

Title: When Jesus is in the Boat

Text: Matthew 8:23-27

Date: Nov 8, 2020, new sermon brief

INTRO.

The year 2020 continues to rock, roll, and rumble on.

- The craziest year of my lifetime.
- One theme: unpredictable!
- And who could possibly be surprised – that in the context of 2020 – the Presidential Election would be as tumultuous and tight as it has been?
- This one thing is for sure: thank God for our military/veterans (this Wednesday).

I want to share with you a story that has ministered to my heart the last several weeks from Matthew 8.

Jesus had just finished the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7).

Jesus immediately came off the Mountain and touched/healed a man with leprosy (Matt 8:3).

Jesus healed a Centurion's servant (8:5).

- *“Just say the word from here, Jesus, and he will be healed.”* (8:8).
- *“Truly, I have not found so great a faith in all of Israel.”* (8:10).

Jesus healed Peter's mother in law (8:14) and nearly everyone in Capernaum (8:16).

Then, such large crowds are following Jesus, he commands his disciples to get into a boat and they will retreat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (8:18).

Jesus enters the boat first...and his disciples follow after him.

Suddenly...a violent storm arose on the sea...

- The boat is being swamped by the waves.
- But Jesus is in the bottom of the boat sleeping.

The disciples woke Jesus up, shouting, *“Lord, save us! We're going to die!”*

Jesus then deals with the 1) disciples first and then next 2) the storm.

To the disciples: *Why are you afraid? Where is your faith?* (The internal storm.)

To the sea: he rebuked the wind/waves, and there was a great calm. (The external storm.)

The disciples are amazed: What kind of man is this? Even the wind/waves obey Him!

Personal – this story is a picture of what I want to be: no matter what is happening on the outside, I aim to be at peace because I know Jesus is with me.

- We can be spun around by drama...or we can be calm like Jesus.

Jesus Christ in the boat is a visual reminder: when I have no control, I can be at total peace, because I know who is in control!

First, we are anxious/fearful when we forget what God has already said, “*We are going to the other side.*” (8:18)

- Jesus did NOT say it would be easy (Beatitude #8, next week!)
- But He did say that: yes, they would go to the other side of Galilee.

Christ-followers must remember these promises from the Bible:

1. God never abandons us. (Moses to Joshua; Josh 1:5) (Deut 31:6; Heb 13:5).
2. God works everything out for our good and His glory (Rom 8:28).
3. God can redeem any sinner.
4. God can redeem any situation.
5. We know the last page of the Bible – Jesus wins!

Second, God purposefully leads us into situations that require us to look to Him and depend on Him (8:23-24).

There’s a play on words here in the text (8:23-24).

- V23, Jesus is in the boat first. V24, the boat was swamped.
- V23, the disciples follow into the boat. V24, Jesus was sleeping.

Lesson: it doesn’t matter what comes into your boat – as long as Jesus is in your boat!

(ILLUS: My son Zeke’s cross-country team was recognized at halftime of the football game.

- I shouted, “Go Zeke” (at least twice)
- Dad...why’d you yell, I was just standing there.
- *It doesn’t matter son...If you’re out there...I’m out there, too.*

Lesson: a big deal to us (something overwhelming) is not a big deal for Jesus!

Adoption issues...Cancer...Infertility... → Jesus Christ is greater!

Lesson: I would never know that Jesus was greater than the storms if the storms never came!

Third, to some degree, the disciples did the proper thing: they took their panic to Jesus (8:25).

- There’s a million ways to address your pain.
 - Some productive: counseling...exercise...friendships...therapy.
 - Some destructive: drugs...alcohol...overeating...depression...toxic relationships.

- There's only ONE WAY to BEST address your pain: pour it out at the feet of Jesus.

FACT. The disciples thought they knew the outcome of the situation (they did not).

Disciples cried out → “We’re going to die!”

Jesus’ response → “Where is your faith...why is your faith so small...?”

- “Why are you so afraid?” (literally...you’re afraid of something that isn’t even happening...something that isn’t going to happen).

We need to stop measuring our future by such human logic and man-made standards!

Lesson. Don’t go to Jesus and state the outcome...Go to Jesus and request faith for the outcome!

Fourth, this is a great reminder: thanks to Jesus, storms can pass as quickly as they arrive (8:26).

- Compare and contrast the language of these two verses:
- V24, “Suddenly” or “Behold”
- V26, “There was a great calm”

Jericho...one day; Josiah...17 days; Elijah...one day; Jesus Christ...one day!

Fifth, this really blessed my heart personally. Meditate on this from Matt 8:27, “*What kind of man is this? Even the winds and sea obey him!*”

Nature is in His hands! History! Governments! Nations!

One day all Republicans and Democrats will bow before Him as Lord! (Phil 2:5-11)

Application for today –

- 1. You cannot trust in polls or in political predictions – you can only trust fully and completely in the Word of God.**
 - a. The mainstream media polls were so wrong!
 - b. (Biden will win big...Trump will win big... -- neither occurred!)
- 2. God is on the throne. God has never lost an election.**
- 3. The outcome of this election will never affect the outcome of the Cross.**
 - a. Knowing Christ is the only “victory” that will matter 100 years from now.
- 4. Our mandate to make disciples from Woodstock to the World remains unchanged.**
 - a. We must love our community well.
 - b. Your school, neighborhood, dry cleaners, grocery store, place of work – this is your mission field far more than 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

- c. Young people...specifically young people...are such an important mission.
- d. We must train our young people to shine bright for Christ!

5. **Some are discussing the possibility of fraud in this election. So what about fraud?**
 - a. Never underestimate what depraved men are capable of (lie, cheat, adultery, etc.)
 - b. Never forget that God sees everything...God will perfectly address it!

Psalm 7:9, *Let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous.*

Psalm 37:1-9, *Don't be agitated by evildoers...they will wither like grass...trust in the Lord...*

God reminded King David multiple times in his search for justice –

- Evil has dug itself a hole and will fall headfirst into it.
- You must keep trusting in My Righteousness.

God is the only “Leader” that will always be there! (Psalm 46:1).

6. **Let's be careful assuming we know all that God is doing in this historical moment.**
 - a. Is God doing something in the U.S.? (Yes)
 - b. Is God doing something in Joe Biden? (Yes)
 - c. Is God doing something in Donald Trump? (Yes)

This is fundamentally the most appropriate Christian response: let us keep on praying!

- For Mr. Biden (if he is the New President) – what a big challenge exists before him.
- For Mr. Trump (if he is not re-elected) – show empathy for the hard-fought loss.

7. **The more culturally secular America becomes, and the more personally Christlike I become – means that all believers will feel increasingly “not at home” here.**
(ILLUS: earthly home, like a hotel vs. eternal home, like your true home.)

- a. Let us never apologize for being patriotic.
 - i. Is America perfect? No.
 - ii. Is America a great land of opportunity? Yes.
- b. Let us love our country – God has planted us here for this precise moment!

8. **Christians in the U.S. and beyond must remember: a much better Kingdom is coming!**

Rev 11:15, *The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Christ...*

CONCL. Carrie's word of balance to me → *“I don't want to have my head in the sand; but nor am I going to let the news in this world overtake me.”* (When I was in Jack Nash's boat; snake)