

# CHAPTER 4

In this chapter, we have,

- I. The parable of the seed, and the four sorts of ground (v. 1-9), with the exposition of it (v. 10-20), and the application of it (v. 21-25).
- II. The parable of the seed growing gradually, but insensibly (v. 26-29).
- III. The parable of the grain of mustard-seed, and a general account of Christ's parables (v. 30-34).
- IV. The miracle of Christ's sudden stilling a storm at sea (v. 35-41).

## MARK 4:1-20


### THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

The foregoing chapter began with Christ's *entering into the synagogue* (v. 1); this chapter begins with Christ's *teaching again by the sea side*. Thus he changed his method, that if possible all might be reached and wrought upon. To gratify the nice and more genteel sort of people that had seats, *chief seats, in the synagogue*, and did not care for hearing a sermon any where else, he did not preach always by the *sea side*, but, having liberty, went often *into the synagogue*, and taught there; yet, to gratify the poor, the mob, that could not get room in the synagogue, he did not always preach there, but *began again to teach by the sea side*, where they could come *within hearing*. Thus are we *debtors both to the wise and to the unwise*, <sup>4114</sup>Romans 1:14.

Here seems to be a new convenience found out, which had not been used before, though he had before preached by the sea side (<sup>4113</sup>Mark 2:13), and that was — his standing *in a ship*, while his hearers *stood upon the land*; and that inland sea of Tiberias having no tide, there was no ebbing and flowing of the waters to disturb them. Methinks Christ's carrying his doctrine into a ship, and preaching it thence, was a presage of his sending the gospel to the *isles of the Gentiles*, and the shipping off of the kingdom

of God (that rich cargo) from the Jewish nation, to be sent to a people that would bring forth more of the fruits of it. Now observe here,

**I.** The way of teaching that Christ used with the *multitude* (v. 2); He taught them many things, but it was by *parables* or similitudes, which would tempt them to hear; for people love to be spoken to in their own language, and careless hearers will catch at a plain comparison borrowed from common things, and will retain and repeat that, when they have *lost*, or perhaps never *took*, the truth which it was designed to explain and illustrate: but unless they would take pains to search into it, it would but amuse them; *seeing they would see, and not perceive* (v. 12); and so, while it gratified their curiosity, it was the punishment of their stupidity; they wilfully shut their eyes against the light, and therefore justly did Christ put it into the dark lantern of a parable, which had a bright side toward those who applied it to themselves, and were willing to be guided by it; but to those who were only *willing for a season to play with it*, it only gave a flash of light now and then, but sent them away in the dark. It is just with God to say of those that *will not see*, that they *shall not see*, and to hide from their eyes, who only look about them with a great deal of carelessness, and never look before them with any concern upon the things that belong to their peace.

**II.** The way of *expounding* that he used with his *disciples*; When he was alone by himself, not only the *twelve*, but others that were *about him with the twelve*, took the opportunity to *ask him* the meaning of the parables, v. 10. They found it good to be *about Christ*; the nearer him the better; good to be *with the twelve*, to be conversant with those that are intimate with him. And he told them what a distinguishing favour it was to them, that they were made acquainted with the *mystery of the kingdom of God*, v. 11. *The secret of the Lord was with them*. That instructed them, which others were only *amused* with, and they were made to increase in knowledge by every parable, and understood more of the way and method in which Christ designed to set up his kingdom in the world, while others were dismissed, never the wiser. Note, Those who know the *mystery of the kingdom of heaven*, must acknowledge that it is *given to them*; they receive both the light and the sight from Jesus Christ, who, after his resurrection, both *opened the scriptures*, and *opened the understanding*,  Luke 24:27, 45.

In particular, we have here,

**1.** The parable of the sower, as we had it, <sup>411B</sup>Matthew 13:3, etc. He begins (v. 3), with, *Hearken*, and concludes (v. 9) with, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*. Note, The words of Christ demand attention, and those who speak from him, may command it, and should stir it up; even that which as yet we do not *thoroughly* understand, or not *rightly*, we must carefully attend to, believing it to be both intelligible and weighty, that at length we may understand it; we shall find more in Christ's sayings than at first there seemed to be.

