

HE SENT THEM AWAY

MATT 14:23-33; MARK 6:45-52

Text: Matt 14:23, Mark 6:45-47

Matthew 14:23

²³ And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Mark 6:45-47

⁴⁵ And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. ⁴⁶ And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. ⁴⁷ And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

Introduction:

Life is filled with storms. It is inevitable. They are stressful, but they are not altogether avoidable. Some storms we choose ourselves. Some we face are because of the choice of some one else, and some are chosen for us by God's Sovereign will.

It is often His will to put us through the storms. He does not seek to hurt us in the storm, but He longs to help us and teach us through the storm.

In this text we see:

1. Jesus is APART from the disciples (v. 23).

He is physically apart from us, but he has not forgotten about us. He was in the mountain praying for the disciples. They were on the ship, according to the other Gospels from even or about 6:00pm, but he came not unto them until the fourth watch of the night (3-6am). Sometimes it seems that we go through a lot of the storm alone, but even though he is apart from us:

2. He is AWARE of what we're going through.

Our storm has not escaped his attention. Our lives are not outside of the scope of his focus. He has his watchful eye on us, and he will not allow us to suffer above that we are able.

3. He APPEARS in the midst of the storm, and it ceases.

This certainly illustrates how he shows up in our lives with his presence, but it also illustrates the condition of this world. He is apart from us today, though he is aware of what is transpiring, but there is coming a day when he will show up... he will come back, and all the storms will cease!

1. TIME OF STORMS

- A. Follows a great spiritual event – the feeding of the 5000.
- B. It is usually when we are at our highest that Satan attacks to bring us down low.

Illustrations:

From Jericho to Ai

Joshua 7:2-5

² And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. ³ And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; *and* make not all the people to labour thither; for they *are but* few. ⁴ So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. ⁵ And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

From the Fire to Fear

1 Kings 19:1-4

¹ And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. ³ And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there. ⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

2. TROUBLE WITH STORMS

- We can't control them.
- There are no steering wheels that man can get his hands on.
- We cannot affect the intensity of the storms.
- We cannot affect the direction of the storms.
- We cannot affect the nature of the storms, or the duration of the storms.
- Only God has control over the storms.

3. TESTING OF THE STORMS

This story is recorded in Mark 6, but in Mark 4 the disciples and our Lord were in a storm on the sea.

Jesus woke from sleep and calmed the sea, and the men marveled.

After unloading from the ship, Jesus casts legions of demons from a possessed man, crosses back over the sea to raise Jarius' daughter from the dead and heal the woman with an issue of blood.

He proceeded on to his hometown and was there rejected.

He sent forth his disciples two by two and they cast out devils, healed the sick, and preached repentance.

Soon they all heard of the death of John the Baptist and retreated to a desert place to rest. It was there our Lord fed the five thousand.

The next verse (Mark 6:45), the Word of God says, "Straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship."

Now, they were shipwrecked in chapter 4. They have experienced great power and great miracles since then. One might think that surely they have already learned

the lesson of the storms, but Jesus constrains them to get back on the ship and go back into the storms!

When we pass the tests, we can move on, but we can't move on until we learn the lessons of the storms!

They fought the storms.

They tried to work through the storms.

Even when they saw him, they thought it was a ghost! Not once is it recorded in the Gospels that the disciples prayed.

Not once is it recorded where they cried out for the Lord.

Not once is it recorded where they revisited in their minds or conversation about the storm they had already been through and the lesson they learned in it!

Some of us will keep going through the same storms until we learn the lessons and pass the tests!

4. TRAGEDY OF THE STORMS

Peter saw Jesus, called out to him, and walked to him on the water, but he took his eyes off Jesus and sank. His sinking, however, is not the tragedy of the storm.

The real tragedy is that there were 11 more disciples in the ship that could have walked on water just like Peter, but they never got out of the boat!

Peter did the impossible. Then, he did the natural. Then, he cried out for Jesus, and he did the impossible again!

Conclusion:

You will face storms. The question is, “How will you deal with them?” How will you adjust to them? What will you learn from them? Will you fight them? Will you yield to God’s will for you through them? Will you rise above them and walk on the stormy seas of life? Or will you die in doubt and despair in the midst of the storm?

God has ordered many of the storms we face, and he is trying to teach us something if we will be good students of his grace.

But we need to remember that Christ is praying for us like He did for these disciples.