



Around the Word  
**Bible Study**  
 Epiphany, 2017

The Light of Christ  
 St. Matthew 8:23-27

**On Vigilance:**

"In this Body He slept; in His Godhead He troubled the sea, and again restored it to tranquility. He thus slept in His Body that He might awaken His Disciples, and make them keep vigil; and we likewise, so that we too sleep not in our souls, nor in our understanding, nor in our wisdom; but that at all times we keep watch, and give praise to the Lord, and eagerly seek from Him our salvation. For He Who now sleeps in the Body has spoken these holy words: *I sleep, and my heart watcheth* (Cant. V. 2)"

—Origen

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**Introduction:** The Light of Authority

The miracles of Jesus serve the purpose of proving that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. In this week's reading Jesus will bring us back to the book of Genesis to reveal that He is the One Who holds creation in His hand in order to conquer sin and the corruption of death in it.

**Opening: Psalm 107:17-32**

<sup>17</sup>Some were fools through their | sinful ways,\*  
 and because of their iniquities suffered af- |  
 fliction;

<sup>18</sup>**they loathed any | kind of food,\*  
 and they drew near to the | gates of death.**

<sup>19</sup>Then they cried to the LORD in their | trouble,\*  
 and he delivered them from | their distress.

<sup>20</sup>**He sent out his word and | healed them,\*  
 and delivered them from their de- | struction.**

<sup>21</sup>Let them thank the LORD for his | steadfast love,\*  
 for his wondrous works to the chil- | dren of  
 men!

<sup>22</sup>**And let them offer sacrifices of thanks- |  
 giving,\*  
 and tell of his deeds in | songs of joy!**

<sup>23</sup>Some went down to the | sea in ships,\*  
 doing business on the great | waters;

<sup>24</sup>**they saw the deeds | of the LORD,\*  
 his wondrous works | in the deep.**

<sup>25</sup>For he commanded and raised the | stormy wind,\*  
 which lifted up the waves | of the sea.

<sup>26</sup>**They mounted up to heaven; they went down |  
 to the depths;\*  
 their courage melted away in their | evil  
 plight;**

<sup>27</sup>they reeled and staggered like | drunken men\*  
 and were at their | wits' end.

<sup>28</sup>**Then they cried to the LORD in their | trouble,\*  
 and he delivered them from | their distress.**

<sup>29</sup>He made the | storm be still,\*  
 and the waves of the | sea were hushed.

<sup>30</sup>**Then they were glad that the waters were |  
 quiet,\*  
 and he brought them to their desired |  
 haven.**

<sup>31</sup>Let them thank the LORD for his | steadfast love,\*  
 for his wondrous works to the chil- | dren of  
 men!

<sup>32</sup>**Let them extol him in the congregation of the  
 | people,\*  
 and praise him in the assembly of the |  
 elders.**

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

**Read St. Matthew 8:23-27**

**v.23: And when he got into the boat, his disci-  
 ples followed him.**

Jesus is famous for His scenes with boats (cf. Luke 5; Matthew 9, 13, 14; John 21). Some have speculated that when Jesus wants to teach large crowds, the water helps reflect His voice so everyone can hear.

What other, famous word for boat do we find in Genesis 6:14? How does the Noah narrative help us shift our understanding to a Law/Gospel understanding of the purpose of boats and water versus seeing them in purely logistical terms (e.g., to amplify the voice)? See also 1 Peter 3:20.

What then can we suppose Jesus really wants us to think about in these scenes? See Genesis 8:21; 1 Peter 3:18-22.

Boats are made to float. Jesus only goes underwater at His baptism. Otherwise, He is either over it (boat) or walking on it (cf. John 6:19). As in Genesis 1, Jesus is over the waters of the deep. Why is that important imagery? See Psalm 139:8.

What's down in the depths to be conquered? See Isaiah 27:1; 1 Corinthians 15:26.

