

With Jesus On The Sea Of Life.

Text: Mat 8:23-27

Suggested Hymns:

- 1) Storms arise
- 2) Help is sought
- 3) Deliverance comes

389, 158, 397, Jesus, Saviour, pilot me, 395

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 8:23-27, ²³ *Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. ²⁴ And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. ²⁵ Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"*

²⁶ *But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷ So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The Scriptures view the life of believers under different images. Christians are pilgrims on their way through a bleak and dreary desert to the heavenly home. We read in Hebrews 11:13, ¹³ *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

And in 1 Peter 2:11, ¹¹ *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.*

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 119:19, ¹⁹ *I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.*

Life is also pictured as a race. We read in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25, ²⁴ *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run*

in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

And in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, ⁷ *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* ⁸ *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*¹

In our text, life is regarded as a voyage over a sea. Let us consider this voyage. Our theme is *With Jesus on the Sea of Life*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. With Jesus On The Sea Of Life Storms Do Arise

After a very busy day in Capernaum Jesus at evening entered into a ship, and His disciples followed Him. The sea was calm, and there was no indication of an impending storm. But suddenly and unexpectedly a great storm arose.

Matthew's language is beautifully descriptive. Suddenly, without previous warning, a furious windstorm broke loose. The winds came down from the mountainside and converted the otherwise calm and quiet Sea of Galilee into an angry whirlpool.

The disciples were men of the sea. Most of Jesus' 12 disciples had been professional fishermen, and they surely had experienced such storms and were capable of handling a boat in a storm. But this storm was especially violent, and the disciples soon realised that the situation was out of their control.

They did what they could to combat the wind and the waves. But wave upon wave swept over the little craft, and it was being filled with water. The disciples feared that any moment now the boat would be engulfed by the angry sea and carry them to a watery grave. Fear was in their heart, and lines of consternation were written upon their countenance.

And Jesus was asleep! He is true man. He had had a very strenuous day of work in Capernaum, and He had become very tired. While the storm raged, He was sound asleep. The howling of the wind and the breaking of the waves

against the ship did not rouse Him from His sleep. He sleeps while His disciples fear. He sleeps while His disciples battle against the fury of the storm.

Let us take the Sea of Galilee as a picture of the sea of life. We have chosen as our pilot Jesus of Nazareth.

Often we have sung in faith,²

Lead us, heav'nly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but Thee;

But not all people think like this. There are many people who face the storms of life without Jesus. They trust in their own riches, their education, their goodness, and their friends to help them through all the difficulties of life. Poor mortals they are!

We have learned to know our weakness, and our helplessness. Earthly wisdom is not a reliable chart and compass for the voyage across the trackless sea. Human merit and goodness cannot save us when the storm of God's wrath and justice strikes. Jesus is the only reliable and safe Pilot. He has braved the storm of God's wrath for us.

Jesus sank, sank into the depths of hell, and His friends gave Him and His cause up for lost. But His sinking was followed on the third day by a triumphant rising. Now He is able to save to the uttermost all those who come to God by Him. Jesus is the true Saviour from sin, Satan, and death. His vicarious atonement has paid the debt and punishment of our sins, has silenced Satan's accusations, and conquered death and the grave.

Is Jesus your Saviour? Come with Him into His ship, the Holy Christian Church. Rely upon Christ's blood and merit for acceptance before the throne of the holy God. Trust Him to guide you safely to eternal security and peace.

Although you have taken Jesus with you on the sea of life, your voyage will not always be smooth and calm. Storms will arise; storms will rage; angry waves will toss your vessel to and fro and cause you to fear and tremble, and at times drive you almost to despair.

What are the storms. They may be financial losses, sickness, bereavement, and suffering for Jesus' sake. These storms often bring about inward storms such as doubts, questionings, and a troubled conscience. Jesus seems asleep. He seems not to care. Day is turned to night, laughter to tears, and song to sighs and moaning. Our heart cries out for a God who cares.

Jesus does care. This fact is abundantly sealed to us by the promises of the Bible. We read in John 10:14, ¹⁴ *“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.”* In John chapter 11 Jesus shows that He cares by raising Lazarus from the dead. We learn from Psalm 27:10 that ¹⁰ *When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.*

God will never forget you as we read in Isaiah 49:15, ¹⁵ *Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.*

Jesus understands your situation as we read in Hebrews 4:15, ¹⁵ *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Tried and afflicted soul, Jesus knows. Jesus cares.

