

The one whom winds and waves obey

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Preacher: Aaron Reeves

[0 : 00] The text that we're looking at tonight begins with Jesus getting into a boat. He's being followed by his disciples. But as we usually do, let's take a look back and see the context.

Let's see how we got here and just refresh our memories of what's been going on. So first, let's look at the location. So Jesus and his disciples were on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, which is highlighted on the screen behind me.

This would be an area that Jesus is very familiar with. He's been there most of his life, according to Luke 2. This is also the place of the Sermon on the Mount from chapter 5.

In chapter 8, the chapter that we're looking at today, it opens right after that sermon. And in verse 1, we see Jesus coming down from the mountainside.

Verse 5 says that Jesus entered Capernaum, which we see on the map. We read in Mark 1 that as soon as Jesus left the synagogue in Capernaum, they went straight to Peter's house.

[1 : 18] So this was the area that Jesus was operating at this time in the text that we're looking at. Matthew 4 tells us that Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee when he began to call his first disciples.

So we step into the shoes of the disciples. As soon as they were called, they followed Jesus. Jesus was traveling all around Galilee, teaching about God's kingdom and healing the sick.

People from all over were talking about Jesus and coming to see him. I think I mentioned this in a sermon before, that when we say all over, we tend to build up the image of neighboring towns.

In our context today, you could think of Lewis, or to a lesser extent, New Haven. This was an area roughly the size of the UK. This was a massive area that people were flocking to see Jesus.

So by the time we get to chapter 8, the disciples have seen the authority that Jesus has over sickness.

[2 : 34] And they've seen the authority in his teaching, which was groundbreaking. He's teaching about the kingdom of God and its people.

A man like this has never been seen before. And that explains why. It's a small part as to why he has such large crowds following him. So much so, it's described in Luke 8, that even his mother and his brothers couldn't get close to him.

And so we get to the lake. And so we know by our context, everything going on, everything we've just outlined, that the lake that is in question is the Sea of Galilee, behind me.

It's interesting to note that the lake itself, we say a sea, we picture a vast expanse, don't we? But the lake itself is actually fairly small. It's 13 miles long and it's 8 miles wide.

Or by English measurements, that's 174 football pitches by 143. I've never actually been to a football game, so that means nothing to me.

[3 : 51] Despite its size, it's actually fairly notorious for violent storms. It's surrounded by large hills and mountains, which affect the conditions quite drastically.

I was looking at the science of it, and I don't think I could explain it to you. I wouldn't feel comfortable doing that, because I'm not sure I completely understood it. But apparently the warm air comes over the hills and crashes down and meets with the cold air, which really, really makes things turbulent.

So the journey across the lake and the storm. Mark 4 says it's evening time.

Jesus says to his disciples, let's go over to the other side. And he leaves the crowd behind. When we talk about the other side, I don't have a laser pointer or anything, but where we see Capernaum, directly opposite that, the longest part of the river is where they were going.

He leaves the crowds behind, and a text also says there were lots of other boats with him. So it's a small fleet of boats making this journey across the lake, all with people who are willing to follow

Jesus.

[5 : 08] It's fair to say that these people knew the potential of the lake. It was probably as notorious then as it is today for the storms.

I imagine, after all they've seen of Jesus, it probably didn't worry them that much. However, as we know, the thought of a storm is quite different from an actual storm.

We could see storms in pictures and say, wow, that's beautiful. But when you're standing under a big bolt of lightning, you're not saying it's beautiful.

It's actually quite scary. I remember once I was recording, trying to record a storm at home with the microphone and the recording gear that I've got, and there was a massive crash of thunder, and everything went out in the house, all the power, everything, and I was shaking.

It was very powerful. So they set sail. And Jesus fell asleep.

[6 : 18] Everything's fairly calm. If you're sailing, things are calm. Then suddenly, there's an urgency. Matthew 8, 24 says, suddenly, or behold, a furious storm came up on the lake.

This is something that happened quickly. Before their eyes, behold. And the storm was furious. The Greek here is actually quite interesting.

The words are seismos, megas, which should be familiar words to us. So you've probably heard it before in terms like seismology, which is the study of earthquakes.

And megas, we say something, wow, that's mega. Okay, maybe 20 years ago. Sorry, my age.

These are words we're familiar with, and megas means to the widest sense something is large.

I've just realized, I forgot to skip through the slides. Storm, furious, seismos, megas. Large in the widest sense that something could be large. So there's a shaking, the boat's being shaken.