Jesus gets into the boat and His disciples follow. Are they playing "Simon Says" or is there something more to this following business? See John 6:68; Hebrews 13:13.

**v.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.**

This storm did not come out of nowhere, though it

was swift and great. It came from nature, but Who is in charge of nature? See Psalm 24:1-2.

Really, who can we blame for this storm in the first place? Romans 8:20.

This is no normal storm. St. Matthew uses a word that means “earthquake” to describe this “storm”. We find the same word in Matthew 24:7, 27:54, and 28:2. What sort of message is Jesus conveying to His disciples here?

Much more than swamped, the boat was being hidden by the waves, or covered. This is most certainly what invokes the disciples crying out dramatically in v.25. What is it that they are so afraid of? See Genesis 7:19; Exodus 15:5; Psalm 44:19.

What other fear-filled, water-and-waves incident were Jesus and His disciples involved in? See John 6:16-24. What parallels can you draw between these two events?

Psalm 130 describes man waiting for God to act; and it isn't a pleasant waiting, as if He were asleep. Where else was someone waiting for God to act on His behalf? See Matthew 27:46-49.

Did God act to save that man? 1 Corinthians 6:14.

What did Jesus want to instill in His disciples and us today, even if/when we are facing death? See John 5:28-29; Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 15:42-43.

**v.25: And they went and woke him, saying, “Save us, Lord; we are perishing.”**

In another famous, biblical event a god is trying to be awoken. Which is that? See 1 Kings 18:20ff.

What can we be reminded of, and should the disciples have been reminded of, when we feel that God is “asleep”? See Psalm 121:4; Songs of Songs 5:2; LSB 382:3.

Ba'al (1 Kings 18) did not wake to save his priests, but Jesus arose to save His, on Easter. The Greek word for “save” is related to the word for “savior”. The word from the Hebrew is just as familiar to you. Which word is that? See Psalm 118:25-26; Matthew 21:9; see also LSB p. 195, second note at the bottom.

**v.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.**

Jesus did not rebuke the disciples, but the winds and the sea. Why might we be able to think of Jesus' words here as more of a compli-

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ment instead of a dig against His disciples? See Matthew 9:12; Luke 5:32.

“Perishing” is also translated as “lost” or “destroyed”. What does Jesus say about those types of folks? See Matthew 15:24, 16:25, 18:12. Who is the one who was actually destroyed or “put to death”? See Matthew 27:20.

Jesus heads through death's door before us. By declaring and showing Himself to be the Son of God, faith has nothing that it fears and the disciples shouldn't either. Yet, in sin, our Lord still allows us to pray against our unbelief (Mark 9:24).

Jesus proves this not just by bringing peace to the winds and the waves, but by bringing peace between God and man. Death no longer has dominion over us because it cannot hold onto Jesus. How do we know this is true? See John 20:19, 21, 26. How long will this peace last? See Matthew 28:20.

**v.27: And the men marveled, saying, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”**

The Man Who controls the wind and the sea hangs on the cross, reminding us of what He can do, that even if death were to take Him, even death on a cross, He will escape. In faith, the disciples turn to

Jesus in their need. Still in the flesh, they do not understand Who it is that does these sorts of things. What is it that they are missing at this point, which will explain it to them? See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14.

*Crux sola est nostra theologia* (“The cross is our only theology”). If we were to only see a God controlling creation here, we would find only a wrathful, jealous, and capricious god. However, Scripture reveals how we rightly read and understand Scripture. What is at the heart of a correct reading of Scripture? See Luke 24:25-27; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23, 2:2; Galatians 6:14.

Are you able to answer the men's question (“what sort of man is this?”) now? See Matthew 28:5-6; John 1:1-3.

**Closing: Seek Where You May to Find a Way (LSB, 557)**

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** Rev. Benjamin Hertel (prhertel@centurylink.net) is pastor of St. Luke Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rensselaer, IN ([www.saintlukeev.weebly.com](http://www.saintlukeev.weebly.com)).

