

Series: Psalm

Title: God's Works and Wonders (in the Deep)

Text: Ps 107: 23-32

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Psalm 107: 23: They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; 24: These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. 25: For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. 26: They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. 27: They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. 28: Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. 29: He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. 30: Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. 31: Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men! 32: Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

This Psalm tells us who the students are, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters." The student are those on the seas in ships in deep waters: fishermen, sailors—those doing business upon the sea.

In scripture, the sea—deep waters, stormy waves—often represent trials. There are many forms of trial: trials of health, of poverty and of wealth, trials between brethren, amongst family, in our occupations. We could go on and on. So if you are experiencing any form of trial--from God's hand—then may God give you grace to behold God's works and God's wonders as you pass through these deep waters.

But above all other trials is the stormy trial that occurs when God makes a sinner behold our sin; the stormy trial of the law when we hear the law declare us guilty before God; the stormy trial of sin and unrighteousness; when God makes us see all our righteousnesses are filthy rags; when God makes us see we must have Christ alone and his Righteousness, his Sanctifying Power.

Like the sailor on the sea in the storm, those who come into spiritual affliction, "These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep."

Our subject is "God's Works and Wonders (in the Deep)."

As everyone here knows, last week Melinda and I went on a 7 day cruise through the western Caribbean. Very dear brethren purchased it for us. They went with us. We have not gone on a vacation in a very long time. So this was an extra special time for Melinda and I. We thoroughly enjoyed it. We are grateful to our brethren for giving us such a nice gift.

Last Thursday night, as we reached the straight on the north end of Cuba, in the middle of the night, we were awakened by a violent storm. Bear in mind, our ship was one of two of the largest ships in the world. When we saw our ship at port beside other ships we were amazed how much larger it was than other ships.

Yet, when that storm arose, the wind and waves tossed our ship like a toy boat in a bathtub. This passage came to my mind. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep."

Most of the time, the waters were between 1500 and 10,000 feet deep. A friend told me they once passed over the Cayman Trench which is 25,000 feet deep. But even the depths of the sea are shallow compared to

when God brings his child to hear the deep waters of his word and experience the deep waters of his chastening hand—that is when we “see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.”

COMMANDING THE STORM

First, we see God’s work and wonder to command the storm—“**For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths.**” (Ps 107: 25-26)

Storms on the ocean are a work and wonder of God. We saw what a wonder it was! For days the seas had been calm, the sun shining, the winds were comfortable and warm. But that night, a strong, cold, stormy wind blew. The wind caused the waves to mount higher and higher and go down lower and lower. But that storm did not come by what men call “mother nature”—God commanded that storm and raised the stormy wind. We read of Jonah when he tried to run from God onboard a ship:

Jonah 1: 4: But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

So it is that God commands the spiritual storm for his chosen child. At God’s command, the Holy Spirit comes forth into a sinner like the stormy wind. Christ said, “The wind bloweth [where it will] and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (Joh 3:6-8)

I heard the wind that night but it was irresistible. The wind came and did what it would. And we had no power to resist it. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit of God. This is what we mean when we speak of the irresistible grace of God. When God the Holy Spirit comes forth into a sinner, the sinner does not determine the outcome—we have no power against the Holy Spirit just as we have no power against the wind in a storm. But the Spirit of God always accomplishes his will within us—always.

The Holy Spirit raises up spiritual waves the same as the wind raises up the waves of the sea—“**For [God] commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths:**” (Ps 107: 25-26)

Just as the wind lifted up those waves that night, so the Holy Spirit lifts up spiritual waves. He quickens the dead sinner; he opens our blind eyes; he makes us see all we are is sin: wave after wave.

One day as Melinda and I looked at the waves on the sea, I made the remark that those waves have been doing that same thing since creation. Likewise, since our fall, we have been sinning wave upon wave upon wave upon wave.

Like waves, our sins mount up to heaven. The apostle Paul said, by making us hear the law condemn us, God makes our sins become exceeding sinful. Our sins mount up to heaven in the very sight of God. We discover we are naked before God.

Hebrews 4: 12: the word of God...*is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13: Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb 4:12-13)

That night those waves went down again very deep into the sea. By the Holy Spirit, we see our sins go down again to the depths. We behold we are born of corrupt seed, passed down from Adam, so we are corrupt to

the very depths of our natures. Our mind is dead in sin. Our will is in bondage to our sin-nature. From the top of our head to the sole of our foot we are an abomination before God.

Romans 3: 10: As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Our deadness in sin is why it is a must that God alone do this work and wonder of sending the Holy Spirit, of giving us spiritual life and creating this great storm, of making us behold wave upon wave of our sin. This is the work and wonder of God worked in the depths of our heart.

END OF OURSELVES

Not only does God get the glory for sending the storm, it is the work and wonder of God to use the storm to bring a sinner to the end of ourselves—“**[As the waves] mount up to the heaven, [and] go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They [their bodies] reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and [in their minds] are at their wits’ end.**” (Ps 107: 26-27)

That is the totality of self: the soul and spirit, the body, along with wisdom of mind. I experienced in that storm that every part of me was useless.

