



“Calm in the Storm”  
Luke 8:22-25

**Idea:** Storms are God’s divinely appointed instruments to teach His people to trust and be at rest in Him.

**Intro:** The *Edmund Fitzgerald* was built in 1958 as hull number 301 at the Great Lakes Engineering Works at River Rouge, Michigan. More than ten thousand people watched as the vessel slid into the water on June 8, 1958. Possessing an overall length of 729 feet, she and her sister ship, the *Arthur B. Homer*, became the largest carriers on the Great Lakes.

On November 10, 1975, after seventeen years on the lakes, the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, having left Duluth, found herself in the worst storm to hit Lake Superior in more than thirty years. Gale winds were being clocked at over 80 miles per hour, and guests were reaching an incredible 96 miles per hour. Waves were running thirty feet high. Men on the lake later recalled how the wind in the rigging sounded like “dozens of air raid sirens, all going at once.” The waves pounding on the ships were, in their words, like “a hundred wrecking balls” all banging on the steel plates of the hulls. Mountainous waves crashed over the freighter, rolling 600 feet along the deck.

Shortly after seven o’clock in the looming darkness the *Edmund Fitzgerald*’s long hull bent. With the next wave, it bent even further. Then, the hull snapped like a broken bone. Her two great pieces wallowed momentarily before plunging some 500 feet to the bottom of Lake Superior. They settled just 170 feet apart. Some say the breakup happened in ten short seconds. One instant she was plowing through waves as high as a three-story building, and the next she was gone.

It is hard to imagine how horrific that scene must have been for the sailors on board the *Edmund Fitzgerald*. Battling wind and waves like that would terrify the most seasoned of sailors. Add to the horror, the breaking up of your ship, and it is hard to imagine a more dreadful experience. While most of us will never encounter a scenario like that, many of us have felt at times like our lives were being tossed around and sinking in a tumultuous sea. What we regarded as normal was breaking apart, and the very foundations we had built our lives upon were crumbling before our eyes. Good things such as family, friends, finances, and our futures were spiraling down and out.

It is in these tumultuous seas that we often wonder where God is. We may even doubt that He cares about our struggles, or we speculate about His ability to change our situations. When the storm is raging, we long for peaceful waters; and we lament that God has seemingly failed us. We feel this way because a particular end or a desired goal has not been met. There is a question that needs to be considered by each of us. Here it is, “Could it be that God’s goal was never the same as mine?”

Oswald Chambers offers a strong, challenging word on this subject. He says in *My Utmost for His Highest*:  
“We are apt to imagine that if Jesus Christ constrains us, and we obey Him, He will lead us to great success. We must never put our dreams of success as God’s purpose for us; His purpose may be exactly the opposite...God is not working towards a particular finish; His end is the process – that I see Him walking on the waves, no shore in sight, no success, no goal, just the absolute certainty that it is all right because I see Him walking on the sea...God’s end is to enable me to see that He can walk on the chaos of my life just now.”

Do you see the Lord like that today? Do you see Him walking on the chaos of your life, bringing calm in the storm? Hey, feeling overwhelmed and fearful is commonplace in this fallen world due to our distrusting disposition toward the Lord. It is, however, not what the Lord would have for us, and it is not what is best for us. Instead, the Lord wants us to see and believe that He alone can peacefully walk on the chaos of our lives. This is His end goal for our lives, but His process for achieving this goal involves tumultuous waves and wind. This truth is on full display in our next pericope. We will see that storms are God’s divinely appointed instruments to teach His people to trust and be at rest in Him.

Read Luke 8:22-25.

**Inquiry:** Jesus and the disciples get into a boat to cross to the other side of the lake to continue preaching the Kingdom. Mark tells us there were multiple boats (Mark 4:36). They are on the Sea of Galilee. It is large lake that is five miles wide and thirteen miles long. Large inland, fresh waters possess a unique treachery because they do not have the even rhythms of the great seas. The waves on big lakes are often nonrhythmic and contradictory. They are also more vulnerable to geography because instead of surrounding land like the oceans do, they are surrounded by varying topography. Thus, they are subject to quick temperature inversions and violent changes of weather. Also, their smaller size instills a false sense of safety.

