

Matthew 8:23 - 27

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[0 : 00] At the heart of Orthodox Christianity is what we believe concerning Jesus, and at the heart of what we believe concerning Jesus is our belief that He is both God and man, one person and two natures.

In the words of our own confession, the Westminster Confession, it is expressed in the following manner, the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, so that the two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion.

Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man? And this truth is one that the church, guided by the Holy Spirit, was able to recognize in the overall teaching of Scripture, particularly, though not exclusively, in the teaching of the New Testament. And the church was then able to systematize this truth in the ancient creeds. Jesus. We don't have a handy proof text that states or declares this truth in the form of a doctrinal formulation.

[1 : 58] That said, we do have a passage, and the passage that we've read in Matthew's Gospel that presents this truth of Jesus as man and God, presents this truth with great clarity.

And we want to consider this passage this evening, the passage that we've read in Matthew's Gospel and chapter 8, and particularly that part of it that relates to Jesus calming the storm. So please, if you could, have your Bibles open in Matthew, chapter 8, and we'll be thinking particularly of the verses from 23 to 27.

And two phrases in particular where we want to concentrate our attention. First of all, the phrase that we read in verse 24, at the close of the verse, we read as follows, that Jesus was sleeping. And we want to consider this phrase in the context of Jesus' humanity. But then we have another phrase a little further on in the passage.

[3 : 11] In verse 26, we read, then he got up, then Jesus got up, and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

And to consider this phrase or this sentence as it instructs us concerning Christ's divinity. As I say, the first, but Jesus was sleeping, speaks of his humanity, and it serves as an encouragement to us and indeed an example.

And the second speaks of his divinity, and it serves as a challenge to us. In fact, what we might describe as a double challenge that we'll comment on a little later.

First of all, then, we have this first phrase in verse 24, but Jesus was sleeping. Now, often I pose questions as a means of finding answers, obviously, of a particular passage.

And here we have one. And why was he sleeping? Why was Jesus sleeping? Now, of the many questions that maybe have been posed from this pulpit over these past few months, there have been some that are very obvious as to their answer, but this one probably takes the biscuit in terms of having a very obvious answer.

[4 : 36] Why was he sleeping? Well, he was sleeping because he was tired. Jesus was tired. He was exhausted. If we just consider the kind of day that he had had as we consider the chapter that this is part of.

Now, I recognize that what we have here is not necessarily even in chronological order. Matthew's concern is not necessarily chronology, but simply to cover certain themes or to get across certain truths.

And so, we have to be careful in identifying some of what we read of in this chapter as necessarily pertaining to a particular day. That said, it is true that from verse 5, we're told of Jesus entering Capernaum.

And all that follows in the chapter takes place in Capernaum. And it's not inconceivable that it could have taken place in the course of a given day.

In any case, the things that we will note here just briefly are the kind of things that Jesus would have been involved in on a day-to-day basis.

[5 : 46] I would explain why we find him here sleeping as a result of his tiredness and exhaustion. Well, let's just see the kind of day he may well have had that ends with him exhausted and tired and sleeping in the boat.

We've read from verse 5 where we're told that Jesus entered Capernaum. And on entering Capernaum, immediately he's accosted by the centurion who needs his help with regard to his servant who lies at home in terrible suffering.

And Jesus, as was his custom, will not refuse to help this man. And he offers to go to the home of this man that he would heal his servant.

And this he does. And so he goes with the man and he heals his servant. Then we read of Jesus coming to Peter's house. And you can imagine as Jesus makes his way to Peter's house, it would be reasonable to presume that he might have thought, well, here there will be the opportunity for rest.

Here I am going to the home of a friend. Here I am going to one who is practically family. And I can escape from the crowds and the pressure to help all those who surround me.

[7 : 03] I'm going to Peter's house. There will be the opportunity for rest. But what does he discover? He finds that they are Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. And so again, he is on call.

Again, that is a duty to be performed, a healing to be performed for Peter's mother-in-law. And then we continue reading in verse 16, When evening came, the end of the working day, we might say. And what do we read? When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him. And he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah.

He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases. And so the crowds continued to make demands on Jesus.

