

To God Alone Be The Glory

Usually I'm happier when it's sunny outside. Being able to see blue sky fills me with hope because I've been taught that blue is the color of hope. Why is blue the color of hope? Well, when Judgment Day comes, what are you going to do? I'm going to run outside and look up into the sky. Why? because that's where Jesus will be coming from, riding on the clouds, hopefully with blue sky behind him. That's going to be a great day since Jesus will come and take us to be with him forever where we will never sin again. Looking up and seeing blue sky fills me with hope. So I like sunny days. *Then there's the sunshine. Seeing the sunrise reminds me of Jesus. The Father promised through one of his Old Testament prophets (Malachi), "*Soon the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings.*" He was talking about Jesus, the s-u-n of righteousness and the S-o-n of God who brings healing for our sin-sick souls by counting us righteous in his sight, not-guilty. So I like sunny days.

But I'm also glad we've have rain and at least mild storms lately, because rain and storm is what the disciples in our text had. You arrived here in a car, safe and dry. The disciples had it much worse: they were on a lake, in an open boat, with a furious wind squall. There may have even been thunder, lightning,

and rain. But they didn't need to be afraid. They had along in the boat JESUS OUR STORM-STILLER. He's the key to not being afraid. Whether you're caught in a storm of thunder or in a storm of life, **remember his power** (35-37,39,41) and **rely on his promises** (38,40).

Let's back up a little. It had been a busy day for Jesus. After teaching the crowd many things in parables, Jesus was tired. It was time to go. Apparently Jesus was in the boat already. So he said good-bye, dismissed the crowd, and left the shore, with the disciples pulling at the oars. And since Jesus was so tired, he went to the back of the boat, lay down on the bench (a.k.a. the cushion) and fell fast asleep. What does that tell you? You're right there in the boat with the disciples. Look around. What do you notice? The almighty Son of God, who participated in creation—God has fallen asleep. The God who never slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4) is sleeping at the back of the boat on this cushion because he has truly taken humanness into his God-ness.

Then a storm sneaks up on them. Now if you went out on Lake Pepin, you could see if a storm were coming, and you could head back toward land quickly. Just fire up the engine. So why couldn't the disciples see this storm coming? Well the Sea of Galilee

is in a kettle-like depression, several hundred feet below sea level. You can't see storms coming till they're right on top of you, and storms are common on the Sea of Galilee. The winds in this squall seem unusually fierce. We can tell because Jesus' disciples, who fish this lake for their livelihood, have certainly experienced a number of these squalls before. They are probably all good swimmers—Peter is for sure. Yet these seasoned fishermen are afraid for their lives! What does that tell you? “Aye, ‘tis a nasty storm.”

So what do the disciples do? They go wake up Jesus and say, “*Teacher, don't you care if we drown?*” Can you hear the ‘chiding tone’ in their voice because Master Jesus is not doing anything to rescue them!?! They all know that Jesus is not a sea captain. He's a carpenter by trade—a land lubber. Yet the disciples go to him for help! What does that tell you? They have faith in him as someone who can do something! It makes sense: if he can heal the sick, maybe he can help them out here. But they have no idea how much.

Rewind to the first week of time. God merely spoke, “*Let there be*” and life sprang into existence. Here Jesus merely speaks to the wild wind and the lawless waves, “*Silence, Muzzle yourselves,*” and they obey as if they know his voice! What does that tell you about Jesus? He's not just a man, he is

God. His human nature possesses divine glory and majesty and power. *Now fast forward to Judgment Day: Jesus will merely speak and the world will end, and our bodies will be purified of all sin and its effects. So this stormy miracle is a little foretaste of what Jesus will do for all those who believe in him. Do you get the idea that it's going to be worth the wait? Can you wait patiently for Jesus to still the storms that are howling in your life?

This miracle isn't just to impress us. We are to learn from this experience. When you're in a storm, it doesn't seem like the world is still under the control of its Creator. But the Lord is always in control. He says so. This same Jesus, who demonstrated his control over wind and wave that day, has now ascended to his throne on high and continues to rule all things for our good, even the weather, even the delta variant. This miracle of Jesus calls out to those who think that thunder, tornados, hurricanes, viruses, cancers, clowns, demons, or any force in the whole universe has the ultimate power over us—this miracle calls out: “Our God is the Almighty. **Remember his power** over storms. He can calm any wind or wave.” **TRUST JESUS OUR STORM-STILLER.**

This does not mean we should knowingly take uncalled-for risks. That's not faith. It's folly. Remember, in this case it was Jesus who said, “*Let's*

go over to the other side.” It wasn’t that the disciples had deliberately gone out on the lake when they knew a storm was coming.

