

THE PILOT OF GALILEE

SERMON BY THE EDITOR

You will find the text tonight in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark, beginning to read at the 35th verse, and reading to the end of the chapter. I am not going to unfold a text. I am rather going to discuss one of those incidents in the life of our Saviour, with which you are undoubtedly familiar. It is the story of the crossing of the rolling waves of Galilee, in the boat accompanied by the disciples; wherein our Saviour stilled the tempest and brought amazement and consternation to the hearts of these men. I presume that were I to take a text, the last clause in the chapter would suffice. "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him"? It is not my intention tonight merely to discuss the historicity and the veracity of the scripture anecdote, but rather to draw from this wonderful story, some lessons that by the power of the Holy Spirit will sink into your hearts. We are going to take a trip in the ship of experience over the seas of life. I want you to notice in the opening of the narrative that the day had past and over the western shores of Galilee the sun was slowly sinking. The Master was undoubtedly weary and tired because of his contact with the multitude, and gathering around him His own disciples, He said unto them, "Let us go over unto the other side". That word "us"! How it thrills our hearts with joy, for we must remember that salvation means the contact of the human with the Divine--the union of the unsaved and the Saviour—the joining of the guilty with the sinless. Christianity is not intellectual assent to dogma: it is not a mental grasp of orthodoxy; it is not subscription to ethical codes; it is not essentially conduct; Christianity is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Praise the Lord! When Jesus comes, there is a deliverance from the power of sin, and as we kneel in penitence and submission at the foot of His cross, the light of heaven sweetly steals into our darkened souls. There is a breaking of the chains, a snapping of the bonds that bind, and the sweet gentle peace that dispels all anxiety and changes our doubts into a glorious faith. It seems to me that He puts His tender nail-pierced hand of love upon our heads, and whispers in a voice that is as sweet as bells at evening pealing, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, thou art Mine! Before us are the great seas of life, but you and I are going to travel together; and I will stay with you until we hear the bell in the distant harbor ringing the welcome home. Let US go over unto the other side; to that land of endless day, to that country that needs no light of sun". How blessed the voice of Jesus; how wonderful the assurance in our souls; we are redeemed; saved through the Blood of the Lamb; and from this moment, we belong to Him, and He belongs to us.

I want you to notice also that at the time of embarkation he sent away the multitude. It was not a question of riding along to glory on the crest of a tidal wave of revival effort; it was not a case of relying on the impetus and the inspiration of a great crowd; it was just the disciples and Jesus, pushing out from the shore in the boat of this new experience over the seas of life. And, so will it be with you, my brother, when these meetings have passed away, and the power of these great assemblies is just a memory; you will find that you can only trust Him, lean on His arm and count on Jesus Christ. You will find that it will be a question of settling down to a sweet simple abiding faith in the integrity of His promise, and an assurance that He will lead you over unto the other side. We are alone now with Jesus, far from the maddening crowd; alone with Him in the boat of our experience, launching out into the seas of the great unknown, not knowing what the morrow may bring forth, only knowing that He said, "the other side".

So we read that there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, and brought terror to the hearts of His disciples. Jesus was asleep in the hinder part of the ship on a pillow and the disciples undoubtedly missed the confidence that the sound of His voice always inspired. We must remember that there are times when Jesus speaks, and times when He is silent. It is easy to trust and easy to praise when the glory of His presence sheds the light across the path, or the voice that once spoke peace to our guilty hearts is guiding the boat, but the time to trust is when we cannot feel, or His voice has been momentarily stilled. They ran into a storm. Well, what of it? The Lord never promised us that we should never see a storm, or that the tempest would never rage. There they were in that frail little boat, on the rolling tumbling tempestuous waves of Galilee. The wind was howling through the rigging, and the tempest was shrieking about their heads; the waters were dashing themselves into foam against the wooden sides of the frail barque, and the white caps were falling in fury into the boat. It was a time to trust. Jesus was there and no storm will ever sink us if He is on board, and no tempest will ever prove our destruction, when the Lord is near. He is the Master of the sea, and blessed is that man who will rest in supreme confidence in the fury of the storm, knowing full well that He who said "the other side" will assuredly take us through. Forget everything else I tell you. But remember one thing: the Lord has never promised you immunity from temptation; He has promised you grace sufficient to overcome. He has never promised you freedom from difficulty; but He has promised power to deliver. No temptation but what there is a way of escape; no cross so heavy that it out-weighs His grace. O! Hallelujah! How our hearts should rejoice in the keeping power of such a Christ.

Have you heard the story how one of our famous hymns came to be written? A banker in one of our large American cities said good-bye to his wife and daughter as they boarded one of the great Atlantic greyhounds to travel to Europe's shores for rest and recreation. He was a man who had given his heart to the Lord and knew the

saving, keeping power of Jesus Christ. A few days after the sailing of the boat the banker was on his way to his office when he heard the newsboys shouting on the streets about the loss of an Atlantic boat. Feverishly he bought a paper. Could it be that his loved ones had been claimed by Father Neptune and were lying in the deep, somewhere in that great expanse of water between our own New England coast and the shores of the old world? Yes, it was too true. The printed page told the story of the loss of the ill-fated vessel. For a moment or two he wrung his hands in a paroxysm of grief, and then praying for strength and power, he walked slowly to his bank. The clerks gazed at him, as with ashen face he walked to his office, and entering, closed the door. For a while he knelt, talking to the Christ of his salvation, and reaching out in faith for the promises that were His. The Man of Galilee awoke at his crying and as He stilled the tempest on Gennesaret, He spoke peace to the troubled banker's heart. It must have been under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that he arose and taking a piece of paper from his desk, penned the words of that immortal hymn that is sung wherever the English language is spoken,

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea-billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well. It is well with my soul.

