

After a long day of ministering to the sick and discouraged crowds by the sea of Galilee, Jesus decided to cross over to the eastern shore to devote a little time to training His disciples. With this in mind, the Savior announced, "Let us cross over to the other side." Mark 4:35. The disciples were now called to make a journey across the lake. Notice that the two lands were separated, divided by a gulf of water. As a result, the trip across required the aid of a boat. It is the same with heaven. The two lands do not connect. We cannot make it to heaven without external help, yet Christ has bridged the gap. In Christ, we can make the journey.

The call of Jesus to cross over to the other side represents the starting point of our journey with Christ. The command to cross over is symbolic of the call to follow Jesus. In the life of every person there comes a call to accept this journey. Christ calls us to follow Him on a journey to our heavenly home which is divided by a great gulf.

Obedying the Savior's command, we are told that the disciples first "left the multitude." Mark 4:36. In the same way, when we are called to rise up and make our journey towards the heavenly land, we too must first leave the multitude. There are many who seek to rise up and follow Christ, while maintaining their current group of friends who continually lead them back into impure habits. If we wish to set out on that heavenly journey, we must leave the multitude. We must separate from ungodly friends who will draw us away from God and back into a life of sin (See James 4:4).

After the disciples had left the multitude, they retrieved the Savior and "took Him along in the boat." Mark 4:36. Just as Christ was invited into the boat, Christ must also be invited into the boat of our lives, that is, Christ must first be invited into our hearts before we can make the journey from this land to the next. So many turn from God when the storms of life come because they never fully surrendered to Christ. Christ was not in the boat.

While it was Christ who initiated the journey, it was not Jesus' boat that the disciples were called to get into. This was one of the disciples boats. In the same way, we are not called to get into Christ's boat, but Christ must come into the boat of our lives. Not only has Christ taken upon Himself human flesh to save you and me, but the great plan of salvation declares that Christ then "worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. Christ enters into our lives to enable us to make the journey.

The journey to heaven is a journey to holiness and there are many today, even among Christian circles, who claim that we cannot make this journey, so Christ simply makes it for us. They claim that no one can keep the law, so Christ just died to forgive us since we cannot obey. This is a poor representation of the gospel. The good news of the gospel is not that Jesus made the journey for us because we cannot do it, but that He gets into our boat and comes across with us to enable us, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:3, 4. By His presence with and in us, He enables us to make the journey to the other side.

After the Savior got into the boat with the disciples, "they launched out." Luke 8:22. As they began the journey across the lake, many of the people in the multitude who had seen Jesus on the shore, listened to His preaching, and witnessed His miracles now sought to follow Him across the lake in their own boats, so as they traveled, "other little boats were also with Him." Mark 4:36. Still, there was a difference between the boats that followed Christ and the disciples boat which cannot be ignored. While Jesus was in the boat of the disciples, Jesus was not in the boat of those who followed. There is great significance in this.

Many claim to be on the journey towards heaven, but they have never surrendered their life to Christ. They claim to follow Him, but are not converted. He is not in the boat. Perhaps they feel as if they are good enough or they simply want to

be a Christian "their own way" and go at their own pace, but tragically those who follow God their own way will not make it. In order to make it to our heavenly home, we must have Christ in our boat.

Now, as the disciples began the journey across the calm lake, it seemed to be smooth sailing. The disciples likely spent the early part of their journey talking to the Savior about the events of the day, but as the time slowly passed by, the conversation with Jesus eventually began to die down, and "as they sailed He fell asleep." Luke 8:23. While the birth of our Christian experience is filled with joy, peace, and great excitement, time passes and soon our communication with the Savior dies down. We no longer pray regularly or study our Bible like we used to. Church becomes more of a social event than an experience with the Savior and Jesus falls asleep in the back of the boat.

As the new experience fades, the Savior falls asleep in the back of the boat. Now the devil is ready to send the storm. Seeing his opportunity, the devil prepares a great storm for the journey ahead. As the disciples make their way across the lake, "suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea." Matthew 8:24. It is often the nature of the great tempests in life to come suddenly and unexpectedly. As you are making your way through life, it seems as if the waters of your life are calm and everything is going just fine when suddenly a storm arises. Suddenly you are diagnosed with cancer. Suddenly you lose your job. Suddenly a loved one dies or your lover leaves you and you find yourself in the middle of a storm. Just when everything seems to be going well, the devil sends storms. They hit hard and with fury and leave you helpless and defenseless in the darkest hour of your life.

The violent storm now raged around the little boat. As the disciples tried to maintain their current direction, "the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling." Mark 4:37. With Jesus sleeping, the water now began to splash into the boat, filling the boat to such a degree that we are told they "were in jeopardy." Luke 8:23. In the

same way, when the storms of life arise, you are tempted to fall back into the old ways. You start to sip at the wine glass, go to the old parties, or start using the old words. The waters of sin slowly begin to splash back into the boat of your experience and you find yourself starting to sink.

As the disciples began to see the hopelessness of their condition, the lightening flashed, revealing the lovely, resting face of Jesus. Now, in utter despair they cried out, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" Matthew 8:25. This cry will never go unheard.

Are you troubled by the cares of this life? Are you surrounded by darkness? Have the angry waves of life beat against you so strongly that you felt as if you would be consumed by them? Have you lost sight of Christ? If so, let the image of a Savior again flash upon the corridors of your mind and cry out, "Lord, save me, I am perishing!"

As the words of the disciples reached Jesus' ear, the Master at once stood up in the boat and said to the wind and the waves, "Peace, be still!" Mark 4:39. As the words fell off of the Savior's lips, we are told that "the wind ceased and there was a great calm." Mark 4:39. Perhaps the storms have arisen in your life. Is Jesus in your boat? Have you ever invited Him in? If so, have you allowed Him to fall asleep? The Savior is offering you peace today. Just as Jesus calmed storm, He can calm the storms of your life and bring peace into your heart if you will only invite Him into your life. Just cry out to Him. Jesus longs to calm the angry waves of life that are beating you down. Whatever you are going through, won't you turn to Him now and invite Him in? Won't you cry out to Him? If so, Jesus will give you peace and get you safely through the storms of life.

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