**2.** The exposition of it to the disciples. Here is a question Christ put to them before he expounded it, which we had not in Matthew (v. 13); “*Know ye not this parable? Know ye not the meaning of it? How then will ye know all parables?*”

**(1.)** “If ye know not this, which is so plain, how will ye understand other parables, which will be more dark and obscure? If ye are gravelled and run aground with this, which bespeaks so plainly the different success of the word preached upon those that hear it, which ye yourselves may see easily, how will ye understand the parables which hereafter will speak of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, which is a thing ye have no idea of?” Note, This should quicken us both to prayer and pains that we may get knowledge, that there are a great many things which we are concerned to know; and if we understand not the plain truths of the gospel, how shall we master those that are more difficult? *Vita brevis, ars longa — Life is short, art is long. If we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, and run us down, then how shall we contend with horses?* <sup>241B</sup>Jeremiah 12:5.

**(2.)** “If ye know not this, which is intended for your direction in hearing the word, that ye may profit by it; how shall ye profit by what ye are further to hear? This parable is to teach you to be attentive to the word, and affected with it, that you may *understand* it. If ye receive not this, ye will not know how to use the key by which ye must be let into all the rest.” If we understand not the rules we are to observe in order to our profiting by the word, how shall we profit by any other rule? Observe, Before Christ expounds the parable,

**[1.]** He shows them how sad *their* case was, who were not let into the meaning of the doctrine of Christ; *To you it is given, but not to them*. Note, It will help us to put a value upon the privileges we enjoy as disciples of Christ, to consider the deplorable state of those who want such privileges,

especially that they are out of the ordinary way of conversion; *lest they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.* v. 12. Those only who are *converted*, have *their sins forgiven them*: and it is the misery of *unconverted* souls, that they lie under *unpardoned* guilt.

[2.] He shows them what a shame it was, that they needed such particular explanations of the word they heard, and did not apprehend it at first. Those that would improve in knowledge, must be made sensible of their ignorance.

Having thus prepared them for it, he gives them the interpretation of the parable of the sower, as we had it before in Matthew. Let us only observe here,

*First*, That in the great field of the church, the word of God is dispensed to all promiscuously; *The sower soweth the word* (v. 14), sows it at a venture, *beside all waters*, upon all sorts of ground (<sup>2320</sup>Isaiah 32:20), not knowing where it will light, or what fruit it will bring forth. He *scatters* it, in order to the *increase* of it. Christ was awhile *sowing* himself, when he went about teaching and preaching; now he sends his ministers, and sows by their hand. Ministers are sowers; they have need of the skill and discretion of the husbandman (<sup>2338</sup>Isaiah 28:24-26); they must not observe winds and clouds (<sup>2110</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:4, 6), and must look up to God, who *gives seed to the sower*, <sup>400</sup>2 Corinthians 9:10.

*Secondly*, That of the many that hear the word of the gospel, and read it, and are conversant with it, there are, comparatively, but few that receive it, so as to bring forth the fruits of it; here is but one in four, that comes to good. It is sad to think, how much of the precious seed of the word of God is lost, and *sown in vain*; but there is a day coming when *lost sermons* must be accounted for. Many that have heard Christ himself *preach in their streets*, will hereafter be bidden to depart from him; those therefore who place all their religion in hearing, as if that alone would save them, do but deceive themselves, and build their hope upon the sand, <sup>512</sup>James 1:22.

*Thirdly*, Many are much affected with the word for the present, who yet receive no abiding benefit by it. The motions of soul they have, answerable to what they hear, are but a mere flash, like the crackling of thorns under a pot. We read of hypocrites, that they *delight to know God's ways* (<sup>280</sup>Isaiah 58:2); of Herod, that he heard John gladly (<sup>400</sup>Mark 6:20);

of others, that they *rejoiced in his light* (<sup>(415)</sup>John 5:35); of those to whom Ezekiel was a *lovely song* (<sup>(333)</sup>Ezekiel 33:32); and those represented here by the stony ground, received the word *with gladness*, and yet came to nothing.

