

Article: Be at Peace

Often the Gospels show us the parables of Jesus. Parables are stories that Jesus tells to make a point. They are fictitious, told to make a point, usually about how things are in the kingdom of God.

But then we have the miracles and works of Jesus. These really happened. They are not made-up earthly stories with a heavenly meaning. They are true stories from the life of Jesus, and yet they also bring us a heavenly meaning or application. As we get to know our Lord Jesus better and see who He is and what He does for those people, we learn more deeply who He is and what He does for us.

A good example of this is when Jesus calmed the storm in Mark 4:35-41. You know the story: the disciples are with Jesus on a boat when a wild storm comes along. It's so bad that the disciples think they are going to die. And perhaps also unusual, but surely quite purposely, Jesus is there—but sleeping. The rough seas didn't even wake Him. The water filling up the boat didn't interrupt His naptime. In terror, the disciples go to Him, wake Him up, and cry out, "Don't You care that we are perishing!?"

Jesus unceremoniously answers their frantic prayer. He simply gets up and rebukes the wind and waves. "Quiet. Be still." And so it is. Just as suddenly as the storm begins, it stops, and all is quiet and still. Actually, if you look at the Greek grammar, it indicates that the storm came quickly, but it was still a process. When Jesus calmed the storm, it happened all at once—a completed action. You may imagine that a storm that dies down naturally would still see the waves churning for some time. But here, in response to the command of Jesus, all is still and right away. Wind and waves obey Him immediately.

I think one reason this story is so beloved by Christians is because the application is so straightforward. We all have storms in our lives in one form or another. We are all terrified of this or that, and rather than trust the Lord, who is in the very boat with us—we turn to fear.

The truth is, we are perishing. Those disciples were right. Without Jesus' help, they more than likely would have drowned. They knew enough about storms and boats to know what trouble they were in. They were right in their assessment.

We, too, are perishing. We don't always feel it or realise it. But every now and again, life throws us a storm that reminds us. This world is passing away, and we with it. We may not drown in the lake or die in a storm (though, indeed, that could happen!). It might be a diagnosis that stops you in your tracks—your own or that of a loved one. It might be a job loss or a broken marriage. It might be a conflict or controversy of some sort or another. Life is full of troubles, and all of it reminds us of the brokenness that comes from sin and the wages of sin that is death (Romans 6:23).

The disciples were right about that. They were perishing. So are we. But they were wrong to fear. Jesus gently chides them, "Have you no faith?" Even if they had drowned and died that night, they still had nothing to fear, for they were with Jesus, not just in the boat, but in His grace. They lived, like we live, by His promises.

We have been studying the Book of Daniel in our Bible studies held at Our Saviour, Lowood. Last month, we read Chapter 3. There, we read about the three men being thrown into the fiery furnace. They had this interesting conversation with the king right before he tried to cook their goose: (The king said) "*If you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?*"¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "*O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.*"¹⁷ *If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*"¹⁸ *But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.*"

Whether God saved them from this present trouble or even from fiery death—their faith stood strong. They did not fear. They didn't take it as a sign of God's weakness or indifference. They knew that in the end, in the end, their salvation was sure. And we can take a note from that book.

The disciples feared their fate, and we are often fearful of our storms. But give them this much—they knew where to go for help. They knew it had to be Jesus.

Jesus was already with them—though sleeping. And here is a healthy reminder for us. When the wind kicks up and the sky darkens and things start to get serious and scary, when life's troubles rain down and suffering squalls blow and the waves of death lap against your boat. Jesus is already there.

And you've already drowned, with Him, in baptism. You've been crucified with Him, buried with Him, in that watery grave, only for Him to draw you up again and again from those waters, a new man, daily emerging to live in faith toward Him and love for your neighbour. Christ has been crucified for you! And that's enough to calm your fears in any storm. Go to the cross. Go to Jesus.

Jesus is there, with us, in every storm. And look, He's not worried. He's never more than a prayer away—though it may be a frantic prayer at times. He always hears. He always answers. He always helps, but in His time, in His way. He may not snap His fingers and chase away all your troubles right away. You may have to ride out this or that storm with Him. But we know that in the end there is perfect peace for us. We know that in the end, and forever we shall be with Him. And no storm, no sword, no earthquake, no fire, no powers of this world or any world can finally harm us because we have Jesus and His powerful Word.

That Word that He commands to the wind and wave—peace, be still—is the Word that also calms and stills us. That powerful Word that commands the forces of nature, will one day call forth the faithful dead in Christ to life again. And that loving word of comfort will invite you and all His people to enter into your rest. There, around the throne of God and the great, calm, glassy sea, we shall never have another fear, hurt or pain. It'll be clear sailing for eternity.

So fear not the storms. Remember, Jesus is in the boat with you. Call on Him in every trouble. Pray, praise and give thanks. Be at peace, and be still.