

Who Then Is This?

Introduction

The Text

²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out, ²³ and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. ²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?” (Luke 8:22–25)

A Process Revealed

- A. This text reveals a process that Jesus is always taking His disciples through in one way or another, and I wanted to bring that process out for us here this morning.
 - 1. There are really three basic steps to this and I’ll just attach a single word to each one: (1) Whirlwind; (2) Disclosure; and (3) Alignment.

(1) Whirlwind

Sleeping through the Storm

- A. Read vv. 22-23 again: “²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out, ²³ and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm [‘whirlwind’] came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.”
- B. There are two simple observations I want to make here: (1) Jesus ordains the whirlwind; and, related, (2) Jesus sleeps through the whirlwind.

(1) Jesus Ordains the Whirlwind

- A. With regard to the first observation, when Jesus calls His disciples into the boat, it is not as if He is expecting a pleasant voyage and then is suddenly surprised by the storm that descends upon them. It’s not as if Jesus forgot to check the weather.
 - 1. No! It’s quite the opposite really. Jesus not only checks the weather, He ordains the weather. He knows the storm is coming . . . and He leads their little boat straight into it.

(2) Jesus Sleeps through the Whirlwind

- A. This first observation is supported by the second: namely, that He sleeps through the whirlwind.
1. I love how Mark describes it for us: “But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion” (Mark 4:38a). Isn’t that awesome?! The disciples are fearing for their lives and Jesus is lounging on a pillow, as comfortable and relaxed as ever.
- B. But what exactly does this mean?
1. This little detail is important. This story contains the only place in all the gospels, at least as far as I could find, where we are explicitly told that Jesus is sleeping. Of course we know He sleeps, but attention is never drawn to it. Why here in this story? Why now? What is Luke (Matthew and Mark) trying to communicate?
- C. I’m pretty sure they’re not just trying to say that Jesus is a deep sleeper or something.
1. Did you have one of those dads? I did. In the evening after dinner, around seven or eight, almost without fail, you could walk into his office and he’d be sprawled out on the floor, just dead to the world. The house could be on fire and my dad would have no clue.
- D. I don’t think that’s the point of this little detail in Luke’s narrative. The point is not that Jesus is a deep sleeper. The point is that Jesus is in control—so in control that He can sleep through the very things that awaken and terrify us. He’s not worried about it. He has authority over it.
- E. Do you have anything keeping you up at night these days? Does anything have you tossing and turning on your bed—worried, restless, even terrified?
1. Hear this: Jesus is sleeping. I don’t mean He’s neglecting you. I don’t mean He’s off duty. That’s what we feel, right? But that’s not what this means.
 - a. It mean He’s in control. He’s at rest. He’s sitting down at the right hand of the Father, with all authority in heaven and on earth having been given to Him. He’s not surprised by what’s troubling you. He’s planning and purposing and working even in the whirlwind. He’s got good for you in it.
 - i. What a word for us at a time when we can’t hardly turn on the news without hearing of another hurricane or earthquake!

(2) Disclosure

Readied to Behold

- A. But what’s Jesus looking to do in all of this? What’s He after with these disciples in a boat, in a raging sea? What’s His plan for the whirlwind?
1. In a word: Disclosure. He takes His disciples into the whirlwind to show them something about Himself.

- B. Read vv. 24-25 again: “²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, ‘Master, Master, we are perishing!’ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.^{25b} . . . And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, ‘Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?’”
- C. There are things that we see of God in the whirlwind that we could never see in the calm.
1. We often live with such an illusion of control. We think that we can work our way out of any problem. We find false assurance in all our technologies, and medicines, and scientific advances. Modern man is so arrogant, so self-important.
 - a. But the whirlwind puts us back in our place. It reminds us that we are mere specks on a speck in a speck in the middle of an endless universe—outside and above which God alone sits enthroned.
- D. The whirlwind reminds us that, at a fundamental level, you and I cannot even control whether we will live to see tomorrow or die on our beds tonight. “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand” (Deut 32:39). That’s what we start to get in the whirlwind!
1. Don’t you feel that when Irma or Maria comes to your town? Or closer to home for us, perhaps, don’t you feel that when an 8.1 temblor quakes the earth due south of us. Don’t you start wonder: Is that going to set off something here under my feet?
 - a. Megan and I were up talking about this just the other night. You look on the news and they say the big one is coming for California. And what can we do about it? With all our technology, can we stop the shifting of tectonic plates? No!
- E. So, in all of this, in the whirlwind, our eyes are cleared of self-importance, of vainglory, and we are readied to behold something of God!
1. That’s why we read in Job 38:1 and 40:6 that when God finally addresses him: “. . . the Lord answer[s] Job out of the whirlwind . . .” In the disorienting chaos of trial and suffering, God speaks. The whirlwind sets the stage for disclosure.
 - a. Maybe He’s doing this in your life right now. It’s hard. But He has something for you in it!