*Fourthly*, The reason why the word doth not leave commanding, abiding, impressions upon the minds of the people, is, because their hearts are not duly disposed and prepared to receive it; the fault is in themselves, not in the word; some are careless forgetful hearers, and these get *no good at all* by the word; it comes in at one ear, and goes out at the other; others have their convictions overpowered by their corruptions, and they lose the good impressions the word has made upon them, so that they get no *abiding* good by it.

*Fifthly*, The devil is very busy about loose, careless hearers, as the fowls of the air go about the seed that lies above ground; when the heart, like the *highway*, is unploughed, unhumbed, when it *lies common*, to be trodden on by every passenger, as theirs that are great company-keepers, then the devil is *like the fowls*; he comes swiftly, and carries away the word ere we are aware. When therefore these fowls come down upon the sacrifices, we should take care, as *Abram* did, to *drive them away* (<sup>(415)</sup>Genesis 15:11); that, though we cannot keep them from hovering over our heads, we may not let them nestle in our hearts.

*Sixthly*, Many that are not openly *scandalized*, so as to throw off their profession, as they on the stony ground did, yet have the efficacy of it secretly *choked* and stifled, so that it comes to nothing; they continue in a barren, hypocritical profession, which brings nothing to pass, and so go down as certainly, though more plausibly, to hell.

*Seventhly*, Impressions that are not *keep*, will not be *durable*, but will wear off in suffering, trying times; like footsteps on the sand of the sea, which are gone the next high tide of persecution; when *that* iniquity doth abound, the love of many to the ways of God waxeth cold; many that keep their profession in fair days, lose it in a storm; and do as those that go to sea only for pleasure, come back again when the wind arises. It is the ruin of hypocrites, that they *have no root*; they do not act from a living fixed principle; they do not mind *heart-work*, and without that religion is nothing; for he is the Christian, that is *one inwardly*.

*Eighthly*, Many are hindered from profiting by the word of God, by their abundance of the world. Many a good lesson of humility, charity, self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness, is choked and lost by that prevailing complacency in the world, which *they* are apt to have, on whom it smiles. Thus many professors, that otherwise might have come to something, prove like Pharaoh's *lean kine* and *thin ears*.

*Ninthly*, Those that are not encumbered with the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, may yet lose the benefit of their profession by the *lusts of other things*; this is added here in Mark; *by the desires which are about other things* (so Dr. Hammond), an inordinate appetite toward those things that are pleasing to sense or to the fancy. Those that have but little of the world, may yet be ruined by an indulgence of the body.

*Tenthly*, Fruit is the thing that God expects and requires from those that enjoy the gospel: fruit according to the *seed*; a temper of mind, and a course of life, agreeable to the gospel; Christian graces daily exercised, Christian duties duly performed. This is *fruit*, and it will abound to our account.

*Lastly*, No good fruit is to be expected but from good seed. If the seed be sown on *good ground*, if the heart be humble, and holy, and heavenly, there will be *good fruit*, and it will *abound* sometimes even to a *hundred fold*, such a crop as Isaac reaped, ~~Gen~~Genesis 26:12.

## MARK 4:21-34

### THE GRADUAL ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

The lessons which our Saviour designs to teach us here by parables and figurative expressions are these: —

**I.** That those who *are good* ought to consider the obligations they are under to *do good*; that is, as in the parable before, to *bring forth fruit*. God expects a grateful return of his gifts to us, and a useful improvement of his gifts in us; for (v. 21), *Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed?* No, but that it may be *set on a candlestick*. The apostles were ordained, to receive the gospel, not for themselves only, but for the

good of others, to communicate it to them. All Christians, as they have *received the gift*, must *minister the same*. Note,

**1.** Gifts and graces make a man *as a candle*; the *candle of the Lord* (<sup>(~~117~~)</sup>Proverbs 20:27), lighted by the Father of lights; the most eminent are but candles, poor lights, compared with the *Sun of righteousness*. A candle gives light but a *little way*, and but a *little while*, and is easily blown out, and continually burning down and wasting.

