

Title: The Powerful Word
Text: Luke 8.22-25
Theme: The power of the word of Christ
Series: Luke
Prop Stmtnt: God's powerful Word is worth obeying because there is nothing above it.

Thunderstorms are awesome and can be awful. That is, they are events that invoke awe. Awe can be respect and too much awe can be terrifying. A single bolt of lightning can have, we are told up to 1 billion volts and 100,000 amps of electricity in it. That means that a single bolt of lightning can have 100 trillion watts of power in it. The US uses on average 10,000 megawatts of power per day. A megawatt is 1 million watts. So, the US uses about 10 billion watts of power every day. If you divide 10 billion (Power used in a day) into 100 trillion (power of a single bolt of lightning) you get 10,000. That means that one bolt of lightning has enough power for the US for 27 years and 3 months. Thunderstorms are awesome.

Read Text:

Michael Lynch was a technology entrepreneur who co-founded a company that he sold to Hewlett-Packard in 2011 for 11 billion dollars. The deal became the source of civil litigation and went to trial in March of this year. In June, Lynch was found to be not guilty. His family owned a super yacht, so he invited his attorney amongst others to celebrate his acquittal with a cruise in the Mediterranean. A powerful storm took them by surprise and this super yacht sank in the storm. 15 of the 21 people on board were rescued. Michael, his daughter, and his attorney were among those who died. Thunderstorms can be awful.

Jesus and his disciples were not in a super yacht, nor were they on a large body of water. The Sea of Galilee is not really a sea, and by comparison to what surrounds much of our state, it really isn't much of a lake either. Lake St. Clair is relatively unknown because it is surrounded by some serious lakes. Even Lake St. Clair is six times larger than the Sea of Galilee. Confusing matters a bit more is the fact that the Sea of Galilee sits 700 feet below sea level. The lowness of this body water compared with the protection of the terrain around it means that the Sea of Galilee does not encounter that many storms. Storms can arise, but they are rather rare. Several of the disciples were fisherman and this was their lake. But it is possible that they had not encountered much danger on it which might explain their fear. At least Jesus calls it a lake in v.22.

This is one of those fascinating, ministry defining stories in the life of Christ. Many are you are familiar with it because it appears in 3 of the gospels. But why? Why is it here? What is the point? This chapter has focused on the urgency and necessity of taking the Word of God to heart (v.15, 18, 21). Those who do, are his family, but in addition to that, look and see how powerful his Word is. Luke puts that in front of us when he quotes the disciples in v.25 who are stunned at what just happened. *"Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"* What happened here caused them to ask this question, but what happened here actually answers that question.

1. Jesus is the God-MAN. (22-23a)

Jesus is both God and Man. He is God in human flesh. During his life on earth, no one struggled with believing that he was a man. It was obvious that he was a man. He looked like a man, walked like a man, talked like a man, ate like a man, and in this case, he got into a boat and fell asleep because he was apparently exhausted, just like a human.

A. **Jesus knows that his deity/humanity is difficult for us to grasp.**

It is necessary for us to understand because this is essential to understanding the very grounding of our salvation. But no man has ever become God and Jesus is the only person of the Godhead who became a man. This is unique. This is a truth that you have to know and that you must believe. But because it is a lot to try to absorb, God gives a lot of space to this in the Bible and Jesus is so careful and intentional to lead his disciples into realizing this about him. This is a perfect example.

“One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” (22) That is all very normal. Nothing in that event raises our eyebrows. The account continues. “So they set out, and as they sailed he fell asleep.” Again, that is very normal. Some of you are like that, aren’t you? As soon as you get into the car (assuming you are not driving) you lean your head against the door and sleep.

Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen. This event accomplished several things at once. 1) They needed to get to the other side of the lake because there was a man over there who desperately needed Jesus. 2) Jesus was tired and this trip would allow him to get some rest, at least initially. 3) The disciples needed another example of his power, so they would grow in their understanding of who he was. He had healed many, even raised a young man from the dead and cast out demons. But Jesus knew that they did not yet really know who he was. This event would be another defining moment that would force them to think seriously about this.

