

July 21, 2024 (Unit 22, Session 1)

## **Jesus Calmed a Storm**

(Matthew 8; Mark 4; Luke 8)

In the Gospel accounts of Jesus calming the storm, we learn that Jesus' disciples experienced tremendous fear. Their fear was so great, they believed they would perish in the storm. Yet, Jesus experienced the same violent storm, and rather than quake in fear, He slept.

The disciples' fear emerged from a lack of faith in the One who slept in the boat. While they worried about their circumstances and allowed fear to overtake their hearts, Jesus remained confident in His control over all things—including the raging sea. Not a drop of an ocean wave or a gust of wind escaped His authority. The Word made flesh, who spoke all creation into existence, rules every inch of this world according to His sovereign will.

At the sound of His voice, the wind and the waves were stilled. And the disciples' fear of the storm was redirected to a fear of another kind—one of reverence and awe. The power of the storm was no rival for the power of the Lord, and the disciples' perspective was shifted to wonder at the holiness, power, and authority of Jesus.

The disciples' fear toward Jesus was different. This fear was one of awe and reverence—a humbled perspective regarding the holiness, power, and authority of Jesus.

We all resonate with their timidity, for it is commonplace in our daily lives to be shaken by concerns in the face of trying circumstances. This story is about a storm and the different feelings that came out of it. But from that storm, and even the storms within our own lives, we see the character of a Savior. It is about our need to bow our hearts and our lives to the beauty, holiness, power, and authority of Jesus as we trust in His authority—for His glory and also for our good.

We all have things that cause us worry and concern, but do you have a reverent awe toward the God who made you and loves you and has promised to be with you through every circumstance of your life?

July 28, 2024 (Unit 22, Session 2)

## **Jesus Healed and Forgave**

(Matthew 9; Mark 2; Luke 5)

As Jesus worked miracles, people were curious and amazed. Large crowds started following Him. Among those most interested in the works of Jesus were the Jewish leaders who looked unfavorably upon both the actions of Jesus and the following that he was gaining. Though they were interested, they felt increasingly threatened.

The Pharisees and teachers had gathered to see the power of Jesus for themselves and would later attempt to build a case against Him. But Jesus' authority to forgive sins served to reveal their hardness of heart and evil intentions.

When Jesus told a paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven and then asked these religious men the question, "Which is easier ... ?," the point wasn't for them to do a scientific assessment to determine which act required greater power. The point was to show them His authority. Therefore, Jesus followed His question with the true answer: "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." He commanded the man to get up and walk.

Jesus affirmed His authority to forgive sins by healing the paralyzed man. All of Jesus' miracles provided the evidence for His teachings and His authority. What's more, Jesus' authority is not constrained to only the physical world, but also reaches deep into the spiritual component of every person. While healing the man's physical condition was a beautiful act of grace, what the man needed most was to have his sins forgiven. And this was the truth the religious leader's hard hearts failed to understand.

As we reflect on Jesus' words in this passage, we can ask Him to examine our hearts. Unlike the religious leaders, whose prideful hearts kept them from submitting to Christ's authority, we can joyfully ask the Lord to reveal any sin. Then by His grace, we can repent and find forgiveness.

Just as Jesus demonstrated His authority to forgive the man's sins by offering the evidence of healing, so has He also shown us His power to forgive our sins through the cross. Not only can we be confident that He will forgive, but we can rejoice that He has met our greatest need.

August 4, 2024 (Unit 22, Session 3)

## **Jesus Healed Sickness**

(Matthew 9; Mark 5; Luke 8)

When someone you know is sick, how do you respond? Do you press in with compassion and prayer, offering to take a meal? Are you tempted to withdraw and leave their needs to others? In today's passage, we will see Jesus repeatedly draw near to people in their time of need.

The Gospel accounts provide a powerful picture of Jesus' compassion toward the needs of people. Some of these suggest His intentional pursuit of people, while others demonstrate a pause—or even a detour—to meet someone's needs. Yet, in both cases, as Jesus provided for the physical needs of people, He also demonstrated His power as the Son of God through His miraculous works.

Jesus had become known for His ability to bring dead things to life, heal the incurable, and bring change where no one else could. As a result, people gathered around Him everywhere he went.