**2.** Many who are *lighted* as candles, put themselves *under a bed, or under a bushel*: they do not *manifest* grace themselves, nor *minister* grace to others; they have estates, and do no good with them; have their limbs and senses, wit and learning perhaps, but nobody is the better for them; they have spiritual gifts, but do not use them; like a taper in an urn, they burn to themselves.

**3.** Those who are lighted as candles, should set themselves *on a candlestick*; that is, should improve all opportunities of doing good, as those that were made for the glory of God, and the service of the communities they are members of; we are not born for ourselves.

The reason given for this, is, because *there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested*, which *should not* be made manifest (so it might better be read), v. 22. There is no treasure of gifts and graces lodged in any but with design to be communicated; nor was the gospel made a *secret* to the apostles, to be concealed, but that it should *come abroad*, and be divulged to all the world. Though Christ expounded the parables to his disciples privately, yet it was with design to make them the more publicly useful; they were *taught*, that they might teach; and it is a general rule, that *the ministration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*, not himself only, but others also.

**II.** It concerns those who hear the word of the gospel, to *mark* what they hear, and to *make a good use* of it, because their *weal* or *woe* depends upon it; what he had said before he saith again, *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear*, v. 23. Let him give the gospel of Christ a fair hearing; but that is not enough, it is added (v. 24), *Take heed what ye hear*, and give a due regard to that which ye do hear; *Consider what ye hear*, so Dr. Hammond reads it. Note, What we hear, doth us no good, unless we consider it; those especially that are to teach others must themselves be very observant of the things of God; must take notice of the message they

are to deliver, that they may be exact. We must likewise *take heed what we hear*, by *proving* all things, that we may *hold fast that which is good*. We must be *cautious*, and stand upon our guard, lest we be imposed upon. To enforce this caution, consider,

**1.** As we deal with God, God will deal with us, so Dr. Hammond explains these words, “*With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you. If ye be faithful servants to him, he will be a faithful Master to you: with the upright he will show himself upright.*”

**2.** As we improve the talents we are entrusted with, we shall increase them; if we make use of the knowledge we have, for the glory of God and the benefit of others, it shall sensibly grow, as stock in trade doth by being turned; *Unto you that hear, shall more be given; to you that have, it shall be given*, v. 25. If the disciples *deliver* that to the church, which they have *received of the Lord*, they shall be *led more into the secret of the Lord*. Gifts and graces multiply by being exercised; and God has promised to bless the *hand of the diligent*.

**3.** If we do not *use*, we *lose*, what we have; *From him that hath not*, that doeth no good with what he hath, and so hath it in vain, is as if he had it not, *shall be taken even that which he hath*. Burying a talent is the betraying of a trust, and amounts to a forfeiture; and gifts and graces *rust* for want of *wearing*.

**III.** The good seed of the gospel sown in the world, and sown in the heart, doth by degrees produce wonderful effects, but without noise (v. 26, etc.); *So is the kingdom of God*; so is the gospel, when it is sown, and received, as seed in good ground.

**1.** It will *come up*; though it seem lost and buried under the clods, it will find or make its way through them. The seed *cast into the ground will spring*. Let but the word of Christ have the place it ought to have in a soul, and it will show itself, as the *wisdom from above* doth in a *good conversation*. After a field is sown with corn, how soon is the surface of it altered! How gay and pleasant doth it look, when it is covered with green!

**2.** The husbandman cannot describe how it comes up; it is one of the mysteries of nature; It *springs and grows up, he knows not how*, v. 27. He sees it has grown, but he cannot tell in what manner it grew, or what was the cause and method of its growth. Thus we know not how the Spirit by



the word makes a change in the heart, any more than we can account for the blowing of the wind, which we hear the sound of, but cannot tell whence it comes, or whither it goes. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; how *God manifested in the flesh* came to be *believed on in the world*, <sup><3486></sup>1 Timothy 3:16.

