

NO STORM IN A TEACUP!

Jesus Calms the Storm Luke 8:22-25

- 1 THE STORM IS REAL — Tell Him (v22-23)
- 2 BUT HE'S IN YOUR BOAT — Trust Him (v23-24)
- 3 AND YOUR BOAT IS IN HIS HANDS — Take Heart (v24-25)

What are you trusting in? Are you trusting in your efforts, skills, experience? Others? Your job, money, power or influence? Is it some vague general idea of a slightly disconnected force out there somewhere? Or do you have a radical trust in a man who is also God, called Jesus?

The Storm is Real (v22-23) Here's a teacup. Teacups have been in China about

5,000 years. The saucer and the handle were only invented in Europe in the 1600s. Two thousand years ago, a Roman named Cicero had a phrase for making a big fuss about nothing, "stirring up waves in a ladle." In 1815 a British judge, Lord Chancellor Thurlow, changed it to "a storm in a teacup." If I make waves in this teacup is anyone scared? No, it's just a storm in a teacup. Storm Darragh hit Wales two winters ago. The lights went out across Flintshire, trees came down, People had to leave their homes just before Christmas because of the floods. Storms don't ask your permission. They just come.

Into the boat In the Bible passage Jesus says to his friends, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they get in the boat and a storm hits. They are in the storm because they did exactly what Jesus said. Obeying Jesus can sail you into the rough weather. They were "in great danger." These men are experts, with the right gear, and they are terrified. Just remember, Jesus never shrinks your storm. The danger was real. Their fear was real. Sometimes life brings us real storms. There are real worries. Jesus never says, "Stop fussing." Your worry is never too small for him, and never too big. Telling him exactly how scared you are is not making a fuss, that's being honest. And Jesus loves honest. Jesus is the boss of the storm. If you trust Jesus when you're scared or worried, tell him. Don't try to fix it all by yourself. Say: *"Jesus, I'm scared about this. Please help me."* He will hear you. *"You can say sorry to Jesus for leaving him out and ask him to be with you."*

He is in your boat (v:23-24) Jesus keeps challenging people to hear what he says, see what he does and respond. The blind see, the lame walk, even the dead are raised. Women like Mary Magdalene, Susanna and Joanna see who Jesus really is, and it sparks them into remarkable service that puts those who should know better to shame. That's why Jesus talks about the lamp not hidden. He says, if you hear my words and put them into practice, you are my family. Hear and do. That is what it looks like to follow Jesus.

In October 2022, Benenden Health asked two thousand British adults a simple question: what are the most stressful things you ever face? The top ten reads like a shipping forecast for the human heart. Losing someone you love. Money, Trouble at work. A relationship that is struggling. Divorce. Exams. Moving house. Even just watching the news. Some of you are in storm-force ten this very morning, and the person in the next seat may have no idea. Inside, the forecast reads 'gale warning, imminent. Red alert.' The Bible never pretends otherwise. So when we read that Jesus is asleep in the middle of the storm, you can rightly think, 'Can I really trust this person called Jesus if this is what happens to me?' Jesus is the only calm thing on that lake. The wind is howling. The waves are heaving. Twelve grown men are shouting and fighting for their lives. And Jesus sleeps. And out comes the prayer "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" They come to Jesus only when all else has failed and they can't fix it themselves. And we do exactly the same. Heaven goes quiet in the middle of our storm, and we decide the silence means absence. We misread his rest. Jesus sleeps in a storm like that because to him it is a ripple in a teacup. The Son sleeps because he knows his Father has the sea in his hand and he wants to show that to the disciples.

There have been other storms. Jonah's storm was entirely his own doing. From the belly of a fish he cried out to God. And God heard him. David's storm was self-inflicted too. When the storm broke over him he prayed, "Have mercy on me, O God." God forgave his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. Job's storm was nothing to do with him. He was blameless. He lost his children, his health, his good name. He argued. He wept. He accused. But he did it all to God's face. He did not walk away from God. Even though he shouted at him he never stopped trusting. Peter's was in the water because he'd done exactly what Jesus told him to do. He sank but with his mouth full of water he managed three words, *"Lord, save me."* Not a beautifully theologically polished prayer but Jesus caught him immediately. Saul's storm was self-inflicted after years of a slow drift away from God. Saul prayed about the

Philistines and heaven is silent. Like the disciples Saul reads that silence as 'he must not care', so he goes to a medium at Endor and tries to drag a dead prophet out of the grave to help him. He did not turn to the living God. By the next evening, Saul was dead on Mount Gilboa. Not one of them offered a tidy prayer but every single one of them was heard. Saul was the only one who didn't ask. The question is not how you got into the storm. The question is who you cry out to. God is not asleep because he doesn't care. He is in your boat. Listen and Do. Here is someone greater than Jonah. He is not the problem but the answer. Soon we will see this amazing person enter the centre of an even greater storm and rise to conquer death itself.

