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Sermon Notes

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What Kind of Man is This?

Matthew 8:23-27

Opening illustration: The Awesome Power of Storms... the even more awesome power of God

I. The Real Point: Christ's Astounding Power

A. Long History of Allegory

1. Allegorical interpretation: Instant spiritual application
2. History is lost... it doesn't really matter whether this really happened or not
3. Best examples: Sleeping Jesus Wakes Up and Calms the Storm

Tertullian: "That little ship did present a figure of the Church, in that she is disquieted 'in the sea', that is, 'in the world,' by the waves, that is by persecutions and temptations; the Lord, through patience, sleeping as it were, until roused in their last extremities by the prayers of the saints, He checks the world and restores tranquility to His own."

Augustine: (PNF 6, p. 304-305)

B. An Easy Sermon: Lord of My Rocking Boat

1. Imagine the easy sermon applications!!
2. "What are the storms of your life??"
 - a. temptations that toss you too and fro
 - b. financial difficulties
 - c. sickness and death
 - d. family troubles

e. unemployment

f. even car troubles... anything that tosses you back and forth

3. Sometimes Jesus seems like He's sleeping... we need to rouse Him through prayer

"Jesus can still the waves with a word if you'll only trust Him..."

C. Real Message: Lord of All

1. Matthew's Purpose: Portraying Christ as Messiah

Identity of the King

Nature of His Kingdom

2. List of Credentials

- Genealogy: "Son of David, Son of Abraham" Jesus is the King
- Virgin Birth: Jesus is the Son of God
- Worship of Magi: Jesus is the Worldwide Savior
- Flight to Egypt: Jesus is the Fulfillment of Prophecy
- Righteous Baptism: Jesus is the Humble Righteous Servant
- Perfect in Temptation: Jesus is the Sinless Man
- Powerful in Ministry: Jesus is Compassionate on His People
- Powerful in Teaching (Sermon on the Mount): Jesus Has Perfect Wisdom

3. Now, Matthew 8

- Power over Disease (Last Week)
- Power over the Natural Realm
- Power over the Supernatural Realm

4. Ultimate goal: that we trust in Him for salvation and protection in all things

The strengthening of our faith through awe in Christ is Matthew's goal

5. Word of God: Powerful and effective for producing faith

Romans 10:17 Faith comes by hearing the word

II. Christ Obeyed by the Natural Realm... Totally

A. Creator and Ruler of All

1. Miracle of the Incarnation: God in the Flesh
2. New Testament Doctrine: Christ Created All Things

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Mountains rose and valleys sank at His command; atmosphere formed, and oceans gathered through His power; every species of life—sharks, lizards, flamingoes, wild boars, chipmunks, electric eels, gila monsters, bald eagles, Shetland ponies, and every man, woman and child in history—all were created by God the Father, through Jesus Christ, the eternal Son

3. Christ Actively Rules Over All Things

Colossians 1:15-17 [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Christ holds every atom in the universe together

Christ rules over His creation with omnipotent certainty

Earthquakes come when He says so... clouds form at His beck and call

4. Christ's miracles demonstrated His power over nature
 - Turning water into wine... total control over fermentation process; grape juice to wine
 - Miraculous catches of fish... commanding fish to swim into nets
 - Peter finding tax money in the mouth of a fish
 - Walking on water... power over the sea

- Cursing the fig tree... power over vegetation to give life or take it away
- All the healings... restoring humanity back to intended physical order (Malchus's ear)
- PERHAPS NONE more DRAMATIC than this story... the stilling of the storm

B. The Following: Hard Road to Heaven

vs. 22-23 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." 23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.

Desiring to cross the Sea of Galilee

1. Last week: Two "Seekers" approached Jesus
2. Telling the Truth: "Discipleship will cost you everything!!"

When Jesus says "Follow me," He will not shield you from trials of the most extreme kind!

Bonhoeffer: "When Jesus calls a man, He bids him 'Come and die!'"

Perhaps not a single man would have followed Jesus if they knew what severe trials they would face! But look what they would have missed if their fear conquered their faith!!

Acts 14:22 [Paul and Barnabas, to new disciples of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra] "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

John 16:33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Extreme testing comes from following Jesus... extreme peace comes from resting in Jesus!