[7 : 38] And it's not something that's trivial. This is something that's violent and horrific. And the disciples saw this arise right before them.

Waves are being thrown up over the boat and they're covering them. Both Mark and Luke's account of this event say they were being swamped.

Luke emphasizes the situation by saying that they were in great danger, which is apparent. I would ask you, how many people here, just out of interest, have been in a small boat in a storm?

One. Almost a storm? Two. Almost a small boat. It is an experience.

If you're out in it for long, a very long time, you get what's known as sea legs. This is where your body adjusts to the movement of the boat and you can walk up and down it like you're walking on solid ground.

[8 : 56] The downside to the sea legs is that when you get home and you stand on solid ground, your legs don't realize this and you're kind of going like this for a little while. This is a picture of a boat called a Cheverton Champ.

My mummy will recognize this boat. This is the first boat that I ever learned to captain. As it happens, I've been in a storm in one of these boats.

I was part of a safety boat crew who was bringing sailors in in small sailing craft because the storm got much too rough for them. They couldn't sail so we were bringing it in.

So picture me at 18 years old stood on the bell that's on the front of that boat in a storm with the wind and the rain and I'm trying to pull up an anchor.

Using the latest in CGI technology, I've managed to recreate that moment. I've waited years to do this. That's me.

[10 : 09] Not much. A bit thinner maybe. But the boat that Jesus and the disciples were in probably likely wasn't like that boat.

Probably didn't have a hood. By hood I mean where the windows are around it. It was fairly open apart from the mast and the sail I'd imagine.

Probably looked something like that. Maybe a bit bigger. So the journey across the lake. The storm is kicking off.

The boat that Jesus was in likely hailed around 20 people. Which I think that boat probably could do. Now storms when you're on the water can get very very loud.

And people in storms can get very very loud. And people in danger in storms can be very very very loud.

[11 : 10] And it's chaos. The wind is beating down and it's in people's ears. They can't hear. The rain is coming. It's all over your face. You can't see. It's dark absolute chaos.

And where is Jesus? Jesus sleeping in the back on a cushion. According to Mark's gospel he was asleep on the cushion. It's interesting I'll just throw this in as a side note that the back of a boat or the stern is usually where the authority would be.

You ever see the races it's the people at the back with the megaphone shouting commands. So it's to the point where you steer. It's where the rudder is.

So picture all the noise and the chaos of this group of panicked disciples all rushing to wait Jesus saying Lord save us we're going to drown. And what is Jesus' reaction to this?

He doesn't leap up and start panicking as well. It's complete calm. As it says in Mark's gospel he rebuked meaning to warn or to tell off.

[12:32] He rebuked the wind and he said to the waves quiet be still. The same authority that he cured the diseases and the sickness that we saw before he healed the storm.

and it was completely calm. Not just it was a bit calmer it was completely calm. When you actually look at the language that's used they started and they were sailing and I believe I looked into this very very quickly and I believe that the word that was used for sailing emphasizes the calmness the smoothness and afterwards it's the same thing they go back to sailing.

A storm arose and Jesus dealt with it. Then he asked his disciples he said you of little faith why are you so afraid?

In Luke's gospel it says Jesus asked where is your faith? It's the same question. Where is the faith? And that is the question. Where could their faith have been at that point where they were panicking? Could have been in the strength of the boat which is quickly being filled by the storm.

[14:00] We know that because the word that we saw earlier for swamped which is used in Luke's gospel actually means to be filled completely. It was being filled. the faith could have been in the storm dying down on its own just fizzling out.

That wasn't happening for the same reason. Their faith could have been in their own ability to captain to pilot the boat.

that wasn't working either clearly because of the panic. They were panicking and they were probably thinking nothing but their own mortality at that point.

Who can blame them when you're in a storm like that? everything they had previously seen and learned of their teacher Jesus had suddenly been forgotten in the minute they faced danger.

Jesus challenges them calmly. He says what has happened to your faith? Why are you so afraid? Do we see what's happened?

[15:17] Their faith has shrunk so much it's barely noticeable. All that's evident now is fear. The disciples were afraid they were showing this fear because their faith was not in the right place.

It's not where it should have been. You might be familiar with the famous verses from Matthew 6, the do not worry section. Jesus echoes those words here.

That is how God closed the grass of the field which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire. Will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith? They doubted everything they'd seen and learned because of sudden circumstances.

circumstances. We shouldn't let, they shouldn't have let, the appearance of these circumstances throw us into doubt.

James 1.6 says, the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind. Very fitting. Maybe one of the reasons they were doubting was because in fact Jesus was asleep.