Your boat is in his hands (v24–25) Jesus rebukes the storm as he did a demon or a fever. He doesn't pray, "Father, if it be your will, perhaps ease the wind a little." He stands up in a sinking boat and speaks to the storm the way you'd speak to a dog, 'Sit!' Or as He did at creation. "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place... and the gathered waters he called seas." Wind and water were instantly flat. One second a washing machine, the next a millpond. That is not weather settling down. That is creation recognising the voice of its Maker. The storm ends but the fear doesn't. "In fear and amazement they asked one another, 'Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.'" Now they are more afraid than ever. In the Greek *deilos* the panicked fear of drowning becomes *phobos*: reverence, astonishment, awe of Jesus. The Lord of Psalm 107 is sitting in the back of the boat, "They cried to the Lord in their trouble... he stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed." Storms are not to enlarge your view of the danger, but to enlarge your view of Jesus. He is not powerless, or out to ruin your life. He is using even the storm to show you who he is. If you trust him, he promises to get you to the other side.

Storms are painful and personal, and borrowing other people's feels wrong. So, if you have lived any length of life, you know storms are real. But I have learned that is Jesus very real. As when I was bullied in school. When my daughter suffered eyesight issues I could not fix. When my mother died at 53 of pancreatic cancer. When our house caught fire and we were out of it for two years with a series of incredibly difficult events when at our lowest. When I was made redundant, and finances were very challenging. When my younger sister's partner died of cancer at 37, leaving her seven months pregnant with two young children. He has brought me through the valley of the shadow of death, he has given me green pastures when I needed them, and he will bring me to the other side. He doesn't promise it will be easy, or that we will always understand. He promises he will always be by our side, in our boat like the teacup in my hands, the sea and the boat are also in his hands:

There was one storm Jesus did not calm. Years later, on a hill outside Jerusalem, the real storm broke; the judgment our sin deserves. The psalmist's words came true of him: "All your waves and breakers have swept over me." And in that storm the only one that could actually sink you and me forever, Jesus, did not stand up and say "Peace, be still." He let it sweep over him as he took the full consequences of that storm upon himself, so that you and I, if we trust in him, do not have to face death and an eternity without God. Remember Jonah? Thrown into the raging sea so everyone else in the boat could live. Here is the greater Jonah thrown willingly into the storm of God's judgment, so that you and I could be brought safely to shore. Three days later was the great calm of Easter morning. The empty tomb "and all was calm" on the far side of the only storm that could ever truly drown you. Death subdued.

Conquered. Then Jesus turns to these soaked, shaking men and asks one question. "Where is your faith?" Only when their own strength ran out did they turn to Jesus, and even then more as an accusation than a prayer. Their problem was never a shortage of effort. It was that they hadn't yet grasped who was in the boat. So let the question search you. What's the thing you grab first when the storm hits, before you ever turn to him? Your savings? Your competence? Your ability to hold it all together by sheer effort? Blaming the storm on others, on circumstances? The storm isn't being cruel. It's being honest with you about where your trust has quietly drifted. Notice that the size of the faith is not the issue. A tiny faith in a great Saviour will carry you through anything; great confidence in yourself will sink you in the shallows. It was never the size of the faith. It was always the object of it. To be clear, trusting Jesus doesn't mean dropping the oars and doing nothing. He gave you the strength, the resources, the wits so use them. But row like someone who knows the One who commands the seas is in your boat, and he is in control. Not you. Not the sea.

Trusting Jesus will not shrink your storm to a teacup. What changes is whose hands hold the cup. Take these three words home with you if you're drowning right now: **Tell Him. Trust Him.** And if you've never trusted him at all **Take heart.** The storm is real but he's in your boat, and your boat is in his hands. It seems fitting then to finish this morning singing 'He will hold me Fast'. My prayer is you will know His presence, and His arms around you in the storm, and as well as in the good times.