

## Jesus is Lord: Meditations from Luke 8 (part 3)

This week, we continue in Luke 8 with the Lordship of Christ. So far we've seen Jesus' lordship over sickness, death, demons, and now nature. Our text is Luke 8:22-25. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the story, with Luke being the most brief. In Mark we discover that his day began with an encounter with some Scribes from Jerusalem who accused him of casting out demons by the power of Satan. On that day he spoke many parables, including the parable of the sower. Great crowds were around him all day. And as any of us would be, he was very tired and needed some rest. So, at the end of the day, he decided to get away from the crowds, take a nice, peaceful, restful, boat ride with his close disciples to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Some of his disciples were fishermen as they would have had access to a boat. And I imagine as they began to sail, Jesus fell asleep quickly. And then, Mark tells us a GREAT windstorm arose. Both Mark and Luke use the word that is sometimes translated as "hurricane." Luke uses the word *seismic*, where we get the term for seismic activity. Luke says the storm came down "suddenly." A night of peace turns into a night of terror. What follows in the conversation during and after the storm between our Lord and the disciples are amazing and profound with much truth to teach. I have 3 truths and some applications.

1. The humanity of Jesus. In this story, we see that Jesus is tired. He is weary from the long, hard, day. He needs rest. Which of us can go without sleep for very long? None of us! We are flesh and blood. So was the Lord Jesus. Often, Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of man." I must ask: "Why humanity? Why such humiliation? Why would God come to us and take on flesh as John says, **"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"** (John 1:14)." Let me give 5 quick reasons.

i. He took on flesh to show us God. God is spirit. And no one has seen Him, and indeed cannot see Him as He is. Therefore, God took on flesh. This is the most glorious mystery, 100% God, 100% man, not mixed together, but united in one person. John says: **"No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known"** (John 1:18). In John 14:9 Jesus says, **"If you've seen me, you've seen the Father."**

ii. He took on flesh that he might be with us. Matthew repeats the words of Isaiah by saying, **"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"** (which means, God with us)" (Matt. 1:23). In the OT we see the presence of God. For example: In the wilderness, he was a cloud by day and fire by night. On the mountain, we see God's presence descend in a cloud. In the temple we see his presence in a cloud of glory. And though the people did not see God, they knew he was among them. But, in the incarnation of Jesus, we can say "He Himself is with us." And, Jesus doesn't just show up at certain times. He is with his disciples wherever they are. In our story, He is right in the middle of the storm with them. He walks the countryside with them. He eats and drinks with them. He laughs and cries with them. He is Immanuel!

iii. He took on flesh that he might help us. From turning water to wine at a wedding to providing food for thousands at a time to teaching truth about the kingdom of God to raising the dead to calming a storm that might take their lives, God took on flesh that he might help us.

iv. He took on flesh to join with us as we are (yet without sin). In the incarnation God took on flesh so that he would be just like us. He didn't appear to be man. He was man. Though conceived by the Holy Spirit, he was in the womb and born just like the rest of us. He went through the same stages we go through as he grew physically from an infant to a child to a young man. He was tired. At the end of a long day his body needed to be replenished. So, he slept, as we see here in the boat. I am sure he woke up with untidy hair in the mornings. He was hungry and thirsty and consumed food and drink just like the rest of us, no difference. This is why the writer of Hebrews can say, **“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin”** (Heb. 4:15).

v. He took on flesh to save us. The greatest purpose of his humanity was so that he might die and lay his life down for sinners. For in his death, we find life. In this we see the great love of God for sinners. **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him would not perish, but have everlasting life.”** If we were to think of all the reasons God took on flesh (and there are so many more), none of them would compare to his death. And since God, in his essence, cannot die, the incarnation is necessary in order to save sinners.

Brothers and sisters, these are only 5 reasons! And I can hardly keep my praise within myself as I consider the great beauties of Christ in his taking on flesh. Let me say by way of application, these are the things that cause great praise in us. I urge you to dwell on the incarnation of Christ in these ways. Think about such things when you read your Bible. Make sure that part of your private Christian reading focuses on the beauties of Christ in his humiliation . . . FOR US!

2. Fears and Anxieties of True Disciples of Christ. Look at vv. 23-24: **“And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying ‘Master, Master, we are perishing!’”** This storm must have been severe because some of his disciples were professional fishermen, accustomed to being on the sea in a boat during storms. I remember being on a sail boat with my uncle during college. It was Hawaii, and we set out on the north side of Honolulu in his sail boat. And the waves were huge, more 20 feet high. And with every wave, I thought, “this is dangerous.” I was really scared as we went down one wave and couldn't see over the next, only to rise again and do the same thing. But, to my uncle, this was nothing. He had seen MUCH larger waves; it was actually calm for him. But he did recall another experience as he sailed with his wife and 1-year old son from Hawaii to California. Literally, a wave broad sided the boat and they flipped on their side and then uprighted again (he was strapped in, the family was below deck). They survived, but this was really a terrifying experience. In the same kind of way, I think the disciples were literally “scared to death” in this storm.

Now, what I would like to point out here is that they were true disciples, they were men of faith. However, they had real fears and anxieties. I think, for a moment at least they forgot their master's never-failing care for them in the past. They forgot everything but the sight and sense of present danger, and could not wait until Christ was awake. Charles Ryrie says, *“It is only too true that sight, and sense, and feeling, make men very poor theologians.”* Let me ask, “How often do you look at your circumstances and forget the simple truth that Jesus is sovereign over all things

and he cares for you?” The disciples saw the wind, the waves, the water flooding the boat, and they were fearful. And as we will see, Jesus ties this fear back to a lack of faith in Him as Lord!

