

Advent: When Storms Rage

Matthew 8:23-27

Devotional Prayer, Repentance and the Spiritual Life 22 December 2019 (Advent)

Matthew 8:26 (quoted)

Have you ever been scared beyond description? I have been, several times. Blood rushes to the brain, and the heart begins to beat faster. It often leads to a panic attack, as the medical description has it. Sometimes it can last for a very long time. That was what happened to the disciples of Jesus that night in the boat. The waves crashed over the boat's hull as the storm threatened to capsize it. The disciples were soaked through, and their cold fear matched their cold bodies. They were terrified; they were in a panic. There was no hope of escape in their minds. The sea was turbulent, the wind very strong, and water was pouring down from the sky. Just as we do, they forgot about Jesus their Saviour for a while. After all, they might have thought, what can one man do against a treacherous nature? Little did they know that He is the Creator, and can control everything that was created. They went looking for Him, perhaps just to inform Him that they were about to perish.

But Jesus, the Author of Peace, in the midst of the violent storm, was sleeping peacefully. The disciples woke Him. Jesus stilled the storm with a word, and turned His attention to the disciples: "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26, King James Version).

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. When He lived on earth, He lived in shalom, regardless of how much panic swirled around Him. He offers this same peace to us in the midst of our own storms. Though the oceans of life may rip and roar, the Prince of Peace keeps us calm amid the chaos when we call upon Him. And how do we experience this shalom? We can only experience the peace of Jesus when we believe His truth. The Prince of Peace, who dwells in us through His Spirit, can help us rest in His truth, in faith, if we ask Him.

Often, when I panic, I tell myself, "you of little faith." We know Jesus very well — that is what we want ourselves and others to believe. We commune with Him. He has heard us a million times. But when we are panic-stricken, our faith fails, even if only for a moment. Enduring storms is never easy, yet we can often look back on them as some of the more intense periods of growth in our lives. Sometimes it is in the darkest and most turbulent storms that we see our greatest victories, and discover that Christ alone is our Saviour — not only in the life to

come, but in our present lives too. The faster we can overcome our panic through faith in Jesus, the faster we will draw closer to Him, to hear His soft, assuring whisper. This Christmas, let us reaffirm our faith in Him.

Next time the wind and waves rage, will you place your trust in God the Son, Jesus?