**3.** The husbandman, when he hath sown the seed, doth nothing toward the springing of it up; *He sleeps, and rises, night and day*; goes to sleep *at night*, gets up *in the morning*, and perhaps never so much as thinks of the corn he hath sown, or ever looks upon it, but follows his pleasures or other business, and yet *the earth brings forth fruit of itself*, according to the ordinary course of nature, and by the concurring power of the God of nature. Thus the *word of grace*, when it is received in faith, is in the heart a *work of grace*, and the preachers contribute nothing to it. The Spirit of God is carrying it on when *they sleep*, and can do no business (<sup><3885></sup>Job 33:15, 16), or when they rise to go about other business. The prophets do not *live for ever*; but the word which they preached, is doing its work, when they are in their graves, <sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 1:5, 6. The dew by which the seed is brought up *tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men*, <sup><3307></sup>Micah 5:7.

**4.** It grows gradually; *first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear*, v. 28. When it is sprung up, it will go forward; nature will have its course, and so will grace. Christ's interest, both in the world and in the heart, is, and will be, a *growing* interest; and though *the beginning be small, the latter end will greatly increase*. Though thou sowest not that body that shall be, but *bare grain*, yet *God will give to every seed its own body*; though at first it is but a tender *blade*, which the frost may nip, or the foot may crush, yet it will increase to *the ear*, to the *full corn in the ear*. *Natura nil facit per saltum* — *Nature does nothing abruptly*. God carries on his work insensibly and without noise, but insuperably and without fail.

**5.** It comes to perfection at last (v. 29); *When the fruit is brought forth*, that is, when it is *ripe*, and ready to be *delivered* into the owner's hand; then he *puts in the sickle*. This intimates,

**(1.)** That Christ *now accepts* the services which are done to him by an honest heart from a good principle; from the fruit of the gospel taking place and working in the soul, Christ *gathers in* a harvest of honour to himself. See <sup><4045></sup>John 4:35.

(2.) That he will reward them in eternal life. When those that receive the gospel aright, have finished their course, the harvest comes, when they shall be gathered as *wheat into God's barn* (<sup><4130></sup>Matthew 13:30), as a shock of corn *in his season*.

**IV.** The work of grace is small in its beginnings, but comes to be great and considerable at last (v. 30-32); “*Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God, as now to be set up by the Messiah? How shall I make you to understand the designed method of it?*” Christ speaks as one considering and consulting with himself, how to illustrate it with an apt similitude; *With what comparison shall we compare it?* Shall we fetch it from the motions of the sun, or the revolutions of the moon? No, the comparison is borrowed from this earth, it is *like a grain of mustard-seed*; he had compared it before to *seed sown*, here to *that seed*, intending thereby to show,

**1.** That the beginnings of the *gospel kingdom* would be very small, like that which is *one of the least of all seeds*. When a Christian church was *sown in the earth* for God, it was all contained in one room, and the *number of the names* was but one hundred and twenty (<sup><4015></sup>Acts 1:15), as the children of Israel, when they went down into Egypt, were but seventy souls. The work of grace in the soul, is, at first, but the *day of small things*; a *cloud no bigger than a man's hand*. Never were there such great things undertaken by such an inconsiderable handful, as that of the discipling of the nations by the ministry of the apostles; nor a work that was to end in such great glory, as the work of grace raised from such weak and unlikely beginnings. *Who hath begotten me these?*

**2.** That the perfection of it will be very great; *When it grows up, it becomes greater than all herbs*. The gospel kingdom in the world, shall increase and spread to the remotest nations of the earth, and shall continue to the latest ages of time. The *church* hath *shot out great branches*, strong ones, spreading far, and fruitful. The *work of grace* in the soul has mighty products, now while it is in its growth; but what will it be, when it is perfected in heaven? The difference between a *grain of mustard seed* and a *great tree*, is nothing to that between a *young convert* on earth and a *glorified saint* in heaven. See <sup><4024></sup>John 12:24.

