

sermon study guide

Pastor Ashwin Ramani

Date: April 25 / 26, 2020

Sermon Title: Thy Kingdom Come - Part 2: Authority Over Nature

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. Tell of a time when you were in the midst of a 'nature out of control' experience.
2. Pastor Ashwin said, "Sleeping is a demonstration of trust in God." What issues / stresses keep you awake at night? How have you been able to demonstrate trust in God through sleep?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Have someone slowly read Matthew 8:23-27 twice while the rest close their eyes and imagine themselves there.

3. Describe your thoughts and feelings. Compare and contrast Jesus' response and the disciples' response to the storm.
4. The disciples were doing precisely what Jesus had told them to do, and yet they ended up in a dangerous storm. What does this tell us about God's character and the ways he teaches us?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Pastor Ashwin said, "There are some spiritual lessons we all can learn only by going through a storm." Briefly tell about a 'life storm' you experienced and the spiritual lessons learned. How did you see God in a new way through the storm?
6. How might the stability Jesus brings to our lives be an encouragement and/or a witness to others?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Reflect on this question from Pastor Ashwin: "The One who has absolute authority over the forces of nature, can He not handle the storm you are facing in your life right now?" Pray for faith and that you would see God's character and power in new ways in the midst of the storm.

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THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 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!"

Romans 8:19-22

¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Mark 4:38, 41

³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Revelation 21:1

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth,"[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

Psalms 107:23-30

sermon study summary

Thy Kingdom Come – Part 2: Authority Over Nature

April 25/26, 2020

Pastor Ashwin

When Jesus began His ministry, ground began to be reclaimed from the enemy. The Christian mandate is to pray for God's Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. While this will never be complete until Christ's return, nevertheless we are called to the same battle as Jesus in bringing the Kingdom of God into our circle of influence. Thanks to the fall, creation too is tainted and literally 'groans' for liberation (Romans 8:22). Almost daily we hear of reports of 'creation' out of control in the form of natural disasters.

Throughout history, storms in our lives, be they natural disasters or other turbulent events, have a way of turning our focus to God. Storms are something beyond our control. Like Covid-19. Occasionally storms may be a consequence of our disobedience. Or, as in the story before us today, Jesus is using this storm to deepen our faith and walk with Him (Matthew 8:23-27). The disciples had followed Jesus into the boat to cross a large lake (the Sea of Galilee) that was prone to sudden, violent storms. So it was that these experienced fishermen found themselves fearing for their lives in the midst of one of these storms (Matthew 8:25, Mark 4:38). To the disciples who knew their Old Testament, the sea was described as a wild and dangerous place. Psalm 107:23-30 tells a similar story of God acting on behalf of distraught sailors at sea.

Jesus, however, was sleeping. Sound sleep was often seen in the Old Testament as a demonstration of trust in God. No crisis is a threat when you are in the center of God's will. When He was woken, Jesus' reply suggested their quality of faith was lacking. Still, He accepted their mustard seed of faith and acted on their behalf. The storm was rebuked and instantly calmed. The disciples were amazed (translated: Petrified!). In this experience they learned something about Jesus that they would never have known without the storm.

There is a relationship between faith and fear. Like a seesaw when one goes up, the other goes down. 'Little faith' often does not look beyond the surface and thus can be quickly overwhelmed, resulting in doubting God's provision and promises etc. Strong faith is rooted in the character of God; even in storms your faith can help you overcome your fears. It is this faith that will set Christians apart from the world at large.

Sometimes storms in our lives illuminate Jesus in ways that we have never seen Him before. They reveal new facets of the character of God to us. Just as Jesus has authority over the forces of nature, so too He has authority over our lives. Are you afraid of the storms surrounding your life today? Come to Jesus and lay your burdens at His feet and receive His peace even in the midst of the storm.