

THE LORD CALMS THE SEA

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Lessons: Mark 4:30-41 and Apocalypse Explained 514:22

The story we have just read is a wonderful picture of how the Lord has power over the great forces of nature.

Can you imagine how wild a terrible storm over the sea can be? Perhaps you have been at the seashore during the summer, and have seen a storm come over it. The quiet rolling water which splashes over the sand when the sun is out, soon becomes churned up when the sun disappears behind black clouds of wind and rain. The sky becomes very dark, and the howling wind whips up big waves of water which crash and boom on the shore. The thunder deafens our ears and causes us to shudder with fear, while the lightning blinds our eyes. We feel safe, if we can find a house and close out the storm—we are glad we are not on a boat amidst those big waves of water, but safe on shore.

But think of the disciples in their open fishing boat, with the waves threatening to break in the sides of the boat, and the wind trying to push the boat over into the water. We know that this must have been an unusually bad storm, for the disciples were fishermen, they spent their lives fishing on the open seas, and we know that they would not have been frightened of a little storm. The Word tells us that their boat was partly filled with water, and this means the disciples were afraid their boat would sink.

They must have wondered how the Lord could sleep so peacefully while they were in danger of drowning.

When they had done all they could, and still the storm threatened to kill them, they finally woke the Lord, saying, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” And then the Lord arose and spoke to the wind and the sea, saying, “Peace, be still.” And immediately there happened a wonderful miracle - the wind stopped its wild howling and the sea became as quiet as a fishpond on a hot summer day. No man, though he were able to use every modern invention possible, could so control the powers of nature, that he could still them by a few words. Yet this is what the Lord did, without the help of any man or any man-made invention—He used the great power of His own Divine love and wisdom.

You know, there are many times when we become frightened, just as the Lord’s disciples were frightened. Perhaps some of us are afraid of storms, perhaps others are afraid of the darkness when they go to bed at night, some may be scared of certain wild animals, or of ugly looking insects. In war we are frightened by bombs, by disease, and by the hardships of poverty. A father and mother fear lest their children should come to harm, and children sometimes are afraid if anyone tries to

hurt their mother or father. Though we may appear brave to other people, we know in our hearts that we are sometimes just as frightened as the next person.

Now the Lord continually teaches us that we must learn to be brave, yet at the same time kind and gentle, even as He is. And what does He tell us? He tells us we are truly brave, when we pray to the Lord and ask Him for His help. He tells us that we should trust in Him when we are afraid. He tells us that when we are in trouble, He will always be with us, even if we cannot see Him. When we are sleeping in the dark, He sends His angels to watch over us and protect us, and we may be sure that no one will be able to harm us.

Sometimes when we are afraid, we seem to be all alone, and like the disciples we wonder if the Lord is sleeping or cannot hear us. But this is wrong. Do you remember what the Lord said to the disciples: "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" You see, the Lord always hears us, He always knows what we are doing, and what good or bad things are happening to us; He is never really asleep, but only appears so because He wants men to learn to trust Him and believe in His power to save them. We only see the things that happen to us in the present, we cannot see the future. We do not always know what is good for us and what is bad for us - we cannot tell what things will bring us real happiness. But the Lord knows. He sees all the future, and He knows what will lead us to heaven, and tries to bring us there when we cannot find the way by ourselves.

When we are older we have storms in our minds. We are tempted by evil spirits to do bad things, even when we know what is right. Like the disciples in their boat, we are tossed back and forward from one desire to another — we are fearful of doing wrong, yet we would like to do it. The great waves of water, which are as strong as our evil loves, threaten to drown us. And we would be drowned in them, if we did not go to the Lord's Word and learn what is right, what we must do to save ourselves. And then we must pray to the Lord in our daily prayers, to give us strength to do what He wants us to do. If we do this, He will help us. He will give us peace, He will calm the storm, and take *away* our evil delights, and fill our hearts with joy and happiness. And it will be as though the sun had come out from behind the dark storm clouds, to give us warmth and light, and show us the Lord's all-powerful love.

Amen.

Apocalypse Explained 514:22

When men of the church are in what is natural, "the Lord appears to be absent. This apparent absence is signified by His being asleep. But when they come out of a natural into a spiritual state these emotions cease, and there comes tranquility of mind; for the Lord calms the tempestuous emotions of the man."