Here we see the greatest reason for fear, stress, and anxiety: a focus on the things of this world and a failure to see the sovereign Lord Jesus. Consider the story of Elisha and the Syrian army. At one particular time Syria was at war with the northern kingdom of Israel. And during the war God kept speaking to Elisha about the whereabouts of the Syrian army. And Elisha would tell the king as Israel’s armies would avoid danger. And the king of Syria found out somehow that Elisha was the one to blame. So, he found out where Elisha was staying and took a large army and surrounded the city. And early one morning Elisha’s servant went out and saw the great army surrounding the city. And he was terrified, saying, “*Master, What shall we do?*” Elisha said, “*Do not fear. For those who are with us are more than those who are with them.*” And then Elisha prayed, “*Lord, open his eyes.*” And God opened his eyes so that as he looked out to the very large Syrian army, he saw all around angelic horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha (2 Kings 6).

Brothers and sisters, when the fears of COVID-19 surround us, when we look at our political system and the unrest working its way up to the election, when the government is making great restrictions on Christians in parts of our country, when we see the unjust murder of millions of babies in the womb, when job security is before us, when the stresses of life come like waves over us, we need to see the great control and care of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. Even when death itself is on our doorstep, we must look unto Christ. And, we will see clearly. And great help will come our way. And, I must add, that not looking unto Christ as we look to the circumstances of life is still sin. It is still a form of idolatry as we focus on something other than Christ.

At the same time, I think it is important for us as Christians not to condemn our brothers and sisters who do worry with fears and anxieties. We must be moderate in our expectations. Believers in Christ still exhibit great weakness. Even Peter, James, and John still cry, “*Master, Master, we perish.*” We are all at different places in our sanctification. And we should help one another look unto Christ together!

3. The Great Power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at v. 24: “**And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.**” And then look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of v. 25: “**And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, ‘Who is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?’**” If you’ve ever been in a storm on a lake or on the ocean, when it stops raining, the wind and the waves continue for some time until calm comes. But, this was not the case here. IMMEDIATELY, there was no wind, no storm, no waves, but only the calmest of the calmest on the water, no fear, no anxiety, no stress. As a man he slept, but as almighty God, he commanded nature and stilled the storm!

Brothers and sisters, Jesus did not lay down his authority in the incarnation. At his word, the storm that terrifies and kills becomes the breath-taking, calming, soothing, relaxing, beautiful day on the lake with friends. In the OT we see the great power of God. This is the power that brought the great flood on the earth in the days of Noah. In Egypt, this same power brought

miraculous plagues. It divided the Red Sea. This power is seen in the conquering of the promised land. Now, when we come to the NT, we see the exact same power in Jesus. He did not invoke God to calm the storm. He did it himself! For He is God! And as his children today, we must know that all the power of Christ to calm the storm is engaged on his people. That's us!

I am reminded of Isaiah 64:1-4: **“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.”** Brothers and sisters, the heavens have been torn open by the person and work of the Son of God. He has come down . . . in humiliation as he took on flesh . . . And he dwelled with his people . . . And He laid down his life as a sacrifice . . . the wrath of heaven came down upon him . . . And at his death, the temple veil was torn in two “rent” from top to bottom . . . the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened . . . And there was an earthquake. And Luke tells us that darkness covered the land for three hours. This was his death! And then 3 days later he rose again, conquering death . . . Here, we see the answer to Isaiah's prayer. And all this power is directed for the good of his people! What a beautiful truth! . . . Let me end with some applications.

Application: The Lordship of Christ in the stories of the Bible are a great tool for apologetics. Why? Because Jesus does what only God can do. He heals the sick. He casts out demons. He raises the dead. He commands nature. And, He forgives sin. He even allows men and women to worship him. If these things are true, how can one deny his deity and lordship over people and the world?

Application: It must be so comforting to us to know that our cries of distress awaken the One whom a most violent storm does not. See v. 24. How often do we delay our calling upon him until we've exhausted all other means? Therefore, do not delay to call upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus says to us, **“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”**

Application: We must not panic, but instead stand in awe of the majesty of the Lord Jesus. The disciples were in panic mode! But, when they saw what He did, they said, **“Who is this, that even the winds and water obey him.”** Instead of panic, they should have said, **“Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil, for you are with us”** (Ps. 23).

Application: Finally, notice the emphasis on faith. Look at v. 25. Jesus said to them, **“Where is your faith?”** We've already noted their response of panic. They should have remembered already the healings, the raising of the dead, the casting out of demons, the teaching with authority. I think we all get this. And we are all at different places in our sanctification. Some are consistently more godly than others. But the key to the increase of faith is to behold the glory of Christ, which is to behold the glory of God. I think the disciples' level of trust in Jesus elevated considerably after that event. They found him to be more of a savior, more of a friend, more of a

caring brother, and more of the powerful sovereign Lord of the universe than ever before. The same happens to us as we behold the glory of Christ. Paul says this: **“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”** (2 Cor. 4:6). Therefore, I must say to you, “dwell on Him. Look at his beauty. Read about him in the Bible. He comes alive on EVERY page. Ask God to give you grace to find the Lord Jesus more beautiful. For the more beautiful he becomes, the more the cares of this world fade away, the happier you are, the less stressful you become, the more content you become, the more godly is your walk, and even death itself will become more welcome.