C. The Storm: An Earthquake in Water

Matthew 8:24 Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

1. A Sudden Storm
 - a. Matthew uses "Behold...!!!!" to give a sense of immediacy to narrative

b. the physical cause of this storm

Sea of Galilee 700 feet below sea level... lowest point on the earth

Winds sweep down steep ravines in the desert, whip up instant storms on the Sea of Galilee

2. A Violent Storm

- a. Greek word is seismos... from which we get the word “seismic” pertaining to EARTHQUAKES
- b. Matthew adds the word “great”... an exceptionally violent storm, as if the Sea of Galilee were a bowl of water that some gigantic man was shaking violently
- c. storm so severe the small ship was disappearing between the monstrous troughs of the waves

[NASB] vs. 24 *the boat was covered (lit. “hidden”) by the waves*

- d. a storm so severe that the disciples, veteran fishermen who made their living on the Sea, and had been sailing it since they were boys were convinced they were about to die!!!

D. The Mystery of the Incarnation: Power Cloaked in Weakness

“But Jesus was sleeping.”

1. God in the Flesh
2. Physical weakness... fatigue, pain, hunger, thirst, sweat, blood, suffering, death

Jesus was sleeping because He was tired... the body needs rest

Mark 4:38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.

3. Jesus used a cushion for a simple reason... it was more comfortable than not using one!!
4. BUT He was supernaturally UNCONCERNED about His physical safety
5. Totally trusting in God the Father’s sovereign rule

E. The Disciples: A Study in Unbelief

vs. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We're going to drown!”

1. Absolute terror!! Three short words: LORD...SAVE... WE PERISH!!!

2. In their fear, they lost their minds

Mark 4:38 The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

"Don't you care???" What a stunning loss of perspective! Someday Jesus would die in torment for them. Never in all history has anyone cared so much, or been willing to give so much to rescue the perishing!!

3. Fear drove out faith!!

Either faith will drive out fear (as in the case of Jesus, asleep in the boat) or fear will drive out faith (as in the case of the terrorized disciples)

Granted, circumstances were terrifying

These disciples knew a deadly storm when they saw it

Illus. If pilot of 747 accidentally leaves microphone switch on and passengers hear him screaming in terror at some problem with the plane, how great is the threat? If a chief surgeon looks at your wound at an accident and begins to cry and shakes his head, how great is the threat?

These were expert fishermen, and they thought they were about to die!!

- a. faith looks beyond immediate circumstances to the promises of God
- b. faith looks over obstacles to the power of God
- c. faith keeps its eye on God's eternal purposes

vs. 26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?"

Expression is frequent in gospels... not you of NO FAITH, but you of LITTLE FAITH!!

They trusted in Christ as the Messiah, sent by God into the world... but they forgot God's overall purposes

4. God's Power Over Wind

Job 28:25-26 [God] established the force of the wind and measured out the waters... [God] made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm

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 148:7-8 Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding

- In the days of Noah, at the end of the flood, He sent a wind over the surface of the earth and moved the floodwaters back
- In the days of Moses, he sent an east wind to blow locusts over Egypt; then a west wind to clear them out of Egypt
- At the time of the Exodus, he sent a strong east wind all night to force a path through the Red Sea
- In the days of Jonah, God sent a great violent storm on the Mediterranean Sea and threatened Jonah's life... then immediately stopped the storm as soon as Jonah was thrown overboard
- Summary: God rules over the winds and the waves with absolute power!!!

5. God's Plan in Prophecy

GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO DIE IN A BOATING ACCIDENT

Illus. Imagine headlines of heavenly newspaper: "Christ's mission on earth ends in tragedy... Boating accident claims life of God's Only Son" Sub-stories... All the prophets stunned; Isaiah the prophet shocked and saddened; "I had thought He was going to die as a sacrifice for our sins, but instead he drowned!" Zechariah said "I wrote 'They will look on the one they have pierced', but the water killed him! King David was most surprised of all: 'I wrote in Psalm 22 that his hands and feet would be pierced, and in Psalm 16 that he would rise again; but instead, he drowned!'"

