

Matthew 8:23-27 – In Him All Things Were Created
St Mark's Northbridge – 15/08/21 AD

BIG Idea: Jesus has extraordinary power over creation, so we do not need to fear

Another Piece of the Puzzle

It is said that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. Well I want to suggest that in a lockdown there are also two certainties: one – family pets will never receive more love and attention than they do in a lockdown. And two: there is more buying, selling, and swapping of jigsaw puzzles than in normal times. The jigsaw puzzle is back!

There's been a resurgence in people doing jigsaw puzzles as we seek to pass the time at home and feel a sense of progress and accomplishment. Whether it's 50, 100, 200, 1000, 2000 or more pieces, jigsaw puzzles are back! Perhaps you've been getting into them.

As we've been going through Matthew's Gospel, it feels a bit like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Over the past few weeks as we've read about Jesus, we have been getting more pieces to the puzzle. Seeing more details about Jesus and why He came into the world. And as we've got these different pieces, Matthew is inviting us to put these pieces into place so we get a more complete picture of Jesus, and respond to Him as the Almighty Son of God.

And today is no different. We are given another piece of the puzzle – an important piece which has Jesus showing his power in a world where things seem out of control. And where He utters a few words which have the power to change everything and bring order into a world of chaos.

So let's pick it up from Matthew chapter 8. If you've got a Bible then it would be good to have it open to Matthew chapter 8 from verse 23:

Matt. 8:23-27

²³ Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴ Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵ The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" ²⁶ He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. ²⁷ The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

On the Boat with Jesus

Well what a day this would have been for the disciples who were on the boat with Jesus. I wonder what they would have been thinking as they set foot on the boat that day. Because at the end of that day, their whole world and perspective would have been flipped upside down by the hours they had with Jesus.

- **a raging storm (v24)**

These disciples were setting out on what they thought would have been a normal journey across to the other side of the lake. And they just happened to be caught in a raging storm. For some of these men, it would have been nothing new. They were fishermen who would have been out on the water in all types of weather.

But this time it was different. We read that "the waves swept over the boat". This doesn't mean that the waves were so big that they jumped over and missed the boat completely. No, these waves were coming into the boat. And it was taking on water.

But Jesus is sleeping. That's right. In the middle of a storm while on a boat that's being tossed about, Jesus is sleeping.

Now some people emphasise that this shows the human side to Jesus. That he's just like the rest of us after a hard days' work – he is tired and needs to sleep. But I think this also hints at just how super-human He is. That He can be peacefully sleeping while a storm is raging at sea.

But the disciples aren't sleeping. They are being tossed about by this storm and experiencing the effects of living in a chaotic and cursed world.

And they are helpless and afraid.

- **a cry for help (v25)**

So they wake Jesus up with a cry for help: *“Lord, save us! We're going to drown!”*

Here are men, some who are seasoned fishermen, in their hour of need. They can't do anything about this storm. And it is threatening their lives. So in desperation they call on Jesus.

They are afraid and there is no filter for their fear in the face of death. It's quite a human reaction: that we are afraid when confronted with our own mortality. It's a universal condition for all people, from all cultures and backgrounds, and of all ages. We all have a fear of death.

That's the disciples in the boat with Jesus. And it's easy to see us in the boat with them – fearing for our lives and being helpless to do anything about it.

So these disciples have cried out to Jesus. And what Jesus says next is both shocking and extraordinary.

- **a powerful word (v26)**

He rebukes his disciples. He calls them people “...of little faith” and questions why they are so afraid. This is a shock. Because isn't this Jesus, the one who has compassion on people? Here He seems out of character – that he's being too harsh on people who are afraid and crying to him for help. And given the circumstances, it's quite understandable isn't?

Well, no. Not for Jesus. Because these disciples have already seen Jesus do many amazing miracles. They have seen it with their own eyes: the masses who have been healed of their sicknesses, those who have had demons driven out from them – all by the power of His word.

So at this point, it's as if Jesus is saying to them: “Don't you remember?” You've seen who I am and you've seen my power” “You've been given the pieces to the puzzle, are you going to start putting them together?”

And so Jesus speaks, and rebukes the wind and the waves. He is once again showing His authority – genuine authority. With the uttering of a mere word, the wind and the waves go completely still.

Jesus brings order to the chaos which swirls about. He speaks, and the creation obeys. What Jesus wills and desires, happens instantly. There is no delay or miscommunication.

On a rainy day, we might wish and want the rain to go away. Or on a hot sticky day in summer we might hope for a cool change to come through and provide relief. Wishing, hoping, wanting, strongly desiring – that's all we can do because we are mere creatures. We can't control the elements and nor do we have power over life and death.