[16:47] But I don't think that in any way challenges his authority. They'd forgotten his sovereignty. In Mark's gospel he picks up on the question that was asked, teacher don't you care if we drown?

Well Jesus was sleeping in body but God never sleeps. Indeed he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. God was with them in that very boat.

And this was a serious misjudgment on the part of the disciples because after everything they'd seen and everything they'd heard they should have known that Jesus whilst he was resting wasn't lacking anything.

what was lacking belonged to them. It was their faith. We as a church don't want to find ourselves in that position do we?

Where we're questioning our king. if we've seen the power of God in our lives we need to really remember the good things the Lord has done and the Lord is doing for us.

[18:09] Remember the miracles that we have seen in our lives and trust his sovereignty. faith is a gift from God it says that in Ephesians 2 but that doesn't mean we just accept it and carry on

strolling along.

We have to apply it. This whole account reminds me of Star Wars. I don't know if there's any Star Wars.

The Empire strikes back. Luke Skywalker R2 D2 and Yoda standing by a swamp. It sounds like a bad joke bear with me.

They're watching as Luke's spaceship is sinking into the swamp. You can just see the tip of it coming out. Luke gives up.

In the film he throws his hands into air and says you want the impossible and Yoda is trying to convince him that actually he has what is needed to raise the spaceship from the swamp.

[19 : 23] Yoda quietly stretches out his hand. Effortlessly uses the force and raises up this big spaceship, this X-wing out of the swamp and onto dry land.

amazing. Why are you laughing? Oh, okay, we'll have to fix that.

Luke says, this is one of my favorite Star Wars moments, Luke says, I don't believe it. Yoda says, that is why you fail.

Going back to our text, who is this? here's what Jesus says about faith.

Jesus said in Matthew 17 20, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

[20 : 37] Not that we can expect to throw mountains around at will with the force. I think that would be glorifying to God. be cool but not glorifying to God.

But, you can rely on that text, on the promise that the impossible for us is made possible with God. Overcoming this storm seemed impossible to the disciples. But Jesus in the flesh as a man did the impossible. With words, he quietened the storm.

Which shows what we all know to be absolutely true, that Jesus is God's son. The reaction of the disciples to this miracle is wonder.

The NIV translates it as amazed. I don't think it covers it. The Greek is much more, expounds it much more and it means to wonder and to admire. Which makes sense when they say, what kind of man is this that even the wind and the waves obey him?

[21 : 53] A question that is answered only two verses later by the demons of the possessed men when they recognize him as the son of God before he casts them out. God. I thought we'd look at some verses that describe Jesus to help answer this question.

Who is this? He dressed in a robe dipped in blood and his name is the word of God. Revelation 19.13 In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

John 1.1 The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son who came from the father, full of grace and truth.

John 1.14 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Revelation 19.16 Finally, the son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being sustained in all things by his powerful word.

We see that here, how powerful his word is and it astonishes man. In a brief summary, who is he?

[23 : 38] He's the word of God that existed before even time and space existed. He is the one and only son who came from the father in heaven.

God is the king of kings and has authority over all things. Not just the storm but death itself.

Jesus said in John 10, he has the authority to lay down his life and to take it back up again. He is God in the flesh.

God in the world will look at So, this is my conclusion. Now we know who Jesus is.

The first thing that we have to do is decide. Because the choices that the disciples made then are the same choices that we face today. are you going to follow Jesus into the boat through the lands through the mountains wherever would you follow him even into the storm are you going to trust him potential objection you could say well why go into the storm why not just stay on dry land storms happen everywhere and to be frank I'd rather be on a boat going like this in a storm with the son of God than be on my own anywhere sometimes we let our faith shrink as we saw we all do it don't we we all do it but he is still with us even in those moments and we can overcome by him who is it that overcomes the world only the one who believes that Jesus is the son of God 1 John 5 5 overcoming this storm seemed impossible to the disciples the boat was being filled the storm was too violent it was beyond their control until they gave it to the son of God when I was to think all the things the Calvary are facing at the moment there are storms of all shapes and all sizes and let me

tell you if he chooses to rebuke it there is no storm that can withstand even one word from Jesus mouth so take it to the Lord the world without faith will submit to the storm in crying and in fear we as Christians we submit to the Lord with joy with hope and with faith because we know who Jesus is he is the son of God

[27 : 02] Jesus does the impossible so we can pray for that and let's start praying for that tonight to the only God our saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time and now and forever Amen