B. **Jesus knows that his deity/humanity is necessary for us to grasp.**

I do not know exactly what all of you understand and believe about Jesus. There is a general sentiment in a lot of religious teaching about Jesus that says that Jesus was an amazing teacher, and powerful person and a good friend who went around and did many wonderful things for people. Since Jesus did so many good things for people, you and I need to do good things for people to help this world be a better place. That is NOT the point and you have to understand the point! All of these wonderful and powerful things that Jesus did was for a point and you have to know what that point is.

You may be a GM family and if you bought a Ford, or heaven forbid a Kia, or Toyota, you might not be allowed to park in the driveway. But, when your life is over, it really won’t matter what kind of a car you drove or if you drove a car. You may be in a MSU family and if you ever wore a

UofM shirt, you might catch a lot of grief for that. But, when your life is over, it really won't matter what college football team you cheered for. But it will matter whether or not you understand who Jesus is. So, pay careful attention to this. Jesus gets tired and goes to sleep. He gets tired and sleeps because he is the God-MAN. He is God who became man. He came to us from God and he was God and he remained as God. Jesus was sent to us from God. He happily cooperated with the mission that his Father called him to accomplish. Christ existed before he was born into this world. That is why we refer to his coming to the earth as the Incarnation (to embody).

Matthew 20:28 He came

John 6:51 He came down from heaven

John 3:13 He descended from heaven

John 3:17 He was sent

1 Timothy 1:15 He came into the world

1 John 3:5 He was manifested

Philippians 2:7 He made Himself nothing

2 Corinthians 8:9 He became poor

Hebrews 2:9 He was made a little lower than the angels

Hebrews 10:5 A body was prepared for Him

Galatians 4:4 He was made of a woman

John 1:14 He was made flesh and blood

Romans 1:3 He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh

Romans 8:3 He was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. In other words, he looked like all other "sinners" (people), though he wasn't. He had the likeness but not the reality.

Philippians 2:7a He took the form of a servant

Philippians 2:7c He was made in the likeness of men

Philippians 2:8 He was found in human form

Hebrews 2:17 He was made like unto His brothers

1 Corinthians 15:47 He is the second man, the Lord from heaven

1 Timothy 3:16 He was God manifest in the flesh

All of this is true, but all of this is not easy to grasp. Jesus is very intentional in building this theological foundation. And here is why this is so important. The entire human race is under the curse of sin. Every human being is born with a nature that is predisposed to rebel against God. We are incapable of saving ourselves. And yet, since it was the human race that has created the problem it is the human race that has to pay the penalty. The penalty for sin has to be a perfect and sinless substitute that is both qualitatively and quantitatively sufficient to pay our debt. The debt is infinite so only an infinite payment will cover it. But the debt of our sin has to be paid by a human. God HAD to become man in order for us to be able to be saved from our sin. Lorraine Boettner said, *“only a truly human person could suffer and die, and only a truly Divine person could give that suffering infinite value.”*

We are on a journey with Luke that is taking us to the cross. There on the cross, a man is crucified. A sinless man is crucified. A sinless man dies. The sacrifice is made. The sacrifice is offered. The sacrifice dies. The sacrifice is completely given up and over to death. Can God die? No. Man dies. Man dies as the wages of sin. God became man in order to die as the payment. Jesus is the God-MAN. He became a man to live a perfect life in your place. His perfect life was the offered up on the cross as the perfect sacrifice. There are times when you see someone suffering and you wonder if their suffering is worth it. If you are going to suffer the effects of chemo and only gain a few days of pain from it, is it really worth it? The suffering of Jesus was beyond anything that we can imagine for a number of reasons, but his suffering was of infinite value and that infinite value was offered that paid the infinite price for our sin. Jesus is the God-MAN. But Jesus is also the GOD-man.