The Sea of Galilee can be perilous because of the topography that surrounds it. There are many imposing mountains gouged with deep ravines all around it. These ravines serve as gigantic funnels that bring winds whirling down upon the lake without notice. These gales are often strengthened by a thermal buildup in the extremely low valley that sucks the cold air violently downward. The lake sets approximately 700 feet below sea level. This was precisely the case as Jesus and the disciples attempted to cross it.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record that Jesus was sleeping when the storm hit. In fact, the Lord had to be awakened. He was sleeping hard due to exhaustion from a long day of ministry. When Jesus awoke, He rebuked the wind and the waves (vs. 24). According to Mark, He commanded, *“Peace, Be still”* (Mark 4:39). As Jesus calmed the storm, He asked the disciples, *“Why are you so afraid?”* (Mark 4:40) and *“Where is your faith?”* (vs. 25). The disciples had not yet learned that Jesus alone could peacefully walk on the chaos of their lives. They were fearful because they did not yet trust Him with everything. Moreover, I bet many of us here today are equally fearful in our lives because we have not yet learned to trust the Lord with everything. For this reason, I want us to see from this passage that the storms we fear are God’s divinely appointed instruments to teach His people to trust and be at rest in Him.

As we seek to understand what the Holy Spirit would teach us today. Let’s look at three realities of what is now and three realities of what need to be.

### Three Realities of What Is

#### **1. The Lord pilots His people into storms.**

The reason the disciples were in the boat and on the water that day was solely because Jesus instructed them to do so (vs. 22). As they moved across the lake, Jesus fell asleep. The God-Man was tired. His physical body was spent. His mental capacity was exhausted. And The Word (ὁ λόγος) had probably used all His earthly words. As Jesus was lulled to sleep by the movement of the boat, however, there

was never a moment that He did not know what lay ahead. He knew the storm was coming, and He intentionally piloted the boat into the heart of the storm.

Just as the Lord led the disciples into the storm on the Sea of Galilee that day, He leads you and I into our own storms of life. Therefore, we would do well to remember that no matter what difficulty or obstacle we may face in life, the goodness and the grace of God has led us to this point and for this purpose. The Lord pilots His people into storms.

## **2. The Lord is present with His people in the midst of storms.**

It is sobering to remember that God pilots His people toward the storms they face, but even more sobering than that reality is the fact that the Lord is also present in the storm. Many of the disciples were professional fishermen. They had spent their entire lives on the Sea of Galilee, and they had experienced many storms on the water. This particular storm seems to have been exceptionally fierce. The wind and the waves were raging. The boats were filling up with water and beginning to sink. The professionals did not know what to do. Humanly speaking they were right for being scared. They were about to die. In that moment, they cried out to the only One who could help them (vs. 24). They cried to Jesus, *“Master, Master, we are perishing!”* Mark includes a question of allegation, *“Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?”*

In one sense the disciples recognized Jesus’ presence in their storm. In another sense, they misinterpreted His presence to mean they would never face such a fierce storm. Christian, we would do well to remember that the Lord is present in our storms. His presence does not promise clear sailing, but it does ensure that we have a captain at the helm who can pilot us safely through the storm.

## **3. The Lord has power over the storms.**

The storm that swept down upon the Sea of Galilee that day was real, and it was dangerous. If Jesus had not been in the boat, the disciples would likely have drowned when the ships sunk. Jesus, however, stood up and rebuked the wind and the waves. He spoke a word and the sea was immediately calm.

The storms of life are real, and they are dangerous. Without the presence and help of Jesus in your life, many times those storms can take you down. With Jesus, however, you are saved. He speaks a word over your chaos and immediately there is calm.

Many times, the calm the Lord brings is not the cessation of the storm. It may go on raging and destroying everything in its path, but the Lord speaks and brings calm within you.