Psalm-Making

- A. But now, before we get ahead of ourselves here, we should say that this process is not automatic. The whirlwind itself does not guarantee that we behold God or receive any disclosure from Him at all.
1. We can think of countless examples, perhaps, where trials and suffering did not bring a person nearer to God but effectively seemed to push them further away.

- a. Like the seed we saw last week that shoots up with joy but, when trials come, it doesn't see more of God, it withers up and dies.
- B. You see, the disciples do right here, and we need to learn from them. Yes, they are awake in fear when they could be sleeping in trust, but at least they go to the right place with their fears: "they went and woke him" (v. 24).
 - 1. Often, what I have found is that, when the whirlwind descends around us, we tend to bend inwards. Rather than crying to God, we search within ourselves for a solution, a way out, a fix.
- C. I have derived great encouragement from this book *The Imperfect Pastor* by Zack Eswine. And one of the things he mentions, almost just in passing, is this idea of psalm-making.
 - 1. He contrasts psalm-making with self-talking. Self-talk is what we often do all day long. We process our world by talking to ourselves about it.
 - a. When a person hurts us, we talk to ourselves about why we think they did what they did and what we'll say to them if we ever get the chance, and the courage.
 - b. When the boss calls us into his office, as we're walking down the hall, we start talking to ourselves about what we think is going to happen: "My numbers must not be on track. It's over. What am I going to do now?"
 - c. When I was preparing this sermon, I knocked the tea I was drinking all over my desk. And I started right in with self-talk: "You see. This sort of thing always happens to me. Nothing works out the way I want." Whoa, Nick. Seriously? That's not even close to truth, but I'm telling myself that, I'm justifying a foul mood. I'm essentially preaching to myself that God's word is not true and He is not present.
 - i. Try to pause throughout your day and catch yourself doing this, self-talking.
- D. And here's Eswine's counsel: Take all that inward-bending self-talk and bend it outwards to God like the psalmist.
 - 1. The psalmist is processing the world around him just as much as anyone else. The only difference is He's processing it in the presence of God. He's not so much talking to himself about his world, he's talking to God.
 - a. When the whirlwind descended . . . "they went and woke him."
- E. Brother/sister, if you are in the whirlwind, don't merely self-talk or self-soothe . . . make a psalm: " ¹ Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. . . . ¹⁵ Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me. ¹⁶ Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me" (Psa 69:1, 15–16).
 - 1. When you make a psalm like that in your heart to God, you ready your soul for disclosure—to behold something of the majesty of God.

Jesus Is God

A. In the case of these disciples, because they came to Jesus with their fears, they were granted a glimpse of His glory. To be more specific: They were shown, in not so uncertain terms, that Jesus is God.

1. Countless Psalms in the OT equate God's unique authority and power with His ability to control the seas. Take *Psa 89* for example: "⁶ [W]ho in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, ⁷ a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him? ⁸ O Lord God of hosts, who is mighty as you are . . . ? ⁹ You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them" (vv. 6–9).

a. The claim: You alone are God. The basis: You still the sea. The Godness of God is argued for on the basis of His ability to still the sea. No one but God can do that.

B. And then, in a little boat, out with a few disciples, on the sea of Galilee, in the dark of night, in the midst of a whirlwind, Jesus of Nazareth silences the waves and wind with a word. Conclusion: Jesus is God!

1. And the disciples saw something of this. Which is why, did you notice? When Jesus stills the waves, the disciples' fear transfers from the storm to the Person who is in front of them: "And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, 'Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?'" (v. 25b).

a. Fear of windstorm gives way to fear of God!

A Whirlwind of Wrath

A. Dear brothers and sisters, it must be noted, of course, that we have here a mere picture of a much greater whirlwind Jesus has come to rebuke on our behalf: namely, the whirlwind of the wrath of God against our sin.

B. It's a bit ironic really. But in Gethsemane, the night before Jesus' crucifixion, we are presented with details that contrast with those from our text this morning.

1. For there in the garden, as Jesus contemplates what He must face for us on the cross, He finds no place for sleep. He's so worked up about it He's sweating drops of blood.

a. But the disciples, on the other hand, even though Jesus called them that night to stay awake and pray with Him, are found sleeping.

C. The boat, the waves, the whirlwind of our earthly circumstances, that keeps us up. That gets us going. But the big problem, the thing that should really terrify us, the wrath of God against sin, we're sleeping.