In this week's story, we see the great faith of a desperate woman. She literally reached out to Jesus, seeking healing from a long-term disorder. The woman believed in Jesus for the same reason Jesus commanded Jairus to believe: because Jesus holds the power to save—to bring the dead back to life, both physically and spiritually.

Jesus was always in pursuit of people and was never too busy to pause to meet the needs of others along the way. But Jesus came to offer much more than physical healing. The life He came to give them would result in eternal salvation.

Jesus' encounters with Jairus and the woman remind us that God cares about the brokenness of this world. We can be confident that His promise to undo the curse of sin will be fulfilled. As we read Jesus' miracles, we see glimpses of a fallen world being redeemed as the Son of God heals and brings life. Greater still is the hope we have to trust in Jesus' power to renew our hearts and bring salvation. He is working now to sanctify us and bring inward transformation until the day we will see Him and be like Him.

## **Jesus Fed Many People**

(Matthew 15; Mark 8)

As you read of the miraculous multiplication of bread and fish in Matthew 15 pay attention to what captures your attention. What stands out most? Consider these astonishing observations: Thousands of people had been following and listening to Jesus for three days with nothing to eat. The disciples doubted Jesus' ability to provide something substantial enough to meet the needs of this crowd. With seven loaves of bread and a few small fish, the disciples were able to feed a crowd of thousands. At the end of this simple meal, the people had food left over.

But one observation seems to showcase the heart of Christ in this story—He had compassion on the crowd. The hungry multitude had nothing to eat and would surely collapse on their journey home. From this compassionate heart, Jesus performed His miraculous works that not only satisfied their hunger but produced an abundance of leftover food. Such is the heart of Christ, to show compassion, give generously, and seek to satisfy.

Jesus' miracle demonstrated both His power and His love. Just as He had power to multiply the loaves and the fish, so does He have power to save us from sin. And just as He displayed His love toward the crowd, so does He display His love toward sinners by way of the cross. The Bread of Life gave His body to be broken so that our hungry souls would be satisfied and find life.

Through Jesus' miracle of feeding the crowd, we find the gospel message: set your heart to feast on Jesus and you will live. (John 6:51) Only in Christ will we find forgiveness, satisfaction, and life eternal. We can turn to Jesus and be reminded that in Him we have all we need.

As you study the miraculous works of Jesus, don't lose sight of the love of God on display through these acts. To know the works of Jesus is to know the tangible evidence of His unsurpassed love.

## **Jesus' Miracles Prove He Is God**

(John 14)

When we study the miraculous works of Jesus—Jesus' calming a storm, healing sickness, multiplying food, walking on water, turning water into wine, helping blind people see, or any of the other miracles that Jesus performed—it's possible to miss the larger story being told and the purpose of these encounters. Like standing too close to a painting, our view of the larger picture becomes obscure, and we can lose sight of its grandeur. While details are important, Jesus' miracles reveal a glorious truth about who He is—God in flesh.

John 14 provides us with one of many reasons to keep a broader focus as we study Jesus' miracles. In preparation for His death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus offered words of comfort and encouragement to His disciples. Soon He would no longer be visible to them with their eyes or available to reach out and touch. Yet, Jesus calls them to see with eyes of faith as He urges them to "Believe in God; believe also in [him]." (John 14:1).

As the disciples grappled with where Jesus' is going, Jesus underscored His oneness with the Father and that He alone is the way to the Father. He patiently reminds the disciples of the authority of His words and the miraculous works He performed—all of which prove He is God. It was a grace for the disciples to behold the works of Jesus and be able to look back and remember what their eyes had seen and their ears had heard when Jesus walked among them.

When they faced times of turmoil, they could recall Jesus calming the storm and believe. When they were hungry, they could remember Jesus' feeding the crowd and believe. Not only were the words and works of Jesus evidence of His divinity during His time on earth, they were also a means to persevere in their faith after He went to heaven.

As you focus on the works of Jesus, consider their true purpose. Jesus' miracles give us a picture of who He is and the hope of life with Him in His kingdom. As we read of Jesus' miracles and grow in knowledge of Him, we can ask God to deepen our faith and love for Him. And when we seek to view the big picture of the Bible, we come to better understand the miraculous works of a God who gave His only Son to save sinners.