After the parables thus specified the historian concludes with this general account of Christ's preaching — that *with many such parables he spoke*

*the word unto them* (v. 33); probably designing to refer us to the larger account of the parables of this kind, which we had before, Matthew 13. He spoke in parables, *as they were able to hear them*; he fetched his comparisons from those things that were familiar to them, and level to their capacity, and delivered them in plain expressions, in condescension to their capacity; though he did not let them into the *mystery* of the parables, yet his manner of expression was easy, and such as they might hereafter recollect to their edification. But, for the present, *without a parable spoke he not unto them*, v. 34. The glory of the Lord was covered with a cloud, and God speaks to us in the language of the *sons of men*, that, though not *at first*, yet *by degrees*, we may understand his meaning; the disciples themselves understood those sayings of Christ afterward, which at first they did not rightly take the sense of. But these parables *he expounded to them, when they were alone*. We cannot but wish we had had that exposition, as we had of the parable of the sower; but it was not so needful; because, when the church should be enlarged, that would *expound* these parables to us, without any more ado.

## ◀4083 MARK 4:35-41

### CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES IN THE STORM

This miracle which Christ wrought for the relief of his disciples, in stilling the storm, we had before (◀4083 Matthew 8:23, etc.); but it is here more fully related. Observe,

**1.** It was *the same day* that he had preached out of a ship, *when the even was come*, v. 35. When he had been *labouring in the word and doctrine* all day, instead of *reposing himself*, he *exposeth himself*, to teach us not to think of a constant remaining rest till we come to heaven. The end of a toil may perhaps be but the beginning of a toss. But observe, the ship that Christ made his pulpit is taken under his special protection, and, though in danger, cannot sink. What is used for Christ, he will take particular care of.

**2.** He himself proposed putting to sea at night, because he would lose no time; *Let us pass over to the other side*; for we shall find, in the next chapter, he has work to do there. Christ went about doing good, and no

difficulties in his way should hinder him; thus industrious we should be in serving him, and our generation according to his will.

**3.** They did not put to sea, till *they had sent away the multitude*, that is, had given to each of them that which they came for, and answered all their requests; for he sent none home complaining that they had attended him *in vain*. Or, They sent them away *with a solemn blessing*; for Christ came into the world, not only to pronounce, but to *command*, and to *give*, the blessing.

**4.** They took him *even as he was*, that is, in the same dress that he was in when he preached, without any cloak to throw over him, which he ought to have had, to keep him *warm*, when he went to sea at night, especially after preaching. We must not hence infer that we may be careless of our health, but we may learn hence not to be over nice and solicitous about the body.

**5.** The storm was so great, that the ship was *full of water* (v. 37), not by springing a leak, but perhaps partly with the shower, for the word here used signifies a *tempest of wind with rain*; however, the ship being little, the waves beat into it so that *it was full*. Note, It is no new thing for that ship to be greatly hurried and endangered, in which Christ and his disciples, Christ and his name and gospel, are embarked.

**6.** There were *with him other little ships*, which, no doubt, shared in the distress and danger. Probably, these *little ships* carried those who were desirous to go along with Christ, for the benefit of his preaching and miracles on the other side. The *multitude went away* when he put to sea, but some there were, that would venture upon the water with him. Those follow the Lamb aright, that follow him *wherever he goes*. And those that hope for a happiness in Christ, must be willing to take their lot with him, and run the same risks that he runs. One may boldly and cheerfully put to sea in Christ's company, yea though we foresee a storm.

