1.

Introduction

1.

What do you do when you are afraid? Cry out for help? Blame other people? Move to protect yourself? In The Sound of Music, Fraulein Maria gives the heartwarming advice,

1.

When the dog bites, when the bee stings, when I'm feeling sad
I simply remember my favorite things
and then I don't feel so bad.

2.

There is some value in "the power of positive thinking," and God even tells us to think on "wh atever is lovely
," but "raindrops on roses" will not actually
protect
you from real and present danger! Ultimately the one who protects you is Jesus, who is rightly called the Lord, and your Savior. You can know this is true because
even the winds and waves obey Him
.

3.

Outline. God reminds us of our peril and fear in vv. 23-25, and points us to depend on Christ' s power and grace in our time of need
in vv. 26-27.

1.

Our Peril and Fear vv. 23-25

2.

Christ's Power and Grace in Our Time of Need vv. 26-27

3.

Body

1.

Our Peril and Fear vv. 23-25. God reminds us of our peril and fear in vv. 23-25.

1.

Text

1.

23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.

2.

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.

3.

25 And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing."

4.

Peril

1.

Got into the boat

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In v. 28 we learn that Christ's purpose in traveling to the region of the Gadarenes or Gerasenes, which was in the tribe of Gad east of the Jordan, was to heal two demon-possessed men. The fact there were pigs and pigherders means this region had a significant population of unbelieving Gentiles, because Jews did not eat pigs. And on the way to this region known for evil, probably a mile from the shore, a fearfully violent storm rises up and comes upon them!

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A great storm

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Their worst fears became a reality. This storm is a beginning of the difficulties Christ promised His disciples would undergo. Storms and the ocean are frightening because they can place us at great peril. During some storms at night here in Caney I have lain awake truly afraid that I wouldn't hear the tornado warning when the tornado comes. The power of the wind, of lightning, of waves, is greater than any man. We understand the danger of deep water at an early age—which end of the pool was the scary end when you were 4 years old? The deep end!

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The depths of the ocean and the power of its waves inspired a special fear in the people of the Ancient Near East. Storms and the sea represented to them the cosmic forces of evil and their root in Satan and his demons. The Canaanites believed Yam was the god of the sea, and that there was a serpent-like sea monster named Rahab who was a picture of the power of Yam. But Yahweh has shown throughout history that He is the true God of the sea, and He demonstrated this when Jesus calmed the winds and the waves.

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Psalm 89:9-10 teaches this truth:

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You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.

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And Job confessed in **Job 26:12, 13**,

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By his power he stilled the sea; by his understanding he shattered Rahab. By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.

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Against the background of pagan fear of the sea as an evil power, Genesis tells us that at creation "The earth was formless and void," *tohu* and *bohu*, chaos and emptiness, but "t he Spirit of God hovered over the face of the deep.
" (
Gen. 1:2
) God created all things out of nothing, giving them form and filling the void, and God looked on everything He had made, and behold, it was very good.

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After men sinned and fell Satan is able to use the power of the sea to do great evil, but God remains the Lord of the sea. God created the great sea creatures pictured by Leviathan, whom man cannot master, but whose master is God. God saved Noah from the flood. God parted the waters of the Red Sea under Moses. David cried out that the waters were over his head. Jonah sank down to the bottom of the sea, where the bars of Sheol nearly closed around him. Peter began to sink but Christ walked on the water. Because Christ has conquered death and Hell one day these perils will be no more. According to **Rev. 21:1**, in the new heavens and new earth there will be no more sea.

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But we still face these perils today. The OT saints called the bottom of the ocean the depths of Sheol, the place of the dead. Today we still call it "Davy Jones' Locker." Submariners fear the deepest depths where the intense pressure can destroy a ship, and divers say "Down at the depth of 100 feet, lives an old man named Oxygen Pete."

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Mariners from every age know these fears, from the prophet Jonah to Paul shipwrecked on Malta to Coleridge's Rime of the Ancient Mariner, to the movie The Perfect Storm. Man cannot defeat the power of the sea.

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But He was asleep. But the God-man lay asleep amidst the storm with nothing to fear.

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Psalm 4:8 says,

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In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

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Christ has this peace to give, but his disciples did not have it. Christ went to sleep to test His disciples' faith.

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Fear

1.

Lord, save us!

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But His disciples have more fear than faith. They called Him "Lord," believed He could save them, and begged He
would
. But they believed they would die. They say, "
We are perishing!
" Quite naturally, their peril led to fear.

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Christ's Power & Grace in Our Time of Need vv. 26-27. Their fear was natural, but it was not right. It was not right because God Himself was with them in the boat, and in the storm. This is the God who is greater than the sea, greater than the power of sin, and death, and Hell. The disciples had yet to learn what Christ taught in
Matt. 12:40-41
, "
Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth....Behold, something greater than Jonah is here.
"

1.

Text. And so Jesus said to them,

1.

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.

2.

27 And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

3.

Christ's Rebuke. We should learn from this Christ's power and grace in our time of need. Jesus responded to His disciples' request by rebuking them as their gracious Redeemer, then rebuking the storm as its powerful Creator.

1.

Rebuked disciples as their gracious Redeemer

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Why are you afraid?

