

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 5 July 2020

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 729

I stand amazed in the presence
of Jesus the Nazarene
and wonder how he could love me,
a sinner condemned, unclean!

*How marvellous! how wonderful!
this my song shall ever be:
how marvellous! how wonderful
is my Saviour's love for me!*

2 For me he prayed in the garden
and bowed to the will divine;
he had no tears for his own griefs,
but sweat drops of blood for mine.

Charles H Gabriel (1856-1932)

3 In pity angels beheld him,
and came from the world of light
to comfort him in the sorrows
he bore for my soul that night.

4 He took my sins and my sorrows,
he made them his very own,
he bore the burden to Calvary
and suffered and died alone.

5 When with the ransomed in glory
his face I at last shall see,
my joy will be through the ages
to sing of his love for me.

Reading: Matthew 8:18-34, ESV

¹⁸ Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. ¹⁹ And a scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." ²⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ²¹ Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ²² And Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

Continues on next page →

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." ²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ And the men marvelled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

²⁸ And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, ^[a] two demon-possessed ^[b] men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

³⁰ Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹ And the demons begged him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs." ³² And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. ³³ The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴ And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

Hymn

Who has held the oceans in his hands?

Who has numbered every grain of sand?

Kings and nations tremble at his voice

All creation rises to rejoice

Behold our God, seated on his throne

Come, let us adore him

Behold our king, nothing can compare

Come, let us adore him

2 Who has given counsel to the Lord?

Who can question any of his words?

Who can teach, the one who knows all things?

Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?

3 Who has felt the nails upon his hands?

Bearing all the guilt of sinful man

God eternal, humbled to the grave

Jesus, Saviour, risen now to reign

Jonathan Baird, Meghan Baird, Ryan Baird, and Stephen Altrogge

Prayer

Hymn: Praise 2! 11

King of kings, Majesty

God of Heaven living in me

Gentle Saviour, closest friend

Strong Deliverer, beginning and end

All within me falls at Your throne

2 Earth and Heaven worship You

Love eternal, Faithful and True

Who bought the nations, ransomed souls

Brought this sinner near to Your throne

All within me cries out in praise.

Your Majesty, I can but bow

I lay my all before You now

In royal robes I don't deserve

I live to serve Your Majesty

Jarrood Cooper

Sermon: Matthew 8:23-34 – What Kind of Man is This?

“What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him!” (v27)

Two men, two approaches to leadership

No matter how qualified or how educated or how well briefed our experts are, they can never know everything.

Jesus’ disciples faced a crisis and experienced something far greater than they could ever have imagined.

Verse 27: “What sort of man is this, that even the wind and waves obey him?” They knew that like Mr Trump and Mr Johnson, Jesus was a man who had authority, but they had no idea before this event just how much.

1. The humanity of Jesus

Despite the familiarity of the miracle, at least two things which continue to stand out – the fact that Jesus was able to sleep and the fact that He was able to still the storm with just a word.

Jesus taught “as one who had authority, and not as one of their scribes” (7:29)

Jesus’ humanity is very important (Hebrews 2:14-18) 14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject

to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, although fully God, had a true human nature. He wasn't "God in the shell of a human body" – he was fully God and fully man.

V24: "And behold, there arose a great storm, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep." He was exhausted!

Matthew says that the storm was so violent that the waves "swept over the boat" (v23). The boat, it seems, was in real danger of sinking.

These were experienced fishermen, in a large boat.

Jesus was able to sleep secure in the knowledge that His life was safe in His Father's hand. He knew that the mission was safe and for that reason He could give Himself totally to sleep. Jesus slept soundly because He depended on His Father for all things.

Jesus wasn't in control of the situation, but He knew, and rested in the fact that His Father was.

The tempest arose by the providence of God, for His own purposes. God was demonstrating what faith in Him should look like by contrasting Jesus' calmness with the disciples' panic.

We are like the disciples: we find it easy to trust in God when things are going well, when we feel like we have control over all the things that are taking place, but as soon as things get tough, as soon as we feel out of control, we start to panic.

Having faith in God doesn't mean that we have the confidence that we won't have any trials in our lives.

True faith is having the confidence that no matter what wind or waves come your way in this world, that the God of the universe who controls and works all things according to His good plan will always be right there in the boat with you.

We too can know that we are safe in the presence of the One who has ultimate authority over all the things of earth – whether it be nature, illness or life itself.

2. The manner of Jesus

An unexpected response v26: "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?"