And all this is a draining experience for Jesus. Even the words, I think, that Matthew highlights that are fulfilled in this healing ministry of Jesus, the words of the prophet Isaiah, I think, suggest that this miraculous activity of Jesus was not something that he could do, as it were, with no impact on his physical and his emotional integrity.

[8 : 25] He took up our infirmities. He carried our diseases. And while certainly we read these words and we think of Calvary, here Matthew is speaking of his healing ministry as being in part certainly a fulfillment of these words.

And these words suggest that this is a draining experience to take up our infirmities, to carry our diseases. In verse 10, we're told of more crowds.

Sorry, rather not in verse 10, but in verse 18, we read of more crowds who are surrounding Jesus. And so there's a need for Jesus to escape from their incessant demands on him.

And so he sees the opportunity of crossing over to the other side of the lake as a means of securing some rest from his labors.

He saw the crowd there in verse 18. He gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. But even then, he's not able immediately to do so, but rather there are questions to be answered.

[9 : 37] Teachers of the law with queries that they want him to respond to. And I think the answer that he gives to one of them there in verse 20, in the context of considering Jesus as physically and mentally and emotionally exhausted, his answer in verse 20 carries greater significance than maybe we would ordinarily attribute to it.

Listen to what Jesus says in answer to this teacher of the law in verse 20. And we've read that so often, but certainly, I speak of myself, I've never thought of it as being said in the context of exhaustion and of tiredness.

And it carries so much weight and meaning. If we think of Jesus being tired and exhausted as he is pounded with question after question, need after need for him to respond to.

And so, in summary, Jesus is tired. He's exhausted. He's shattered. He is a man. He is a man like you and me, as we read in the words of the Confession, sharing with us our common infirmities. He is physically exhausted. He is emotionally drained. He is spiritually worn down by all the demands that are being made upon him.

[11 : 11] He is a man. And as he is able to make his way onto the boat that we read of there from verse 23, he falls into a profound sleep for the simple reason that he is tired.

He is exhausted. And this can serve for us as a great encouragement. Jesus, as fully human, knows what it is to be, and considering the case that we're looking at this evening, he knows what it is to be tired.

But he also knows what it is to experience all the infirmities and weakness that are common to men. He knows what it is to be tired, to be exhausted, to be worn down, to be frazzled from all the competing demands on his time.

And what about you? Perhaps the second most obvious question I could pose, are you ever tired? Do you know what it is to be drained, to be exhausted?

And there's so much to do and so many duties to perform in your work, in your family, in the church, and to juggle all these duties and all these responsibilities, and you're just so tired, and you want to do things well, and you want to fulfill the duties that you have, and yet you're tired, and you're worn down, and you're exhausted.

[12 : 37] Well, Jesus has been there. He understands what it is to be tired. He understands what it is to be exhausted. He understands what it is to have multiple and competing demands on his time and affections.

He is, in the words of the writer to the Hebrews, he is that great high priest who is able to sympathize with us, to be able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

And among them, that very human weakness of human, or of physical tiredness and emotional exhaustion. Jesus is tired.

Jesus is exhausted. But notice also, and this to serve as an example for us, we are encouraged that our high priest understands us and knows us and sympathizes with us, but also as an example, though he is tired and though he is exhausted, he continues loving.

He continues healing. He continues serving. And so that serves as an example for us in our tiredness.

[13 : 49] But Jesus was sleeping. Jesus the man, an encouragement and an example. Well, finally, in verse 23, he is able to get into the boat.

He is able to rest his weary head and body, but not for long. In verse 24, we read, Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake so that the waves swept over the boat.

A furious storm. The Greek word used here that is translated storm is the word *seismos*. And you don't need to be a linguist to work out the connection to an English word, the English word seismic, that we use in relation to movements of the earth, to earthquakes and tsunamis.

And the word describes a furious storm, hence the need for the adjective, a furious storm came up on the lake. An earthquake, we could call it a tsunami, a tsunami is what is hitting the lake, having embarked on this boat.

And yet, Jesus is so tired, he is so shattered, he has gone into such a profound sleep that it would seem that he continues to sleep through the storm.

[15 : 18] Well, we know what happens next. And what happens next introduces us to the next phrase we want to briefly consider. What happens is that given the storm, given this furious storm, the disciples waken him and cry for help.

