some storm of life assaults you there are two important questions you need to ask yourself.

1. Is this storm due to some sin that I need to repent of?
2. Is this storm the result of God wanting to draw me closer to Himself in some way?

If you answer yes to the first one, then repent and experience God's deliverance. He may not remove the consequences of the sin, but He will forgive. Remember Jonah still had to be swallowed by the fish and David still had to go through the plague for numbering the fighting men.

If you can answer no to the first question that it is not the result of sin, then the reason must be that God wants to draw us closer to Him, to learn to trust Him more, to make us more like His character through our experience.

Remember I said that Jesus had two responses. The first was to rebuke the wind and the waves and demonstrate His great power, to tell them to stop. And it was immediate. Normally when the winds stop, the waves will still be choppy, but Scripture tells us that both stopped immediately so that the water was calm as well.

The second response to the plea of the disciples was to ask them why they had such little faith. **Would Jesus ask us the same thing? Would He wonder why we didn't trust Him more in the storm?** There are two important truths I see here.

1. Jesus is to be followed into the storm. We may not understand why we have to go through it, but we are to follow Him none the less.
2. Jesus is faithful in the storm.

He said He would never leave or forsake us. *If He brings us to it, He will bring us through it.*

Psalm 23:4 doesn't say "Yea thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death alone." It says that He is with us.

Lamentations 3:22-23 "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness."

We aren't told how long it took for the disciples to go and wake the Lord and tell Him about their imminent demise. They may have tried frantically to get out of the storm themselves: row harder, bail faster, use bigger buckets. Or they may have gone directly to the Lord. My sense is they tried on their own first, that's why they came urgently with the plea being somewhat critical that Jesus didn't care they were about to drown. I'm afraid that's my first response. Do my best to get out and then go the Lord if all else fails. Folks, let's learn to go to Him first in any and all storms.

There is one final point I want to make in conclusion.

IV. THE DISCIPLES PERPLEXITY IS UNFOUNDED – v. 25b

What do I mean? If we truly understand who Jesus is, is there reason to be afraid in our storm? Notice that they were both amazed and fearful by what they just saw Jesus do. **Who wouldn't be awed by someone who has power over nature?** **But also, who wouldn't be fearful of someone who had such power over nature?**

It was a way to increase their faith even when it seemed hopeless. That may be why the Lord is allowing some storm in your life. When it seems hopeless put your trust in Him. Dispel any notion, any tendency, any desire to follow your own logical way out and simply admit you need the Lord and then follow Him. He will be with you in the storm and He will be with you through the storm.

I think the disciples failed to hear something when they first got into the boat. I skipped over this on purpose until now. Go back to **verse 22** and what Jesus said. **"Let's go over to the other side of the lake."** It is more than just a simple statement of desire. It is a statement of fact that they could take to the bank – Jesus was saying they would arrive on the other side. They should have taken Jesus at His word that they would get there.

If the Lord has allowed some storm in our life it is His will and He will be in it with us. Believe Him when He says that. **J. Vernon McGee said "How often He puts us in storms of life in order that we might come closer to Him and learn what manner of Man He really is."**

Psalm 56:3 "When I am afraid, I will trust in You."

David Gooding sums up this passage with this insightful conclusion: The story of the stilling of the storm is not, of course, meant to tell us that Christ will never allow any believer to perish by drowning, or by any other natural disaster. Many believers have so perished. It does demonstrate that He is Lord of the physical forces in all the universe, that for Him nothing happens by accident, and that no force in all creation can destroy His plan for our eternal salvation or separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What storms are you facing today where you need God's reassurance that He is with you?

Remember that in the storm, God loves you.
Remember that in the storm, God listens to you.
Remember that in the storm, God will not leave you.

Their peril was unmistakable.

Their plea was urgent.

Their perplexity was unfounded because the Savior is powerful.

If God brings you to it, He will bring you through it.