The hymnist writes,³

This I believe yea, rather,
In this I make my boast,
That God is my dear Father,
The friend that loves me most,
And that, whate'er betide me,
My Lord is ever near,
Through stormy seas to guide me,
And banish every fear.

2. With Jesus On The Sea Of Life Help Is Sought

When the winds blow and the breakers roar, go to your Saviour for help. ²⁵ *Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”* We can read their excitement and fear in their words. Their speech is abrupt. In the original the cry for help comprises only three words.

Christ's answer is "*Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?*" The Lord chides them because of their fear and little faith. How could they think of perishing with Jesus, the almighty God, with them?

After they had just experienced the authority of Jesus' teaching and had observed the many miracles He had just performed, they should have realised that they were perfectly safe as long as Jesus was with them. Jesus obviously was not frightened or worried, so why should they be?

It is easy for us to be critical of the disciples' lack of faith in this situation, but how do you suppose you or I would have reacted? After all, we know that Jesus is also with us always, no matter where we are or what dangers may threaten us.

Can we claim that our faith is never shaken in times of trouble and danger? We must also confess that our faith is sometimes pitifully weak. At such times we can learn even from Jesus' weak disciples to come to our Lord in prayer and to rely on Him for deliverance.

But let us not aim any criticism at the disciples. Rather let us apply the rebuke to ourselves. Honestly, we often act as though our Jesus was dead. We fear too much, we fret too much, and we worry too much.

We are far from that strong, triumphant, world-conquering faith that keeps the heart calm when the storm is high, that lifts our soul above the clouds into the serene sunshine of the mountain top.

But although we are of little faith, and fear makes our requests but cries for help, yet Jesus is pleased to have us come to Him and seek His help. In every need pour out your heart to Jesus who alone can help and deliver, strengthen and uphold you.

Do not be offended when in His Word or through the lips of His chosen minister the Lord chides your weakness of faith, your lack of child-like trust, your gloomy outlook and fears. But continue to lean heavily upon the mighty arm of Jesus and ask Him to give you implicit trust in His glorious promises of help and willingly surrender to His gracious, loving will. Believe that at last deliverance will come.

3. With Jesus On The Sea Of Life Deliverance Comes

Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. What majesty touches these words. The mighty Sovereign of the sea arose; He spoke to the angry sea. We hear His command of omnipotence, as written in Mark 4:39 ***“Peace, be still!”*** Immediately the sea obeyed His voice, and there was a great calm.

When Jesus commanded the forces of nature to quiet down, that was certain to take place — without delay. Jesus’ almighty power as the Son of God attended the words that He spoke.

Just as that centurion at Capernaum could expect immediate obedience when he gave an order to a soldier under his command, so even the wind and the waves had to obey the One who had created them and established all the laws of nature.

That is true of all the promises our Lord gives us in the inspired Scriptures. Every threat He has made to punish wickedness and unbelief will most certainly be carried out; and every promise He has made to forgive and bless and save penitent sinners cannot fail to be fulfilled.

So our salvation is sure, because we have Jesus’ word for it, and it depends entirely upon Jesus’ suffering and death, and fulfilling the Law, as our substitute and not upon any merit or worthiness in us.

The almighty and merciful Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He arises and rebukes the storm of our affliction, and we are helped. He can give new strength to our weak and ailing body and turn failure to success and moans to songs of triumph.

But if according to His often mysterious will the physical affliction continues, the gracious Saviour will not leave us nor forsake us. He will arise and through the Gospel speak calm to our troubled souls.

His wonderful words of divine promises are powerful to silence our doubts and turn our weakness to joyous confidence. Assured of a heavenly Father’s love and a gentle Saviour’s care and guidance, we can confess in faith, ***“Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”***

We have the advantage over all the people who were in the boat with Jesus or in the attending boats, for we know that Jesus is the Son of God and that He willingly died for our sins, rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven 40 days later.

Jesus has promised that one day He will come again and raise all the dead and take us and all believers to Himself in heaven. Our arrival at our heavenly destination is just as certain as was the disciples' safe arrival on the opposite shore of the Sea of Galilee.

However, we also must expect to encounter storms on the way. Then at last, *"when ends life's transient dream and death's cold sullen stream shall o'er us roll,"*⁴ the blessed Jesus will speak His almighty word, and the sea will become as smooth as glass, and we shall enter, as in a moment, into the haven of eternal rest, on the banks of which glisten the golden towers of the New Jerusalem. *Mighty Sovereign of the sea, Jesus, Saviour, pilot me. Amen*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ See also Hebrews 12:1

² Hymn 397

³ Hymn 411 v 2

⁴ Hymn 368