

The Fourth Sunday after the Festival of the Epiphany of our Lord  
St. Matthew 8:23-27  
February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Who Can This Be?

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

After our Lord's preaching on the Mount, great crowds followed Him, for they confessed that His Words—His preaching—was filled with an authority that the scribes of their time did not possess. He spoke with the authority that only someone who had been sent by God could possess. Therefore, after His preaching, the crowds who heard Him followed Him. And last week we heard of two individuals in the crowd who needed healing, one for himself, the other for his neighbor.

Today, however, the crowds have been sent away, so that our Lord + Jesus is left to be with His disciples alone. Our Lord often does this. He takes His disciples to be with Him in private, so that He might impart instruction and learning that they would later pass onto the crowds. And, as we will see next Sunday when we celebrate the Festival of the Transfiguration of the Lord, in some cases, our Lord + Jesus only brings three of His disciples with Him—Sts. Peter, James and John.

So then, here on the Sea of Galilee as the disciples and our Lord crossed over in boats, we are told a "tempest" arose. In the original Greek language, the Evangelist St. Matthew (through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost) uses the word, "seismos." This is the word from which we get our word earthquake. The word implies a great shaking and commotion. This tempest that arose was not just strong winds, but winds so strong that the boats were being tossed about as if they were nothing.

This is why the disciples beseech the Lord + Jesus for help. We have to remember that at least four of the disciples were fishermen—Sts. Peter, James, John and Andrew. They were brothers and business partners, with their fathers, as fishermen. In other words, they knew how to handle a boat. They were experienced with the water and being on the water, and dealing with the weather that can suddenly occur when one is on the water. The fact that they ask the Lord + Jesus for help is telling. This "tempest"—this seismos—was of such force that even these experienced boat handlers were afraid for their lives.

So then, where do men who are experienced with boats go when their boating skills are not enough to rescue them? These men, the disciples, go to the Lord + Jesus. This in itself shows faith. They had enough faith to know that in trouble they should go to the Lord for help. The same should be

true of us, as well. We should learn to have enough faith to go to the Lord + Jesus for help in times of trouble. When we struggle with sin, our Lord + Jesus is the One Who has won forgiveness for us on the tree of the holy cross and provides that forgiveness through His Word and Sacraments, which we receive in this sanctuary. When we are sick or injured, it is the Lord + Jesus Who is able to heal us of our physical maladies. Through our constant hearing of our Lord's preaching, our faith is strengthened to the point where we know to Whom to go for healing and forgiveness. We know, through our faith, to go to our Lord + Jesus for help.

So did the disciples in today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Matthew. They had enough faith to know to go to the Lord + Jesus for help in this tempest. Why then does our Lord rebuke their littleness of faith when He is awoken from sleep? Is He just like some of us who are grumpy whenever we are sleeping and someone tries to wake us? I imagine my wife is quite familiar with the concept. No, our Lord is not grumpy at the disciples for having awoken Him. He rebukes their littleness of faith, because they should not have even been afraid in the first place.

What an amazing teaching! Our Lord + Jesus is teaching His disciples that even though they are being tossed about like a building in an earthquake; even though the winds and the waves are in such turmoil that these experienced boat handlers not convinced of their skill, they are not to be afraid, because the Lord is their protection. The Lord + Jesus is with them, and no harm will befall them. For, the heavenly Father watches out for the Lord + Jesus and those under His care.

But, the same would be true even if the Lord + Jesus was not with them in the boat. The heavenly Father—the Lord God Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth—will not let those chosen by our Lord + Jesus come to harm until they had accomplished their mission of preaching the Gospel to the entire world. The disciples were under the protection of the Lord God and were safe from any tempest or storm or earthquake or fire or stoning or poison or prison (as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles). Our Lord + Jesus is teaching His disciples to have the kind of faith that showed no fear in the midst of any life-threatening situation. This is the kind of faith that they would be taught to possess after spending three years with our Lord and being instructed by Him.

They would take this great faith and go into all the world and proclaim the great things our Lord + Jesus has done for us and for all mankind. They would face persecution and death, but would gladly face it for they came to see just Who this Man is. He was the Redeemer and Savior of the world. He was God in the flesh. He revealed to His disciples today that He was the Incarnate Savior of the world. He was the Man Who created the Heavens and the Earth. He could command the wind and the waves, for He created them. All things are under His authority. All things are under the authority of this Man Who is God.

The same faith is something that the Holy Ghost now teaches us. Through our constant participation in hearing the Word of God and receiving the Blessed Sacraments; through the daily living in our Holy Baptisms—through daily confessing our sins to our heavenly Father, and believing that our sins are forgiven on account of Christ's sake, our faith is strengthened through the work of the Holy Ghost. We receive this faith in the Church—here in this place. This is why it is important for us to always be here—to always be in the Word—for it is here that our faith is strengthened by the One Who has all authority in Heaven and Earth, and Who gives us His Holy Ghost to create and strengthen our faith.

It is easy for us to turn to the Lord + Jesus in times of trouble, just as the disciples do in our Gospel. But we should learn to always turn to our Lord + Jesus both in good times and in bad. The Holy Ghost teaches us through the Word of God to trust that no matter what the situation, our Lord God will deliver and preserve us.

He shows us this by His very own actions. Today, He calms the storm for the disciples, showing

His power over all creation. And, He has shown us His power over death and sin by offering up His life as a ransom for ours. He fulfills the Law that we are unable to fulfill. He endures and conquers the temptations to which we often fall. He suffers and dies in our place, so that we might have life and have it eternally. In all this He reveals to us that we have no need or reason to fear, for He provides for all of our needs of protection, both physically and spiritually, in this life. He has been given all authority in Heaven and Earth, and He uses it to bring us ever closer to Him in faith.

Therefore, my dear friends, do not be afraid when the tempest comes. Do not be afraid of the devil and his accusations against you and your sinfulness. Do not be afraid when the cares and concerns of this life roil and rage. For, the Lord + Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer, watches over you with His Holy Ghost. He desires to teach you through His Word to trust in Him and Him alone. And He will deliver you from all your cares and sorrows. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*