1. But not Jesus. He knows that's the only thing worth worrying about, the only thing worth losing sleep over. It's the problem behind all other problems. Here is the war to end all wars. It's why He's come.
 - a. And on the cross, it's as if He rebukes the whirlwind of the wrath of God for us, by throwing Himself into it. And when He comes up for air three days later, the sea is calm. The sea is calm!!!

(3) Alignment

Where Is Your Faith?

- A. If you noticed, I read past a question that Jesus asks His disciples there at the beginning of v. 25: "He said to them, "Where is your faith?"
- B. I wanted to talk about this as we near the close here. And I'm thinking of it as a call for alignment.
 1. You know how cars sometimes can go out of alignment? You are aiming to stay within the lines of the road but as you're driving there's something pulling you left or right. Your car is out of alignment.
- C. And your heart and life can get this way too. Where you have these things you know about God, things He's already disclosed to you about Himself, but your heart and your life don't seem to follow. Something still pulls you off into anxiety or condemnation or pride. You're still veering off the road.
 1. Think of all that the disciples have seen of Jesus even just to this point: the sick healed, the demons cast out, the dead raised. And yet here they are—their hearts and lives out of alignment with what they've seen and heard: "Where is your faith?"
 - a. It's a question that perhaps Jesus is asking you this morning.
- D. And while I don't know much about aligning a car, I do now something about aligning the soul. It involves the ongoing and ever-important work of repentance and faith. "I'm sorry. I believe, help me with my unbelief." And Jesus is here to help.
- E. But now, think about this with me. What would our week look like if our hearts and lives were aligned with the truths this text reveals to us about Jesus?
 1. What kind of risks would we take for Christ if we knew the wind and waves obey Him?
 2. How freely and wildly could we love others if we knew we knew God is with us in the boat?
 3. How deeply could we experience God's rest—a peace that surpasses understanding? Circumstances indicate you should be losing your mind, but if this Jesus is with you, you can sleep.
 - a. Alignment looks and sounds like David in [Psa 3:5-6](#). When his very life was in jeopardy, here's what He writes: "I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord

sustained me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.”

F. Whirlwind, Disclosure, Alignment. That’s what we’re after!

Conclusion

DNA Groups

- A. Now here is one final observation as we conclude. Yes it is true, wonderfully, life-alteringly true, that Jesus is in the boat with me. But it is also true, and profoundly important, that you brother/sister be in the boat with me as well.
1. God doesn’t just give us His Son, He gives us one another, a community of disciples, a people to do this discipleship thing with.
- B. This observation leads us towards something we’re hoping to develop here at Mercy Hill: namely, a culture of discipleship.
1. A culture where it’s normal to meet up at the office, or in the parks, or at the coffee shops, or in our living rooms, and follow behind Jesus like this together. To lean on one another, to learn from one another, to help lead one another towards the Savior.
- C. This is why we encourage you to meet up in groups of two or three throughout the week. We call them DNA Groups. And our hope is that they help facilitate this very process of discipleship that we see here in our text. The goal is renewal in Christ’s image (hence “DNA”)—alignment with God in our hearts and lives.
1. It begins with D for Discovering Christ. We help one another in the whirlwind of our own lives to see Him—who He is, what He’s done, what He says. Life can be terribly disorienting. And we lose sight of Christ among the wind and waves. How wonderful to have a brother or sister that can speak through the chaos and direct us to God.
 2. And it moves from D to N for Nurturing Christ. Here is where we ask one another the question: “Where is your faith?” If this is who God is, who Jesus, is, do we believe it? Or are we hoping in some other gospel, some other god to deliver? We do the heart work of repentance and faith with one another in the light of the cross. We pray and beg for help in trusting what we have discovered, what He has disclosed to us. We make psalms together.
 3. And then D and N lead to A for Applying Christ. If our hearts are now aligned with the truths and promises of God, what does this mean for our lives? We help one another walk this out. We text one another throughout the week. We care about alignment in heart and life.
- D. So I encourage you, consider forming a DNA Group. We don’t have an official process for this yet, maybe we never will. Certainly the leaders here are happy to coach you along, but, currently, we’re keeping it organic and encouraging you to take initiative. The idea is to ask a person or two to meet up regularly to encourage one another in the Lord.

1. You might come together, share stories from your week and together make your way to Jesus, the Scriptures, and prayer.
2. Or you may decide you want to go through a book in the Bible, or a book that relates to something you want to grow in, like parenting, or evangelism, and you move from that to your heart and lives.
 - a. Either way, Christians, disciples of Christ, need one another. Disciples travel together behind Christ—moving from whirlwind to disclosure to alignment; from Discovering Christ with our minds to Nurturing Christ in our Hearts to Applying Christ to our lives.
 - i. I need you with me in the boat with Jesus.