So it is with Jesus, He never fails us, though sometimes He gets the blame when we fail Him. No cry ever goes up from a heart that is torn or a soul that is anguished, but what it touches the Heart that was pierced, and surely as the rising of the sun there comes to our life the voice Divine "Peace, be still."

I said a few moments ago that the Lord will always give us grace in time of need. When a man is converted and born again of the spirit of God, he does not receive grace sufficient to last him all along the journey over the seas of life. So many people shake hands with a preacher, sign a card or unite with a church and then consider the question absolutely settled. They sit back in snug complacency and try to ride through the storm on the experience of their yesterdays. He gives grace sufficient; but it is only sufficient for the need. We cannot overcome today by the strength of our yesterdays. Our strength is according to our day. The greater the trial, the more abundant the grace. The deeper the heartache, the greater the balm that heals all wounds, it was daily manna that fell in the wilderness and we need daily bread in the day in which we live. Neglect the means of grace; abandon the family altar; choose the picture show to the prayer meeting, and imagine that the portals of heaven will open wide because twenty years ago you joined the church, and the greatest disappointment of your life will be when your ship comes sailing home. Learn the lesson of abiding in His grace; of trusting in His will and letting Him, the matchless Pilot of Galilee guide you over the harbor bar.

Picture for a moment if you can the disciples in the boat. Louder and louder

screams the wind, the shriek of the tempest and the fury of the waves make the timbers of the boat groan and cry as if in a few moments there would be wreckage, disaster, and death. I can see the disciples as they alternately looked at the sleeping form of the Master and then turned their weather-beaten faces toward the fury of the gale. Faith says, "He is with you, you will not sink. He has healed the sick and given you His promise. The storm will subside and the day will break." And reason says, "You are lost. The inevitable will come; you will never survive the strain. This tempest is more than you can bear." O Peter, hold fast to that which is good; trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not to thine own understanding. I can see the bronzed face of the converted fisherman as he is torn between conflicting thoughts, until at last a cry sounds through the darkness of the night. "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" What a question. As if Jesus did not care, as if He does not always care, when we are afraid of the dark, or shrink from the fury of the gale. He cares so much that His great heart bleeds in sympathy and love and always would He place around us the everlasting Arms and keep us in the ways of peace. Yes, Jesus cares for you, my brother, when the waves of life are hard and you do not know the way. Yes, Jesus cares for you my sister, when weary and tired with the burdens of the day you long for a rest that only He can give. Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. He cares when our hearts are pained too deeply for mirth or song; He cares in the night of Galilee's storm as well as under the meridian sun of the light of understanding and faith.

But look! The sleeping Master stirs. He slowly rises from his couch and walking with majestic stride to the bows of the boat, He stops. Have you ever closed your eyes and let the eyes of your imagination see the picture that faith portrays? Have you ever closed your ears and listened to the sound of that voice as it echoes through the night? I can see Him now, the Man of the seamless robe, gazing into the darkness of the night with the fury of the tempest beating around Him. I can hear His voice as it spoke once to my own heart. "Peace! Be still." Suddenly the wind dies away. The shrieking of the gale is hushed; the fury of the tempest is stilled, and the waters are obedient to His word. Placidity reigns on Galilee, while wonder and amazement take hold of the hearts of the disciples. There is love in His tone and an appeal in His voice as He says, to the men who should have trusted, "Why are ye so fearful? What makes you afraid, when I am with you; how is it that you have no faith?" They look from one to another with eyes open wide. Beyond all human comprehension, and beyond all grasp of the human mind was this new deed of the Man they called Master. With awed voices they ask the question, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

What manner of Man is this? We are living in a day when they have been tearing away the Robes of His Deity, and everything of faith that is not amenable to reason is thrown into the discard. But blessed be the name of the Lord, there are

some of us left, who can still call Him Lord and Christ; who believe He was born of a virgin and that He died on Calvary's cross to shed His atoning blood for our sins, Glory be to Jesus! There are some of us who can still answer in this age of apostasy, incredulity and unbelief, "He is the Saviour of my soul." What manner of Man is this? Jesus, Son of God, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelt; Saviour, Redeemer and Coming King. Hallelujah for a faith that will not dim though the storms around us rage. Give Him your heart tonight, my brother, and let Him say to you, my sister, "Let us go over unto the other side" and ere very long you will be saying in awed tone, amazement in your soul and wonderment in your mind, "What manner of Man is this?" He will reveal Himself and the glory of His keeping power all along that journey from the altar to the golden shore, and when life's long voyage is over, He will guide you to the haven of refuge and the harbor bells of Heaven will be ringing your welcome home.

What though the tide be deep and wide,
Naught shall we fear, on life's wild sea,
To Thee we raise our songs of praise,
Pilot of Galilee.

Give me fifty thousand dollars and one reverse of fortune may scatter it away. But let me have a spiritual hold of this Divine assurance "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want", and then I am all right. I am set up for life. I cannot break with such stock as this on hand. I can never be a bankrupt, for I hold this security, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Do not give me ready money now; give me a checkbook and let me draw what I want. This is what God does with the believer. He does not immediately transfer his inheritance to him, but lets him draw daily what he needs out of the riches of his fullness in Christ. ---Spurgeon.