Erm... wouldn't you be afraid?

However, they did just call Jesus “Lord” - they also had just reminded Him that He could save them (v25). They’ve also seen the power of Jesus on a consistent basis: healing all the sick who were brought to Him and casting out demons and all with nothing more than His will and His word.

Their lives are at stake. Now their faith that Jesus can do anything is truly put to the test. Will they be able to rely on Him when it’s them who are in physical peril? “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” (Mark 4:38) and “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!” (Luke 8:24)

Jesus makes them pause for a moment – in the midst of the storm – and asks them to consider: do they have a reason to be afraid at this point?

“You of little faith” shows the disciple’s problem perfectly. If they had strong faith, they wouldn’t have panicked, but rested in Jesus’ power. If they had had no faith, they wouldn’t have cried out “Lord, save”. They are a mixture of faith and lack of faith.

John Calvin: “If we fear nothing, an indolent and carnal security steals upon us... faith languishes, the desire to pray becomes sluggish.” In other words, if our faith is never tested, if we never have anything to fear, faith becomes just an abstract concept and prayer becomes unnecessary.

Irrational fear resists comfort. It forgets the goodness and power of God. It extinguishes faith. Godly fear recognises that there is a threat but is tempered by confidence in the goodness of God.

“Perfect love casts out fear”. We have perfect love for God when our love for God answers the love that He has already set upon us (1 John 4:18-19).

If we could begin to grasp the love of God for us – love enough to die in our place – and if we understood how mighty God is – mighty enough to speak and have words come into being, our fear would begin to take on the right size and shape.

3. The power of Jesus

Jesus speaks and immediately great calm comes over the sea. Jesus demonstrates his authority and unique ability. He commands nature and receives obedience. When Jesus commands, nature obeys. He is sovereign over all things.

God ordained, or permitted the storm to arise in the first place. Satan may have tried to use it for his evil purposes, but God used it for good.

The purpose was to reveal Jesus’ identity as the Son of God, for no-one else could exercise such power.

John Calvin: “Those who know God’s power safely rest in His protection, for He controls all the harmful things we fear.”

Lessons from God's providence:

- God's will is the final cause of all things, even the storms of life that we face today. We cannot call God to account for His actions, but as our Creator, we must humbly accept His judgements.
- We should take comfort from it and find solace in it. The Lord ordains our path and watches over our ways. Nothing that happens in our life happens by chance or coincidence. When we find peace in God's providence, we can free ourselves from worrying about the future.
- We have a place to go with our troubles and questions. When hurt by wicked men, we can go to God, fully believing that whatever the enemy intends, God permits it and intends to use it ultimately for our good.
- Hebrews 9:27 reminds us that "it is appointed for man to die once." We will all die therefore we must have a strong faith, but even the strongest believers will endure hardship.

"What sort of man is this, that even the wind and waves obey him?"

The only One who can command the seas is God alone (Job 38:8-11). Therefore, this kind of Man is the God-man who came to save His people from their sins. He is the Master of nature as no one else is.

We know who this Jesus is. He is the Lord and Saviour. He has power over the storm, but greater than that, He has power over sin and death itself.

That is why we can trust Him and why we should follow Him. When He commands us to follow Him, He never says that it will be an easy ride. Our comfort comes not from circumstances. It comes from Christ Himself. He is there with us in every storm.

Therefore, we can take our fears to Him, whether they are real or imagined and know that He will listen. He is the Master of nature, the Saviour and He exercises His reign for our good, now and forever. That is who this Man is. That is why even the wind and waves obey Him. And that ultimately is when all men inevitably fail, we can continue to trust him with our whole lives.

Hymn: Praise! 774

A sovereign protector I have,
unseen, yet for ever at hand,
unchangeably faithful to save,
almighty to rule and command.
He smiles, and my comforts abound;
his grace as the dew shall descend,
and walls of salvation surround
the soul he delights to defend.

2 Inspirer and hearer of prayer,
both leading and guarding your sheep,
I place in your covenant care
my life, both awake and asleep;
if you are my shield and my sun
the night is no darkness to me,
for, fast as my moments roll on,
so nearer to you I shall be.

Augustus M Toplady (1740-1778)

3 Creator and ground of my hope,
to your name alone I shall bow,
a new 'Ebenezer' set up
to show 'God has helped us till now.'
I think on the years that are past,
when all my defence you have proved;
nor will you relinquish at last
a sinner so blessed and so loved.

Closing Prayer