But this miracle of Jesus is about so much more than just his control over creation. There is another storm on the now calm lake, and it’s still raging in the hearts of the disciples. They are afraid. They need to be reminded: **JESUS IS OUR STORM-STILLER. Rely On His Promises** (38,40).

At first the disciples were afraid because they thought the storm was threatening their lives. Their fear had no foundation. In fact, if they had remembered and trusted Jesus’ promise, they could have been sitting there in the middle of that storm as calm as a purring kitty cat. Which promise could they have thought of? The promise that he would make them able to fish for people. Have they caught one person yet? No, not even one. They call him Teacher, but they didn’t apply his teachings to their lives while the storm was raging. *Yet even if they didn’t hear Jesus’ promise to make them fishers of men, they still didn’t need to be afraid. Although the heavenly Father never promised to keep them from being killed, he did promise that he would not forsake them (Deut 31:6,8; Ps 37:28; Isa 42:16), not even in the hour of death. And since they have had that promise for a long time, there

is no cause for fear. Here’s where we gain insight for our daily living: when you’re afraid, it’s because you’re distracted from God’s promises. God has promised that he will send us only what is for our eternal good (Ro 8:28). So when the storms of life rage, **TRUST THE PROMISES OF THE STORM-STILLER.**

Now that the storm has been stilled, you’d think the disciples would be wiping their foreheads and saying, “Whew! What a relief!” But as I said, there’s another storm brewing in their hearts. They are even more afraid now that the storm on the lake has been calmed. That’s why Christ chides them, “*Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?*” As if to say, “You just saw me still the storm. And now you’re afraid? Where is your joy?” There are times I still need to learn the same lesson: Jesus rose from the dead. What do I have to be afraid of? Being afraid is like saying. “God, I’m not sure I can trust you. I’m not sure you can keep your promises. The only way I’m going to stay safe is if I take certain measures to protect myself or to protect my family or to protect my church or to protect my country.” When we think this way, we need to repent. And then let’s remind ourselves that Jesus is our Savior and therefore we’re completely forgiven! He’s our Teacher. Let’s take his words to heart and rely on his

promises as we remember his power. This miracle isn't recorded in the Bible just to teach us what happened on the lake one day. It wants to remind us that Jesus is our divine Savior from sin. If he has the power to calm a raging storm, does he not also have the power to remove our sins by his death on the cross so that we can stand before the Judge perfect, clean, righteous, not-guilty?

And now that our biggest problem has been solved, this miracle can help us with our smaller daily problems too. Think back. What life-storms have you faced in the last year? Pandemic, surgery, death of a loved one, brakes went out and you smacked another car, not enough money to pay the bills, the house repairs you're trying to make just don't seem to be getting done fast enough, you whacked a ball and it broke a window, you lost control of your mouth and out slipped some nasty words which you're now embarrassed about (hopefully). Or maybe your job went away. Or your job stinks because not enough people seem to care about doing quality work. Maybe your life-storm is an ongoing argument with someone you'd rather have peace and love with. Perhaps you're struggling to overcome a sin that adheres to your soul no matter what you do to get rid of it. Or maybe you just can't understand why God let something bad happen to someone you know or, for that matter,

to someone on the other side of the world whom you don't know.

When God brings storms into your life, do you wonder if he's sleeping on a cushion at the back of heaven, as if he doesn't care about you? That's never so. There is never a time when our Savior-God stops loving those whom he has brought to faith Christ. Even while Jesus was sleeping in the back of the boat, he was in control of that storm. And now he doesn't sleep anymore. So when we become afraid or angry at God, our Savior lovingly chides us with these same questions, "Why are you so afraid? angry? upset? Do you still have no faith?" That's his way of reminding us that he is our Storm-stiller. He has the power to calm every problem. He wants us to be calm, to bring our prayers to his throne, to focus on the things we can do something about, like feeding our faith, and like moving our ministry forward here by taking on tasks we have the ability to do. When you make time to be in worship like this... When you pray for those who are being tested... When you engage in the gospel ministry, these are some of many ways you show that you TRUST JESUS OUR STORM STILLER.