

The Power of Living Water

Luke Ch 8 v 22-25

I am sure most of us are familiar with the fact that Lake Galilee is prone to sudden storms which seemingly appear from nowhere. The lake is about 700ft below sea level and, as the rivers that rise in the foothills of Mount Hermon have cut deep ravines as the waters rush to the sea, so the winds are also drawn down these ravines which act like a funnels. These cold winds hit the lake with frightening consequences. It was just such a storm that happened when Jesus was in the boat sleeping, as recorded in Luke Ch 8. Yet the miracle has a much deeper message for us, as one might expect. "Where is your faith?" Jesus asks the disciples; and he asks us the same question today. As Christians, we know we are not exempt from the storms of life - both literal and figurative. We have seen the effects of hurricanes and floods and also experienced personal storms such as illness, disappointment, loss of loved ones, or accidents. Yet throughout everything, Jesus asks us to keep our faith strong. It is how we react to the storms of life that mark us out as followers of Christ. Jesus reminds us that he is always there to calm the storms in our lives, to save us and protect us.

John Ch 6 v 15-21

This story also takes place during a storm on Lake Galilee. This time Jesus was not in the boat but alone on the hill side, spending time in prayer. He looked down on the lake, saw his friends in trouble battling against the waves and went down to help them. Although his own problems were beginning to descend on him, they were immediately put to one side in order to help the disciples. Scholars have discussed endlessly what really happened that night/morning. Did Jesus actually walk on the water? Did the boat reach the shingle beach first? Did the light of the full moon just make it seem that way? We will never know, but what we do know is that as soon as Jesus joined them in the boat, the storm died down. With him beside them nothing mattered any more. "Courage!" he said "It is I. Do not be afraid."

Both these stories could be called *Fisherman's Tales*, retold time and again over the years but they are still relevant for us today. Jesus doesn't make us exempt from the storms of life. He lets us fight our own battles. He is proud of us or sad with us. But whatever we are doing our lives are always lived under his loving watchful eye. Jesus does not, however, watch from afar. When we need him most, when our strength is failing, he lends his strength to every situation. That is when Jesus helps each and every one of us. We are never left to do anything on our own. John wrote that when Jesus got into the boat they were immediately safe. So it is with us - with Jesus by our side the longest battle is shorter and the hardest problem is easier.

For Discussion

1. How easy is it to keep a strong faith in times of trouble?
2. Can you put your own trouble to one side to help others?