- When Peter drew his sword to protect Jesus from arrest, Jesus said "How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it MUST HAPPEN IN THIS WAY??!!"
- Psalm 22 "You have pierced my hands and my feet"
- Passover Lamb and all the sacrifices: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin"

The disciples forgot God, and they forgot God's promises

"You of little faith... why are you afraid??"

F. The Miracle: By a Simple Word

vs. 26 Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

1. Amazing! First priority for Jesus was His disciples faith!
2. Stilling the storm was nothing more than giving the word
3. The word of God is infinitely powerful... Jesus' word is enough to rule the wind and waves TOTALLY!!!
4. Result: Instant, supernatural calm

Matthew uses word "great"... "Great storm", then "Great calm"

A stunning display of power, perhaps the most spectacular miracle of Jesus' ministry

G. The Reaction: The Central Question

vs. 27 The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

1. The Question is not, "What are the storms of your life?"
2. The Question IS "Who is this, that the winds and waves do His bidding?"

Illus. Teaching children in St. Maartin... speaking to the wind and it disobeys

3. Simple answer to the Question: Who is this? Jesus is God in the flesh!!

Ecclesiastes 8:8 No man has power over the wind to contain it; so no one has power over the day of his death.

Jesus has absolute power over the wind, and Jesus has absolute power over the day of His death

John 10:17-18 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life-- only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

The Bible teaches that God alone can control wind... God alone rules over life and death; and yet here is Jesus Christ ruling over wind and waves... and they will see Him with the same power over life and death

Jesus is God Almighty!!

Result: fear

Mark 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

III. Christ Obeyed by the Supernatural Realm... Reluctantly

IV. Application

A. Danger of Allegorical Application: Jesus Asleep in the Boat

1. Misses significance of Jesus' physical life on earth

Spiritualizes everything (like Augustine's "anger" analogy)

2. Misses uniqueness of that moment in time and history
3. Leaves door open for despair through misapplication

- Horatio Spafford's four daughters

IN THE 1870s Horatio Spafford was a successful Chicago lawyer and a close friend of evangelist Dwight L. Moody. Spafford had invested heavily in real estate, but the Chicago fire of 1871 wiped out his holdings. His son had died shortly before the disaster. Spafford and his family desperately needed a rest so in 1873 he planned a trip to Europe with his wife and four daughters. While in Great Britain he also hoped to help Moody and Sankey with their evangelistic tour. Last minute business caused Spafford to delay his departure, but he sent his wife and four daughters on the S.S. Ville Du Havre as scheduled, promising to follow in a few days. On November 22 the ship was struck by the English ship Lochearn, and it sank in twelve minutes. Several days later the survivors landed at Cardiff, Wales, and Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband the brief message, "Saved alone."

When Horatio Spafford made the ocean crossing to meet his grieving wife, he sailed near the place where his four daughters had sunk to the ocean depths. There, in the midst of his sorrow, he wrote these unforgettable words that have brought solace to so many in grief:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
 When sorrows like sea billows roll,
 Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
 It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
 Let this blessed assurance control,

That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

Why didn't Christ still the waves and save Spafford's four daughters?

- Men of the *Titanic*
- Men of the *H.M.S. Birkenhead* [In 1852, the British troopship was traveling to South Africa, hit a ledge and foundered; on board with more than seven hundred men, women, and children. With only 20 minutes left before she would sink, the decision was made to place all women and children in the few lifeboats there were. The men would remain behind and face the man-eating sharks circling the sinking ship. Hundreds of men drowned or were eaten alive in full view of their children, but not a single woman or child perished that day]
- 1956, Scroon Lake, NY; founder of Navigators Dawson Trotman died while rescuing a drowning girl

Was Christ unfaithful to His promises to Spafford, the men of the *Titanic* and *Birkenhead*, or to Dawson Trotman?

NOT AT ALL... the real issue is that faith drives out fear

- B. Asking the right question: Who is this who rules the wind and the waves? The Son of God!!
- C. Answering the right way! The Son of God!!
- D. Trusting Christ for True Salvation: His true saving purpose... not safety from drowning but from the wrath of God
- E. Trusting Christ for Daily Protection: There should be nothing you fear but disobeying God
- F. Obey Him in All Things: the wind and waves obeyed Him totally... so should we