But the Creator of the world has power. And that's what we see with Jesus. He is the one in whom all things were created. He is the one who was there when creation was spoken into existence, and He is the one who has authority over creation as He rebukes the wind and the waves.

The Creator of the universe hasn't left the creation alone without any care for it. No, he deeply cares for His world and for people in His world. And that's why He came.

- **an extraordinary man (v27)**

So what do the disciples think about all this? Having just seen Jesus calm a storm and save their lives, what's their reaction?

Well understandably they are amazed and astonished, and almost lost for words. They ask each other: "*What kind of man is this?*" What have we just witnessed? Did this happen or are we imagining things?

They are in a state of shock and awe.

They have just witnessed the creator have authority and power over creation. Who else can make the wind and waves obey them? He is no ordinary man.

And these disciples were not the only ones amazed by Jesus. A few years later there was a Roman centurion standing in awe and amazement as he looked up and saw Jesus on the cross. He concluded much the same as these disciples: that Jesus was an extraordinary man – that, “surely...he was the Son of God”.

The one who not only has authority over the wind and the waves, but the one who by His death and resurrection has been given all authority on heaven and earth.

And so this piece of the puzzle showing Jesus and his power is truly spectacular.

Living with Jesus

So if we've been given this piece of the puzzle, what are we going to do with it?

Well the disciples show us what it mean for our lives as we live with Jesus – the one who has authority and power over creation.

- following (v23)

You'll see firstly that the disciples followed Jesus. In verse 23, they got on the boat with Jesus. It seems like such an incidental statement. But just before this, Jesus gave an ultimatum to those who want to follow Him: he said that He is more important than anything or anyone else. As the disciples heard this, they would have heard Jesus saying to them, “are you with me?”

So as they follow Jesus onto the boat, the disciples are saying, “yes, we’re with you”.
“We’re all in”.

And that’s what everyone needs to work out: are we with Jesus? Will we leave all else and follow Him? Will we keep leaving all else and keep following Him?

The disciples show us that it’s possible to leave all else and follow Jesus, even if it means things will be unpredictable. You see, the disciples followed Jesus and got on to the boat leaving behind relative certainty and security, not knowing what would lie ahead.

And following Jesus today doesn’t make you immune from the stresses and challenges that life throws at you. But we do have Jesus with us. The disciples had Jesus with them in the boat, and we have Jesus with us to the end of the age – that is His promise to us if we follow Him. Isn’t that such a precious promise, especially when feeling isolated and alone, and when the world feels like it’s been flipped on its head?

So we are to follow Jesus, wherever that may lead us.

- **trusting (v25)**

And we are also to trust Jesus. In the midst of fear, we are to know Jesus and trust Him. Jesus rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith, and that’s because he wanted them to have faith that is not overrun by fear. They were fearful of drowning and perishing, but they had lost sight of the One who they were with and the One who they put their trust in.

There are many things we are afraid of and anxious about. At this moment in time, our fears of death, uncertainty and a loss of security and control have come to the surface.

And there is a rightness to fearing things that unsettle us. But Jesus doesn't want our fear to overrun or overtake our faith in Him.

It's because we trust in Jesus that we don't need to be overwhelmed by fear. He is the One who has the power and authority. And He has shown that most clearly in His death and resurrection – taking on our sin and rising triumphantly. And isn't that such a comfort when we feel like we're in that boat and being swamped and overwhelmed by the waves. Knowing and trusting in the Creator and Saviour of the world makes a massive difference. So even when we are afraid, we can trust Jesus.

- **marvelling (v27)**

And finally, the disciples show that the appropriate way to respond to Jesus is to marvel and be amazed at Him. That's what they do after they've seen Jesus calm the wind and the waves, and save their lives. They stand back amazed at the Lord Jesus. And we should constantly be amazed and captivated by Jesus.

I know that during the Olympics I was captivated by many athletes as they performed and competed and moved their bodies with precision and skill that I could only dream of doing. We might be amazed by people and the way God has made them, or marvel at the beauty of God's creation. And sometimes they capture our attention and admiration more than Jesus.

But Jesus is in another realm. He's no ordinary man. He has power and authority over creation. That is the disciples' conclusion. And that must be ours too. We must lift our eyes in wonder and marvel at Jesus every day. That He would come into the world and bear our sin and give us life.

When you put the pieces together, all you can do is stand back and be amazed at Jesus. He is the God-man who has come into the chaos of our world and has complete authority over it.

Let's pray.