We read there in verse 25, the disciples went and woke him, saying, Lord, save us, we're going to drown. And what does Jesus do? Well, he is indeed woken up by their cries.

He rebukes their lack of faith. And then we read what we are particularly concerned with in this second part of the sermon. Then we read this.

Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. It was completely calm.

This is the response to this rebuke that Jesus gives to the winds and the waves. And the calming of the wind and the calming of the waves is simultaneous.

[16 : 24] If you can just imagine the effects of a storm, and you can imagine the effects of the wind, and the wind creates this movement in the waves. And just imagine if a storm were to cease

suddenly, a very unlikely occurrence.

But just imagine for a moment if that physical phenomenon were to happen, that there's this storm and suddenly it stops. But what of the waves? Well, the waves would continue to splash and continue to go over the boat because, you see, the movement of the waves is from before the ceasing of the storm.

And here also the movement of the waves predates the command of Jesus. And yet, when Jesus rebukes the wind, there is calm.

He rebukes the waves, and there is calm. Simultaneously, these forces of nature as we are prone to describe them, immediately and completely and absolutely obey the command of Jesus, obey the command of their Maker.

It was completely calm. And the disciples, understandably, exclaim, what kind of man is this?

[17:39] The very manner in which they pose the question is very revealing. What kind of man is this? It's as if to say, can this really be a man? A man cannot do this.

Men don't do this kind of thing. What kind of man is this? They maybe don't know the answer, but the question is spot on. It's a very incisive question.

What kind of man is this? Well, we know the answer to the question, but in order to, if you wish, reinforce the answer to that question, let's just listen to the words of the psalmist in Psalm 104.

And as we simply listen to the words of the psalmist, we can confirm the answer to the question of the disciples. What kind of man is this?

There in Psalm 104 we read, Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord, my God, you are very great. You are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment.

[18:40] He stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes wind his messengers, flames of fire his servants.

He sets the earth on its foundations that can never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke the waters fled.

At the sound of your thunder they took to flight. They flowed over the mountains. They went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross.

Never again will they cover the earth, and so on and so forth. And as we listen to these words of the psalmist, and as we consider the incident described, and as we seek to find an answer to the question of the disciples, what kind of man is this?

Well, this man is God. This man is God. In the words of the Nicene Creed, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

[19:49] It is the Creator who is ordering the created world, and the created world can do nothing but obey the voice of the Creator.

And as God, and as God, He serves as a challenge. I spoke at the beginning of a double challenge. He serves, firstly, as a challenge to our faith, in the sense that we, too, can cry out confidently as we consider to whom we cry.

As we seek the help of Jesus, we seek the help of God. We seek the one who enjoys all power and authority. And so, when we would take the words of the disciples on our own lips, in our own circumstances, Lord, save us.

Lord, save us. Whatever the storm, whatever the emotional earthquake, whatever the tsunami in your soul, whatever the problem, great or small, in Jesus we have one able to help.

Cry out to Him that our recognition of who He is would serve as a challenge, a challenge, and indeed an encouragement to our faith as we would cry out to Him confidently.

[21:07] But I say a double challenge because I think recognizing Jesus for who He is, as God, is also a challenge to our obedience. Here we have something that is worth pondering on.

The winds obey. The waves obey. And as we look back to the previous parts of the chapter that we've just very briefly noted, the fever obeys, the leprosy obeys, the demons obey.

They obey immediately, and they obey without murmuring. What about us? We who have been created in His likeness and image. We who, as Christians, have been brought into His family.

If the waves obey, and if the winds obey, and if even the demons obey, what a strange thing it is that we are so slow to obey.

What a strange thing it is that we are so quick to disobey. And so as we remember and as we are reminded who Jesus is, so it serves as a challenge to our obedience and the nature of our obedience.

[22 : 17] So two phrases that we find in this portion of the chapter. Jesus was sleeping. He is a man. Be encouraged.

He understands. But we read also, He rebuked. He rebuked the winds and the wind, and it was completely calm. Be challenged to believe and to cry for help.

And let us also be challenged to obey the one who has every right to expect our obedience. Let us pray. So, let us pray.

others can we Specifically Rebell■?

Declared? Okay. Better? Do you ■■ what we did or we! I guess we can show you that is what we said