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Christ rebuked His disciples not for disturbing Him with their prayers, but for disturbing themselves with their fears. He didn't ask them, "Why do you ask me for help?" He asked, "Why are you afraid?"

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Little faith

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He tells them the true cause of their fear by calling them "O you of little faith." There is a godly fear of calamity which keeps us from being what the Bible calls a "fool," but there is also an ungodly fear of storms, natural disasters, and other threats and difficulties. An ungodly fear does not trust God's sovereign lordship and providential care as a foundation for our life that cannot be shaken. An ungodly fear believes there is an evil more powerful than God. An ungodly fear does not believe Christ has fully paid for your sin and so earthly travails are no longer the punishment of God's wrath but the discipline of your loving Father. John teaches us " There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.
" (
4:18
) Do you fear the wrath of God when you run from the lightning? When you lie awake when the wind roars around your house? Then ask God to forgive you for your sins, and believe His promise that He is faithful and just to forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Then even if the storm takes your life the Lord will preserve your soul.

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Do you believe He will? That is the faith of a Christian. The one who knows Jesus Christ says "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me! " (**Psalm 23:4**) "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, 3 though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. " (**Psalm 46:1-3**
) Our God holds the tempest in His hand (Prov. 30:4); He hurls the tempest to the earth (Is. 28:2; Jonah 1:4) and you will fear it, but He is our shelter from the storm (Is. 4:6; 25:4; 32:2). " When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever.
" (
Proverbs 10:25
)

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Rebuked storm as its powerful Creator. Though Christ rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith, He did grant their request! He did so by
rebuking the storm as its powerful Creator
.

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Notice "How *easily* this was done, with a word's speaking." [1] Notice also "How *effectually* it was done. There was a great calm, all of a sudden. Ordinarily, after a storm, there is such a fret of the waters, that it is a good while ere they can settle." [2]

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God calms our fears. The same power that calms the sea calms the tumult of the peoples. God can calm our fears through faith in Jesus Christ because He is our Creator.
Psalm 65:7
says He is the one who by His almighty power both "
stills the roaring of the seas
"
and
"
the tumult of the peoples.
" Jesus saves us from both the perils we face and the fears they bring.

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The application of this passage should be coming into clearer view. God calms our fears through faith
in Jesus Christ. And when we are in fear that faith should drive us to seek God's protection
through prayer
. Christ's willingness to grant His disciple's request should give us good reason to "
come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
" (
Hebrews 4:16
) Those who have asked for the eternal salvation Christ gives may freely ask for temporal deliverances. Turn with me for a minute to Jonah 2, which teaches us to pray this kind of prayer of faith. The account in Matthew bears many similarities to Jonah's experience in Jonah 1 and Paul's in Acts 27, and I recommend you read those two chapters this afternoon. But give attention to Jonah 2; if the disciples had not yet learned what Jonah learned, we must not go home today without learning it.

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1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, 2 saying, "I called out to

the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. 3 For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. 4 Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; Yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.' 5 The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head 6 at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. 7 When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. 8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!" 10 And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

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Pray! "Salvation belongs to the LORD!" Even from the blackest terror at the bottom of the sea your prayer will reach God in His holy temple. If God heard the prayer of the pagan Ninevites, He will hear the prayer of His beloved children in distress. Call out to Him in prayer, and He will help.

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Pray in faith! And pray in faith. Jonah believed He would see God's temple again. When you fear the tornado outside your door, the waves swamping your boat, the terror of the noonday or the pestilence that stalks by night, do you believe that whether you die now or live to see the next day, no matter what may come, after this peril, you will see the Lord ? The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting for those who fear Him. Trust Him even when you call out to Him out of fear for your life.

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Response.

1.

The disciple's problem was both their peril and their fear, so Christ rebuked both their fear and

their peril. But He did not only speak the words of the rebuke; He also worked the response He sought. He calmed the storm, and He calmed His disciples. The "great storm" became a "great calm,
" and "
you of little faith
" became great believers.
They marveled because it was a miracle. They admired Christ, their faith greatly strengthened, asking "
What sort of man is this?
" They admired Him because "
Even winds and sea obey Him!
"

2.

Christ's Power. Do you admire Jesus Christ for this same reason? Your Savior is the Lord of heaven and earth. Say with the Psalmist, " I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.
" (
Psalm 135:5-7
) Remember that He was Lord of the waves at creation. "
At your rebuke they fled. You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.
" (
Psalm 104:7, 9
) He was Lord of the sea in the Exodus. "
At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.
" (
Exodus 15:8
)

3.

Faith. And for this reason He gives true peace to those who trust by faith in Him, even a peace that passes human understanding. " You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock. " (**Isaiah 26:4**)

4.

Prayer. So we must come to Him in prayer, as His disciples did. "Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.
" (
Psalm 32:6
)

5.

Conclusion

1.

When the dog bites, when the bee stings, what will you do? We have revised one Rogers & Hammerstein song to make a Christian prayer before our fellowship meals; we should change another one into a Christian prayer when we fear for our lives.

When the dog bites, when the bee stings, when I'm feeling sad,
I pray to my Savior who created all things,
And then I don't feel so bad.

1 Matthew Henry, 111.

2 Matthew Henry, 111.