Hopefully, we learned this during COVID. There were so many people who were scared to death over the virus. This was true of Christians and non-Christians alike. People masked up and gloved up. They would wear two to three masks and bathe in hand sanitizer. Then they cut off all personal contact with other people. All of this was done in an attempt to navigate the uncharted waters of COVID. What good was any of that? I would argue that much more harm was done than any good that came from it. As we have traveled through the storm of COVID, I hope we have learned that nothing can harm your life unless the Lord first allows it. Nothing can touch you without His consent. Jesus asks in Luke 12:25, *“And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?”* The reality is that you cannot add or subtract one day from your life. Therefore, rather than being fearful of the storm before us, let’s trust the God who holds power over the storm.

This leads us to three realities of what needs to be in our lives.

## Three Realities of What Need to Be

### **1. A calm assurance of God's goodness.**

The disciples questioned whether Jesus cared or not about their situation (Mark 4:38). They questioned His goodness because they were in a violent storm. We too may question God's goodness when in a harsh storm of life. We wonder, "Why would God allow this in my life? Does He not love me? Does He not care about me?" The reality is, God does love and care about you. In fact, He loves you so much that He will cause you to face difficulty for your own long-term good. The Lord wants you and I to see and believe that He alone can peacefully walk on the chaos of our lives. His goodness pilots us into areas for our own growth and development.

Do you rest in God's goodness? When the storm is raging all around, are you at peace knowing that God is good? Strive to possess a calm assurance of God's goodness in all situations.

### **2. A confident understanding of God's power.**

When Jesus calmed the wind and waves, the disciples were awestruck. They marveled over His power and authority over the storm. We too, stand in awe and marvel over how the Lord pilots us through the storms of life. The very thing that seemed hell-bent to sink us, Jesus overcame on our behalf. When that happens, we are overwhelmed and amazed by God. This is a good thing, and on some level we should never lose it. On the other hand, as we faithfully trust the Lord to pilot our lives through the storms of life, we should develop a confident understanding of His power. When the storms blow in with all their violence and destruction, rather than being knocked down in fear, we should in faith fix our eyes on Jesus who holds command over the storms. Allow the storm to rage as you rest in the power and goodness of the Lord.

### **3. A consistent welcoming of God's trials.**

Again, the Lord wants us to see and believe that He alone can peacefully walk on the chaos of our lives. Storms are God's divinely appointed instruments to teach His people to trust and be at rest in Him. We ought to learn to welcomingly gaze at the oncoming storm with anticipation of what we will learn about God through it. Rather than being fearful of what is coming or what you are experiencing, welcome it as God's gracious instrument to further your sanctification.

This welcoming of trials will require a change of perspective. You will not ever welcome them if you do not wholeheartedly believe God to be good in all He does. Likewise, you will never welcome them if you waiver in your belief that God is sovereign over all things. Let's remember that in God's goodness He pilots us into storms, yet He never sends us in alone. He is an ever-present help in time of trouble (Ps 46:1).

**Conclusion:** The *Edmund Fitzgerald* with its size and longevity on the Great Lakes seemed to be invincible. It had sailed through many storms during its seventeen years of service. On November 10, 1975, this great ship met its match upon the waves of Lake Superior. Too often, we too feel like we have met our own match upon the storming waves of life. In those moments we wonder, "Why would God allow this in my life? Does He not love me? Does He not care about me?". The reverberating answer from God's Word is always, "He is here with you now, and He cares deeply about you!"

Christian, please do not mistake the struggles and hardships in your life for God's absence or neglect. Peace is often hard to find. The wind and the waves are usually pounding all around us, and shots are constantly being made at our lives. Someone once said, "Peace is the brief glorious moment in history when everybody stands around reloading." Do you feel like that sometimes? Do you feel like that today? Well, you are in good company. The disciples felt like that in the boat.

The Lord wants us to see and believe that He alone can peacefully walk on the chaos of our lives, and His process for achieving this goal involves tumultuous waves and wind. Remember that God pilots you into and remains with you amid those storms. He alone holds all power over them. Let's learn to possess a calm assurance of His goodness and power as we welcome the trials, knowing they are for our good.

Do you see Jesus walking on the chaos of your life?

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Do you need to be forgiven?