

UNEXPECTED AUTHORITY

Lesson 2

Matthew 8:23–27

RECAP

Take a moment to share about your experience with last week’s “Spiritual Practice” and “On Mission” sections.

BIG IDEA

Through the miracles found in **Matthew 8** Jesus clearly displayed His power and authority. This power and authority was over sin, disease, and creation, as well as the unseen realms.

CONTEXT

Matthew placed the miracle of Jesus calming the sea after the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law and before sending demons out of two men into a herd of pigs. **Matthew 8** contains miracles that demonstrated the Kingdom of God in action.¹ As Jesus was crossing the sea, He was heading into Gentile territory in order to expand the Kingdom of God.

READ MATTHEW 8:23–27

²³ Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his disciples. ²⁴ Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵ The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

²⁶ Jesus responded, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly there was a great calm.

²⁷ The disciples were amazed. “Who is this man?” they asked. “Even the winds and waves obey him!”

¹ “Mark and Luke recorded some of the following events [as well], but placed them in different locations, probably in the chronological sequence of events.” Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 147

d. The experience of crying out to God, “Why are you sleeping?” is universal. Read through and underline what stands out to you from the following laments/pleas:⁵

i. **Isaiah 51:9–11**

⁹ Wake up, wake up, O LORD! Clothe yourself with strength!

Flex your mighty right arm!

Rouse yourself as in the days of old when you slew Egypt, the dragon of the Nile.

¹⁰ Are you not the same today, the one who dried up the sea, making a path of escape through the depths so that your people could cross over?

¹¹ Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.

They will enter Jerusalem singing, crowned with everlasting joy.

Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

ii. **Psalm 44:23**

Wake up, O LORD! Why do you sleep? Get up! Do not reject us forever.

iii. **Psalm 35:23**

Wake up! Rise to my defense! Take up my case, my God and my Lord.

iv. How do you personally relate to these verses of lament/plea?

⁵ Just like the disciples were literally experiencing Jesus sleeping, the nation of Israel had often felt that God was distant or sleeping and cried out in lament.

3. Scripture says clearly that God does not sleep (**Psalm 121:3–4**). Take time to list some ways that you have seen Jesus show His power and authority in the storms of your life.

How might these past “storm” experiences inform the way you come to Jesus or respond to “storms” in the future?

4. What was Jesus’ response to the disciples when they cried out that they were going to drown? (**Matthew 8:26**)
 - a. Why do you think Jesus responded that way?⁶
 - b. While, “You have so little faith,” may seem like a harsh statement,⁷ how was Jesus both inviting and challenging the disciples?

⁶ The disciples had been doing ministry with Jesus and had already experienced Him healing and casting out evil spirits, yet they panicked during this storm and feared for their lives.

⁷ Jesus also used this phrase when He spoke to Peter as he was sinking after being invited to walk on water. (**Matthew 14:22–33**) “Wherever ‘little faith’ is used in Matthew (see **6:30**; **14:31**; **16:8**), it signifies the failure to see beyond the mere surface of things.” Barker, Kenneth L., et al. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Zondervan, 2004. Bible Gateway Plus

5. What was Jesus' command to the wind and waves and what happened? (**Matthew 8:26**)

a. In the following verses, underline what you see about Jesus having control over nature.

i. **Psalm 107:23–30**

²³ Some went off to sea in ships, plying the trade routes of the world. ²⁴ They, too, observed the LORD's power in action, his impressive works on the deepest seas. ²⁵ He spoke, and the winds rose, stirring up the waves. ²⁶ Their ships were tossed to the heavens and plunged again to the depths; the sailors cringed in terror. ²⁷ They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits' end. ²⁸ "Lord, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. ²⁹ He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves. ³⁰ What a blessing was that stillness as he brought them safely into harbor!

ii. **Job 38:8–11**

⁸ "Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb, ⁹ and as I clothed it with clouds and wrapped it in thick darkness? ¹⁰ For I locked it behind barred gates, limiting its shores. ¹¹ I said, 'This far and no farther will you come. Here your proud waves must stop!'"

iii. **Psalm 89:9**

You rule the oceans. You subdue their storm-tossed waves.

iv. **Isaiah 42:5**

God, the LORD, created the heavens and stretched them out. He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath to everyone, life to everyone who walks the earth.

v. **Psalm 8:3–4**

³ When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—⁴ what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?

- b. How would you sum up the power and authority God has over nature?

6. The same word Jesus used to rebuke the storm (ἐπιτιμάω/epitimaō)⁸ is also used in reference to commanding evil spirits.⁹ Jesus has dominion over both the seen and the unseen world.¹⁰

Have you ever experienced God's power in the supernatural (spiritual) realm? If you are comfortable, share that experience with your group. (If you don't have an example, that's okay, take time to listen to other's stories.)

Do these stories help to give you hope? In what way?

⁸ **Matthew 8:26**

⁹ See **Matthew 17:18; Mark 1:23–25; 9:25; Luke 4:41**

¹⁰ "Although the degree to which Matthew thought of the winds and sea as being subject to supernatural or demonic powers is unclear, he may not have conceived of them as we do, that is, as lifeless elements." W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2, T&T Clark International, 2004. 74.

7. What question did the disciples ask after the miracle?
(**Matthew 8:27**)

What is your typical response when God shows His power and does something that is beyond what you are able to do yourself?

8. Each of these stories tells us more about Jesus. What is one thing you have learned about Jesus from this lesson, and how will it impact how you live?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

If this story is simply Jesus calming the storm, it either has very little to do with us or we wonder why He doesn't calm every storm that comes into our lives. However, this story is bigger than Jesus calming the sea. Jesus has authority over all of creation, both the seen and the unseen. Regardless of what is happening around us, Jesus, Himself is peace.

“When the cold, bleak wind of sorrow blows, there is calm and comfort in the presence of Jesus Christ. When the hot blast of passion blows, there is peace and security in the presence of Jesus Christ. When the storms of doubt seek to uproot the very foundations of the faith, there is steady safety in the presence of Jesus Christ. In every storm that shakes the human heart, there is peace with Jesus Christ.”¹¹

As you experience the storms of life, take time to sit with Jesus and walk through these steps:

- Sit with your hands facing down and pray this prayer:
“Jesus, I give to You the storms I am facing. I recognize that You may not make them stop, but that You have authority over them.”
- Turn your hands right side up and pray this prayer:
“Jesus, I receive Your peace as I sit in Your presence. Regardless of what is going on around me, I know You are not sleeping. You are Peace and I trust You.”

¹¹ Barclay, William. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Vol. 1, Westminster Press, 1975. 318

ON MISSION

We as believers have Christ in us, we image Him and we have Holy Spirit's power. So, on some level, we have access to the power and authority that can calm storms and bring peace. Acknowledging and using that power can show Jesus to the people around us.

Calming storms and bringing peace can be a witness to those who don't yet know Christ as well as an encouragement to other believers.

Where do you see a need for God's power?

How could you invite God into those spaces?

Jot down some ideas about what that could look like in your life and/or brainstorm with your group.

After you have brainstormed together, take a first step toward bringing peace this week to your spheres of influence.

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

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