2. Jesus is the GOD-Man. (23-24)

Jesus gets into the boat. The other gospel writers tell us that he went into the stern of the boat and fell asleep. Mark says that it was in the evening and that Jesus was in the stern. I am not a boater. I had a kayak once. I do not know boater terms and can't figure out why boaters don't use words everyone else does. You say starboard and port, gunwale and bow and speed is measured in knots instead of miles per hour. The stern is the back of the boat. Either Jesus slept on the deck of the back or under it. Either way, he is in the back of the boat and he is sacked out. He taught all day and he is whipped. Meanwhile a serious storm arises and this little lake doesn't look so little anymore. Matthew calls it a great storm and Mark says a great windstorm. Both of them describe the waves as crashing into the boat and filling it with water. Luke makes it clear that they were in danger. This was a serious problem. “Master, Master, we are perishing.” We are dying!

Jesus wakes up and with a command orders the wind to stop. Luke says that he rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased. Then Luke adds one more comment. *“and there was a calm.”* A second ago, the men had to yell at each other to be heard. They were grabbing the sides of the boat (sorry, gunwale) to keep from flying out and now, the only thing that you could hear was the creaking of the wood, the sloshing of the water in the boat and the breathing of the men as they tried to absorb what just happened. Except for the men soaking wet, and the boat half-filled there was no storm and no evidence of one. What just happened?

If you issue an order and you are obeyed, you are in charge. Jesus spoke and the wind and waves obeyed, instantly. Creation obeyed. Creation obeyed because the Creator spoke.

3. His Word demands obedience.

This is the point that Luke is making. Jesus is the God-Man whose word demands our obedience from the heart. In this event, the wind and waves teach us, don't they. Jesus says it, and they do it, immediately. Jesus does not give them to the count of 3 (1..., 2..., 2 ½..., 2 ¾..., 2 7/8...). The wind and waves don't pretend that they don't hear Jesus, or they are confused by what he is saying. They don't get together and have a conference on whether or not Jesus really means what he says, or is just using a metaphor for getting their attention so they won't get out of hand. Jesus does not threaten to take away their desert, or give them a time out. He gives the word and they obey. They always do. In fact, when the wind and the waves were threatening the boat, they were in complete submission to him as well. Since all of creation does his bidding, and since there is coming a day when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, why would you not get on the right side of history? Why would you not get on the right side of eternity? At the end of chapter 14, Jesus presses this point home a bit more by giving the example of a king who is going out to war with 10,000 soldiers going against another king who has 20,000 soldiers. If the first king realizes that he cannot win this war, then the smart thing is to ask for terms of peace. He is going to lose either way, so he might as well lean into it. There's a sense in which that that is true about the authority of Christ. He is going to reign over all. It's not if, it's when. Embrace it, but not reluctantly. Yes, the Word of God demands obedience, but how does Christ use his word? How does he use his authority? He uses it as a means to do us the greatest good and to provide for us the deepest love. Therefore...

4. Where is your faith?

“Master, Master, we are perishing!” (Luke)

“Do you not care that we are dying?” (Mark)

Later on, the disciples would come to realize just how ridiculous their accusation was. But in that moment, that is what it seemed like. The disciples felt like they were on their own and that Jesus did not care even though he was in the boat with them. The contrast is stark. The professional fisherman were terrified and Jesus was completely at rest. Either he was ignorant of the danger, or they were ignorant of his power. In moments of crisis, it is easy to forget everything that we have learned and experienced. And that happened to the disciples. It

happens to us. It will happen to the disciples again and again but there will come a day when they really get it. They will learn that Jesus is worth trusting, no matter what. Sometimes he saves us from the storm. Even if he doesn't, he has the power to and if he chooses not to, it is only because there is something better that he is doing. Sometimes he saves us through the storm. Either way, as Jesus said in v.15 the good soil "are those who hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."

- What is the storm that you are in?
- Is the storm generating fear?
- What exactly are you afraid of?
- How does that help you understand what your faith is in?
- How can the storm become a means of peace instead of panic?