

This week we take a slightly different turn in the WW. A number of readers have written asking for prayer for their situation and because of this and various reports I have received, I thought this week to look again at the Lord Jesus Christ, the very embodiment of the gospel.

The Wednesday Word, Nov. 26, 2008: Sinking Ships and Sleeping Saviors

Mark 4:35-41

In Mark 4 we encounter one of the great storm stories of the Bible. If the truth be known, all of us face various kinds of storms in our life. In fact, a number of the readers of the W.W. are going through some major financial storms right now. Just last Sunday I heard a brother say that, because of the current economic uncertainty, there almost seems to be a spirit of fear that has gripped many Christians. He may be right! This is why we need to hear more good news about Jesus. We need to know that the One who has bought and paid for us has the power, ability and willingness to take us through whatever storms we have to face. It is as we see Him in His majesty that we can easily trust Him. If there is one thing necessary in this present situation it is that we, as His followers, grasp the good news of Christ's absolute power and sovereignty. Since HE is the sovereign ruler of all, He can calm the storms of our lives and deliver us. If ever we are to get through these and future days we must learn to look to Him alone and to trust in Him alone.

Do you really believe that your Savior is all-powerful? Do you believe that He has all the power necessary to get you through this present crisis? As we go to the Bible we see that there was something about Jesus, ----- a compelling, divine, majestic sovereignty ----that moved and conquered the hearts of men. Observe it at work, in this passage, as He tells his disciples to get into a boat and sail across the lake to the other side. Well what's majestic about that? Consider this, these men were experienced fishermen and I'm sure some of them must have smelt the storm brewing; they knew how to read the signs. ----Yet they followed Jesus right into the storm. This is a case of divine majesty at work.

We see this divine majesty demonstrated throughout the life of Jesus. Think about how, for example, Christ walked up to Matthew, the businessman/tax collector, and simply said, "Follow me" and Matthew instantly got up and left everything. Christ did the same to Peter and the fisherman immediately left his nets. If you don't think there's anything special in this, just try it yourself. Just go into a thriving business and try commanding the owner to leave everything to follow you. That puts it into perspective doesn't it? Jesus spoke and people followed. There is something majestic and compelling about Him.

Observe also how, in this passage, Jesus says with the same authority and majesty, "Let us go to the other side." I've looked this phrase up in the Greek and do you know what it means? It means, "Let us go to the other side!" That was the word of the Lord. There was no way, then, for that boat to sink since Jesus had said they were going to the other side. So watch how these fishermen follow the carpenter and how the carpenter leads them straight into the heart of the storm.

We need to understand this; following Jesus is never easy! He has the persistent habit of leading His followers into difficult situations. We need to learn from this that the desire to have a trouble free life is a non-starter! It just isn't going to happen. The good news, however, is that it's there in

the midst of the storm that we encounter God. He is the God who hears our cries. As Spurgeon says, "Because God is a living God, He can hear; because He is a loving God, He will hear; because He is a covenant God, He has bound Himself to hear."

But back to our story: in the midst of the storm, the disciples panicked. They forgot that Jesus had spoken and had given His word. What word? That they were going to the other side. What we can learn from this is that between the receiving the promise of the Lord and the provision of the promise there is often a problem. And it's there, in the problem, that Jesus demonstrates His divine power and majesty. It's there, in the midst of the storms of our life, that He also tests us to show us whether or not we believe in His Word, His Majesty, His deity and His absolute power.

But something worse than the fact that Jesus leads them into the storm is that in the midst of the storm, He goes to sleep. Have you ever been in a storm and it seemed as if Jesus has forgotten you? It seems He is sleeping. Don't panic! The storm may have come, but Jesus hasn't gone anywhere, He's right with you. Don't be like the disciples. They forgot that Jesus was right there in the boat with them; they were in His presence, but they forgot this. They forgot He was there, they forgot His word to them, they forgot that they were going to the other side.

But, you know the story, the disciples have a panic attack and waken Jesus with the cruelest of words, "Don't you care that we are about to perish?" Have you ever felt that Jesus didn't care for you? One look at Calvary will expose the error of your thinking. See him there, suspended between heaven and earth, bearing our curse. See Him there, the dying lamb; the interceptor of the wrath of God. How then can you imagine that He doesn't care for you?

Then, in one of the great scenes of the Bible, the Creator of the universe arises from His sleep, stretches Himself to His full height and rebukes the storm by calling out one word, "HUSH!" The winds got quiet, the waves got quiet and even big Peter got quiet. The disciples knew that they were in the presence of sovereign majesty. It's no wonder then that they asked, "behold what manner of man is this that even the winds and the waves obey Him?" It's no wonder that they were amazed; Jesus had just given them a revelation of His deity!

These men knew the Old Testament scriptures: they were beginning to connect the dots! They were beginning to see that when Jesus calmed the storm, He was demonstrating that He was the Lord, the almighty Yahweh of Psalms 107. Here's what it says,

Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distresses. He makes the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he brings them unto their desired haven. (See Psalm 107:23-30).

Here once more we are faced with incontestable proof that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Yahweh of the Old. In the Old Testament it is Yahweh to whom the people cry in the storm, but to whom did they cry in the New? They cried to Jesus, for Jesus and Yahweh are one and the same!

It is this same Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, who has undertaken our entire salvation. So what does this mean for us as we face the uncertainty of the future? What does His word say? To the Philippians who had supported the cause of Christ Paul says,

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19).

David says, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread (Ps 37:25).

We need to learn to claim the promises like these and take them as our own. We would be well advised to memorize and meditate upon God’s promises and trust the One who stands behind them. Here are some more promises that I hope will be helpful.

Matt. 6:25-26 "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor yet for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they??"

Matt 6:31: 33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Ps. 55:22 "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

1 Pet. 5:7 "Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you."

Ps. 31:19 "Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!"

Ps. 22:26 "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek Him: your heart shall live for ever."

Ps. 63:5 "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips."

Ps. 103:5 "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Ps. 104:27-28 "These wait all upon Thee; that Thou may give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good."

Ps. 145:15-16 "The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

Ps. 34:10 "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing."

Ps 23:1 “The Lord is my shepherd I SHALL NOT WANT”

Ps. 23:5,6 "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my

head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the House of the LORD for ever."

Is. 49:10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them."

2 Cor. 9:10-11 "Now He that ministers seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causes through us thanksgiving to God."

Let's conclude by saying, if the disciples had not have been in the storm they would never have seen the revelation of Jesus as the great sovereign deliverer, the Master of the winds and the waves. Something wonderful will come out of your storm. Trust Him with your situation; go to Him constantly, thanking Him for His supply.

The disciples approached Him in unbelief, but even then grace answered with provision and a demonstration of His majesty. How much more then should we, armed with faith and promises, go boldly to the throne of grace to receive mercy and grace to help in our time of need.

For those who have difficulty understanding practical faith, I'll leave you with this from Spurgeon,

"What is it to believe? To tell you as simply as possible: to believe is to give up trusting in yourself and to trust in Jesus Christ ----. The old country preacher said, "This here is how I believe — when I see a promise, I do not stand on the promise; but I say, that promise is firm and strong so I'll fall flat on it. Now, if the promise will not bear me, then the fault lies with the promise, but, as for me, I fall flat on it." Now, that is faith

And That's the Gospel Truth