

“What manner of man is this...?”

I remember storms when I was growing up. I lived with my grandparents for a time and my grandmother was so afraid of a storm. It was not just seeing it that bothered her but also the sound of the storm. The sight and sounds would drive my grandmother to the closet and there she stayed until it was over. There might have been a time when grandpa was home and a storm came up. He would always know where to find grandma and would often tell her there was nothing to fear, but in the closet she stayed and she would move for no man. This fear was heartfelt and sincere and all of those around her knew that storms were not her finest hour.

Many years ago there was a storm where I live. I had been on our patio watching the clouds move out very quickly to be replaced by darkness. And all of a sudden the light was gone and it was dark. I mean very dark, a darkness that spoke to you and what it said was simple.....go to shelter and go to shelter quickly. It was then that my wife and I went to the basement until all was over. I thought about grandma at that time and a closet was nearby but I knew the safest place would be down low and to the basement we went. I left the television on loud enough to be heard in the basement. The weather people had already advised their listeners to head to a basement and when we heard the all clear for our county, out of the basement we came. The sky was bright, blue, and wonderful looking. The storm had passed and left its mark on some of the countryside around us. We would find out later that it was not just a storm but a tornado that struck less than a mile from our house.

I am told that if you find yourself in a boat and a storm comes up it can turn ugly very fast. The water can hurt when it hits and where do you go for shelter on a boat? The calm of the water disappears and suddenly the waves begin to build. This brief description scares me enough that I really do not ever want to be on water in a storm. I told this to a younger man who is in the Coast Guard and he laughed. The stories he told me about storms and water and being on a ship.....NO, emphatically NO. The storm on the water is just like the storm I experienced and wrote about above. All of a sudden the beautiful sky or the very calm waters change and change for the worse. I have a strong preference for being on land even if I do get wet. I thought about this when I found myself on a boat with friends on the Sea of Galilee in March 2008. It is easy to see land when you are on this body of water but if the winds blow in the right direction I am told the waves on the Sea of Galilee can be just like waves found on any larger body of water. On this day for me the sky was blue, the wind was warm and there were no forecasts for any bad weather.

A long time ago a group of men found themselves on a boat crossing the same body of water that I found myself crossing in March 2008. They were ordinary men just like you that came from many different work backgrounds but one day in their lives they were spoken to by another man. This man called them and they followed. On this day in their boat one man found himself asleep. This man was tired and needed rest. This man was not ordinary like those who followed him. His day had been long and filled with meeting many people who had requests. He honored the request of a leper, a centurion,

healed a woman with just a single touch of his hand and dealt with a demon possessed man. Just like you, I know what it is to have a busy day. My busy days were never like this and I assume yours were not either. We can also relate to being tired and needing rest. This man and his followers sought after a boat and went to the other side of a body of water. We are told that “without warning” a storm came up but this man had fallen asleep in the boat. The storm is described in Matthew Chapter 8. I imagine being on a boat, in a storm and no place to hide. I also imagine the fear of death taking over just like it did for these men in that boat except for one. Because of fear the men woke up this man called Jesus and said to him, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown.” Absolute fear for sure but this Jesus did not encourage the men to row faster and did not join in their fear. He just spoke. It was no different that a touch to heal a woman, a word to heal a servant, or words to heal a leper but it was His word and His alone. Just like that morning, this evening for Jesus only took a word from His lips and the wind and the waves stopped.

“He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “**Quiet! Be still!**” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.” (Mark 4:39. NIV)

Now please understand. The storm did not just gradually come to an end. It stopped immediately. And these disciples of this Jesus marveled as you and I would under the same circumstances. Then they spoke following this incident.

“What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him.”
(Matthew 8:27...NIV)

Have you ever had your back to the wall and did not know where to go or what to do? You are in good company. We are no different than the disciples when we question what direction to take in times of troubles. So, if we do learn from our mistakes as well as the mistakes of others then let us learn and let us get to know better this man whom the disciples marveled at by saying.... ***“What kind of man is this?”***..... There is no reason that if they eventually understood the answer to this question that we can not also understand the answer to this question. Not only did a supernatural event occur in the lives of these disciples but they can also occur in ours when we finally discover, ***“What kind of man is this?”***

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (Isaiah 43:1-2...KJV)

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