

Matthew 8:23-27 (NIV)

²³Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” ²⁶He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. ²⁷The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

40-08-01-What Kind of Man Is This?

trust, unbelief, Epiphany, discipleship, God’s power
Mat 8:23-27

Jesus is more concerned about little faith than about big storms.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as the Scripture reading.)

–*Do you recall your first roller coaster ride?* [Mine was unforgettable. My dad took me to the old Santa Cruz boardwalk. I was anxious for it to begin! But once it started, I could hardly wait for it to end! I was totally petrified, but I wouldn’t let my dad know that. He was laughing all the way, really enjoying himself, so I just kept looking up at him with a frozen grin on my face. What a relief when it came to a halt! But then my dad did a very fatherly thing. His son had seemed to enjoy it so much, he just handed the conductor another fare and said, “We’ll be going again!” And I just tried to hide my fears with that silly grin.]

–In their boat ride, the disciples didn’t try hiding their fears about the storm that overtook them. They thought, “*This is it! We’re done for!*”

–This *storm*, however, provided yet another *manifestation* [epiphany] of this *mysterious person*, and it made them ask, “*What kind of man is this?*”

I. They Already Knew He Was the Man to Follow:

- A. Jesus did *miracles*, performed *healings*, cast out *demons*. (To them it seemed obvious: “*This must be the Messiah, the Christ!*”)
- B. But He had just told them that *following Him entailed a cost*–
 1. He had warned that *discipleship was no easy road*– **Mat 8:19-20**,
Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”
 2. Yet, He *also* told them *discipleship was top priority*– **Mat 8:21-22**,
Another disciple said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”
- C. After seeing such *exciting works* on their journey with Jesus, they expected to see *more!* (And such *fair weather* for a little boat trip!)
 1. Something *exciting was* about to take place! [**Dr. W. M. Christie**, who spent years in Galilee, described the winds that seemingly blew from every direction. Once, he and a group of visitors stood on the shore of Tiberias with the water’s surface so calm that some doubted that such storms as the Gospels described were possible. Almost at once, a wind sprang up. In 20 minutes the sea was white with foam-crested waves. Great billows broke over the towers at the corners of the city walls, and the visitors had to seek shelter from the blinding spray that reached 200 yards from the lakeside.”
[The Greek word for this “*storm*” is *seismos*, which, on land, is the same

word used for an *earthquake*.]

2. We can't foresee what's in store when we follow Jesus. (So, *what boat does Jesus call us to step into with Him?*)
 - a. Mark 4 records "*the boat*" as the one Jesus preached in. (Today, He mostly preaches His Word *from inside the Church*.)
 - b. Jesus called His "*disciples*" to enter "*the boat*" with Him. (For us that means *the Church*, which down through history has been *endlessly exposed to furious storms*.)

TRANS: During this event, notice that **Jesus is more concerned about little faith than about big storms.** He kept putting His disciples in situations that *stretched their faith*. They believed He was the *Messiah*, the *Prince* prophesied in the OT. *But did they really know Who He was?* They were *about to learn....*

II. What Kind of Man Can Sleep Through a Storm?

- A. Jesus was a real human, needing sleep. (As an infant, His *earthly mother* rocked Him to sleep *in her gentle arms*. Now, as a grown man, *Mother Nature* rocked Him to sleep *in a storm-tossed boat!*)
- B. He slept with complete confidence. [A Christian officer, assigned to a new military post, took ship with his family. In the midst of an terrible storm, his wife complained about his calmness: "*If you don't care about yourself, you should at least show concern for your wife and children!*" The officer, going to his room and bringing back his sword, drew it and pointed its tip at his wife's heart. When she only smiled, he asked why she wasn't afraid for her life. She replied, "*How can I be, when the one holding it loves me?*" Then he said, "*How can I fear a storm whose fury is in the hand of our loving Heavenly Father?*")
- C. Jesus calls us to follow Him in *being undisturbed by life's storms*, even being able to sleep through them. [During a test, a submarine was submerged all night. Back in harbor, the captain was asked, "*How did that big storm last night affect you?*" In answered, "*What storm? We didn't know there was one!*" The sub was so far beneath the surface that it reached an area they call "*the cushion of the sea*."] (Faith in God's loving watch-care can turn *every storm* into a "*cushion*" to rest our mind's upon.)

TRANS: On awakening Jesus, they were probably surprised that He was **not so concerned about the big storm.** He was **concerned about their little faith.** They did reverence Him, addressing Him as "*Lord*" and even praying to Him, "*save us!*" But, instead of *trusting*, they added

what seemed obvious to fishermen, "*We're going to drown!*" When He seemed *calm* and *unconcerned*, they might have been thinking...

III. "What Kind of Man Is This?"

- A. Usually, someone called upon for help *deals with the emergency first* and later with *what needs correction*. (To Jesus, a faith issue was the most urgent point— v.26a, He replied, "*You of little faith, why are you so afraid?*") To Him, the storm was insignificant in comparison.
- B. Christ's primary concern is about *the state of our faith in Him*—
 1. "*Little faith*" leads to *great fear*. (His incarnation was specifically for the purpose of destroying fear's power— Heb 2:14-15, Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.
 2. Their "*little faith*" betrayed a lack of trust in His *wisdom, love, and power*. (God's concern for us isn't so much about life's *stormy trials*, but about the faith by which He wants us to face them.)
- C. After rebuking their "little faith," v.26b says, "*Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.*"
 1. The incarnate Creator was speaking to His creation—not in His capacity as God, but in His *divinely empowered humanity*.
 2. The *Son of God*, Who was faithful and fearless as the "son of man," tells **us**, who are *children of men*, to have fearless faith as *children of God*.

CONCLUSION:

—The answer to "*What kind of man is this?*" is that Jesus was God in the flesh, demonstrating what human faith is supposed to look like. He has called us to follow Him, to enter the boat of life with Him. Whether our lives are "*completely calm*" or whether they are suddenly *beset by furious storms*, He wants us to entrust ourselves to His care. He wants our "*little faith*" to become "*great faith*."