

Grace, mercy and peace are yours in abundance through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, **“Let us go over to the other side.”**
³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, **“Quiet! Be still!”** Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, **“Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”** ⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” **This is the Gospel of our Lord.**

Dear Friends,

The Bible has a number of stories about storms and boats and they all reveal different things to us. The story of Noah and the Ark shows us how God preserved his faithful people and the promise of a Savior, while bringing judgment on an unbelieving world. The story of Jonah shows us that we can’t outwit God. Jonah tried to run away from the task God had given him but God sent a storm to turn get Jonah’s attention and call him to repentance. Before us we have the story of another boat and another storm. This storm happened on the Sea of Galilee and involved Jesus and his disciples. **“What did the Great Storm on the Sea of Galilee Reveal?”** As we explore this portion of scripture we are going to see, **“The Littleness of Faith on the Part of the Disciples,”** and **“Jesus Power as True God.”**

I. When this event happened, the disciples had been following Jesus for about a year. He had been traveling around the region of Galilee and he was getting towards the end of what historians call, “His Year of Popularity.” Wherever he was, people flocked to hear him preach, to be healed, and to see if he would perform any miracles. He had preached his famous “Sermon on the Mount” about 6 months earlier and had just spent most of the day teaching with what I like to call, “The Kingdom of Heaven” parables. I call them that because most of them begin with the words, **“The Kingdom of Heaven is like...”** There were so many people that Jesus shared them with the people from a boat and that is where our story begins.

At the end of the day, Jesus was tired and wanted to go to the other side of the lake and so they took him as he was, in the boat, and headed out across the lake. As they headed out across the lake the disciples might have been thinking, “Life couldn’t be better. Things seem perfect,”

but then the storm came. This wasn't unusual. The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by high hills and is subject to sudden storms, but this was a particularly severe storm – a furious squall.

Fortunately, some of the disciples had been fishermen. They were experienced sailors and had been in the middle of many storms and knew how to handle a boat but this storm was different. **“The waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.”** It looked like they were going to end up in the sea and possibly drown. They were frightened and so they turned to Jesus as their last resort. **“Teacher, don't you care if we drown?”** was their cry.

The disciples recognized Jesus as Teacher, but forgot all about what he was teaching. They approached Jesus as their leader but we have to wonder if they recognized him as the Son of God. Was their cry for help – a cry of desperation – or a cry of faith? It would appear that in the case of the disciples, the storm brought out the littleness of their faith.

At times we are tempted to think, “It's a good thing I'm not like that,” but is that really true? How many times do we wait to bring our requests to God until things get so bad, we consider it our last resort. We cry to God in desperation but doubt that even he is able to help us. After all, if God were paying attention, he wouldn't have let us get into this fix in the first place. It all comes down to faith. Faith in our God, faith in our Savior, and faith in the promises of God.

So many people believe that faith means you know who God is, but faith is not only having that knowledge of God, but also accepting God's Word as true and especially trusting in God completely. That's not always easy for us to do. We want to be independent. We want to be on our own but there are so many things in this world that easily overwhelm us – sickness, accidents, the loss of a loved one, natural disasters and the list go on and on. Psalm 46, which we sung earlier, reminds us that we are not alone. **“God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.”** We want to look to God to help us in every trouble, not as a cry of desperation or last resort, but trusting that he is in control and he will bring us the help he knows is best for us. We can count on our God. He knows us and he has redeemed us. He cares for us as a father cares for his child.

II. As Jesus calmed the storm he was trying to help the disciples deal with their lack of faith.

Through this incident we see Jesus not only as true man but we also see his divine power as true God.

Look at the example of the terrific forces of wind and sea described for us. No human power is able to control these forces. We don't even have to go back 2000 years in time to see this. Consider our own weather and all the storms we have had in the past few months. We have a hard enough time predicting the weather let alone trying to control it. Tornadoes and floods can come without warning. The last few weeks are a prime example of our utter weakness.

As we consider the story before us, then it's amazing that a calm command from Jesus was all that it took to calm the winds and waves. Immediately the storm was gone and everything was calm. The winds and waves heard their Creator's voice and immediately dropped at his feet. After all, he was their creator. And the disciples were right there to see this brilliant display of Jesus' power.

Did this help the disciples to see Jesus as God's Son? Jesus asked them, **“Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”** ⁴¹ **They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”** It appears they still had a long way to go. God's great power had delivered them from danger and yet they weren't sure what this was all about. Their faith would waver for another year or two until that first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would help them see and believe what this was all about.

Throughout his ministry Jesus displayed his power in so many ways. He healed people. He cast out demons. He did miracles. He walked on water. He calmed the storm. But the greatest display of his power was when he defeated Satan by hanging on the cross for our sins. The chief priests and one of the thief's hanging next to him taunted him to prove he was God by using his power to come down off the cross. Jesus displayed his power by staying on that cross and taking the punishment we deserved. He could have abandoned us and avoided the crucifixion but then we would have had no salvation – our faith would be in vain.

As we consider the power of God – displayed for us in this miracle of calming the storm and especially displayed for us on the cross – it reminds us that our God is all powerful and can do all things for his people according to his will. Through the eyes of faith we can see the picture of God's perfect love for us in sending Jesus to save us. God's Word displays our Savior's power so that there is no doubt he was up to the task of bringing us salvation .

What did the Great Storm on the Sea of Galilee Reveal? It shows us how the disciples faith wavered just as our faith wavers at times but it also revealed the power of our God to deliver them and to deliver us from danger. May we always trust the power of our God to save us and

when challenges crop up in our lives may we look first to our Lord and cry out to him with confidence and not wait and only look to him as a last resort – as a desperate plea for help. After all, he has redeemed us and made us his own and he will deliver us from our problems. Amen.