First, my soul [my heart, my spirit within] was melted because of trouble—“[As the waves] mount up to the heaven, [and] go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.” My heart became without strength when I saw my utter inability—and the inability of everyone on that ship—to do anything to save us from those winds and those waves. But much more, when God first made me see my sin, then my soul, spirit, heart was melted within me—I had no strength inwardly. And he still melts my heart the same way. When God did this in Isaiah’s heart? “Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I *am* undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” (Isa 6:5) Has your spirit melted within you because you see that your sin has left you totally helpless to help yourself? Still, that is not the end of self.

Next, my bodily strength was taken away during that storm—“They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man.” Those waves rocked us to and fro for hours on end. There was no way to walk straight, no way to get physical relief, I became sickened by it. In a much greater spiritual way, God makes his child to see his body is totally weak to aid in any way. The works of our hands are useless to work out a righteousness before God. God makes us become sickened by our sins. There is no strength in ourselves in any form to gain relief from our sins, from justice, from death. Still, that is not the end of self...

Finally, I was at my wits end—“and [in their minds] are at their wits’ end.” The margin says “all their wisdom is swallowed up.” I tried to use what wisdom I could to get relief in that storm. I laid every way I knew to lay. I walked around. Nothing I could think of would work. My wit—my wisdom—to help myself came to its end—I was at my wits end. This is where God brings his child—“all our wisdom is swallowed up.”—we are at our wits end. Our will, our wisdom, our works, is brought to its end.

Sinner, have you been in any kind of storm or experienced some trial where you have seen your total inability? Well, even greater is your inability: to establish the righteousness of the law, to pay divine justice the debt you owe because of your sins or to give yourself spiritual life. Oh, but what a blessing when God brings us to end of ourselves.

CASTING ALL CARE INTO CHRIST’S HAND

It is the work and wonder of God to bring his child to cast all our care into Christ's hand—**“Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,...” (Ps 107: 28)**

Have you ever considered when it is that we truly pray? True prayer is casting all our care into Christ's hand. And we only cast all our care into Christ's hand when we can do nothing else. When God has melted our spirit within us, when God makes us see our bodily strength is useless, when God swallows up our wisdom and brings us to our wits end, “Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,...”

We were focused on the beauty of that ship, the food, the shows, the sea, our friends and the fun. But when God made that storm arise, when God brought us to the end of ourselves, then my heart was turned from all that, to the Lord and I called on him in my trouble.

We go through this world like passengers on a cruise ship: going from one dinner to the next, from one show to the next, some play golf, others climb rock walls, others surf. And all those insignificant things are just as insignificant in eternal spiritual importance as the business we deem so important in our lives daily.

It takes God to command the Holy Spirit to raise the storm to make us behold our sin to bring us to the end of ourselves that he might bring us to cry unto the Lord. Then we truly pray when we count ourselves worthless—our soul, body, and wisdom of mind all useless—then we are made willing to cast all our care into the hand of the LORD. Jonah cried, “For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.” (Jon 2: 3-4) Then our cry is, “God be merciful to me the sinner!” (Lu 18: 13)

SALVATION

At last, it is God's work and wonder to save—**“...and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.” (Ps 107: 28-30)**

Be it the trial of conversion or trials in life or death, when God brings us to cry unto him alone for salvation then God makes the raging sea calm. And he does it the same way every time—by making us behold the Lord Jesus Christ our Salvation!

God makes us behold Christ who bore the shame of our sin for us in his own body on the tree. All our sin that God makes us to behold in ourselves—he makes us to behold that very sin laid on Christ our Substitute. Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the law for his people by loving God and his people as himself by laying down his life on our behalf.

In our light suffering under God's chastening hand, God makes us behold how Christ bore infinitely more to justify us from our sins. We behold that the fierce anger of God's wrath was poured out on Christ in our room and stead. Christ bore separation from God so that God will never leave us nor forsake us.

God makes us behold how God raised him from the storm into Christ's desired haven at Gods' right hand because he accomplished our justification.

Every trial beginning to end is to turn us to Christ our All. And when we are turned to Christ then from heaven, Christ speaks like he did on this earth and says to the stormy trial, “Peace, be still.” (Mk 4: 39) Then Psalm “he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto [Christ] their desired haven.” Through faith in the blood of Christ we are washed, justified and sanctified through the Spirit of God.

GOD'S APPLICATION

Psalm 107: 31: Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

Yet, left to themselves, when trials are over, the children of men go on patting themselves on the back. Mariners praise themselves for their skill! Remember, the man who was found frozen in the snow, revived many hours later by doctors. Recently, in an interview, a reporter ended by congratulating the man on being so strong and surviving being frozen.

But those God makes to know the truth, by his grace, we do indeed praise the LORD in spirit and in truth—**Psalm 107: 32: Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.**

We say with the disciples, “What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.” (Lu 8: 25)

Last Thursday night, it was God who brought us out of our distresses. He made the storm a calm so that the waves were still. I was glad because the sea was quite. Saturday morning, God brought us into our desired haven at Ft. Lauderdale. There was only one I could thank—my God and my Savior the Lord Jesus.

So it is in salvation—the only one worthy to be exalted and praised—is the one who has done it all—our Captain, Christ Jesus the Lord!

Amen!