**7.** Christ was asleep in this storm; and here we are told that it was *in the hinder part of the ship*, the pilot's place: he lay at the helm, to intimate that, as Mr. George Herbert expresses it,

*When winds and waves assault my keel,  
He doth preserve it, he doth steer,  
Ev'n when the boat seems most to reel.  
Storms are the triumph of his art;  
Though he may close his eyes, yet not his heart.*

He had a *pillow* there, such a one as a fisherman's ship would furnish him with. And he *slept*, to try the faith of his disciples and to stir up prayer: upon the trial, their faith appeared *weak*, and their prayers *strong*. Note, Sometimes when the church is in a storm, Christ seems as if he were asleep, unconcerned in the troubles of his people, and regardless of their prayers, and doth not presently appear for their relief. *Verily he is a God that hideth himself*, <sup><255></sup>Isaiah 45:15. But as, when he tarries, he doth not tarry (<sup><313></sup>Habakkuk 2:3), so when he sleeps he doth not sleep; the keeper of Israel doth not so much as slumber (<sup><403></sup>Psalm 121:3, 4); he slept, but his heart was awake, as the spouse, <sup><213></sup>Song of Solomon 5:2.

**8.** His disciples encouraged themselves with their having his presence, and thought it the best way to improve that, and appeal to that, and ply the oar of prayer rather than their other oars. Their confidence lay in this, that they had their Master with them; and the ship that has Christ in it, though it may be *tossed*, cannot *sink*; the bush that has God in it, though it may *burn*, shall not *consume*. Caesar encouraged the master of the ship, that had him on board, with this, *Caesarem vehis, et fortunam Caesaris* — *Thou hast Caesar on board, and Caesar's fortune*. They *awoke Christ*. Had not the necessity of the case called for it, they would not have *stirred up* or *awoke* their Master, *till he had pleased* (<sup><213></sup>Song of Solomon 2:7); but they knew he would *forgive them this wrong*. When Christ seems as if he slept in a storm, he is awaked by the prayers of his people; when we know not what to do, our eye must be to him (<sup><412></sup>2 Chronicles 20:12); we may be at our wits' end, but not at our faith's end, while we have such a Saviour to go to. Their address to Christ is here expressed very emphatically; *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* I confess this sounds somewhat harsh, rather like chiding him for sleeping than begging him to awake. I know no excuse for it, but the great familiarity which he was pleased to admit them into, and the freedom he allowed them; and the present distress they were in, which put them into such a fright, that they knew not what they said. *They do Christ a deal of wrong*, who suspect him to be *careless* of his people in distress. The matter is not so; he is not willing that any should perish, much less any of his little ones, <sup><413></sup>Matthew 18:14.

**9.** The word of command with which Christ rebuked the storm, we have here, and had not in Matthew, v. 39. He says, *Peace, be still* — *Siopa, pephimoso* — *be silent, be dumb*. Let not the wind any longer roar, nor the sea rage. Thus he *stills the noise of the sea, the noise of her waves*; a

particular emphasis is laid upon the noisiness of them, <sup><351></sup>Psalm 65:7, and 93:3, 4. The noise is threatening and terrifying; let us hear no more of it. This is,

**(1.)** A word of command to us; when our wicked hearts are *like the troubled sea which cannot rest* (<sup><251></sup>Isaiah 57:20); when our passions are up, and are unruly, let us think we hear the law of Christ, saying, *Be silent, be dumb*. Think not confusedly, speak not unadvisedly; but *be still*.

**(2.)** A word of comfort to us, that, be the storm of trouble ever so loud, ever so strong, Jesus Christ can lay it with a word's speaking. When without are fightings, and within are fears, and the spirits are in a tumult, Christ can *create the fruit of the lips, peace*. If he say, *Peace, be still*, there is a *great calm* presently. It is spoken of as God's prerogative to command the seas, <sup><265></sup>Jeremiah 31:35. By this therefore Christ proves himself to be God. He that made the seas, can make them *quiet*.

**10.** The reproof Christ gave them for their fears, is here carried further than in Matthew. There it is, *Why are ye fearful?* Here, *Why are ye so fearful?* Though there may be cause for some fear, yet not for fear to such a degree as this. There it is, *O ye of little faith*. Here it is, *How is it that ye have no faith?* Not that the disciples were without faith. No, they believed that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; but at this time their fears prevailed so that they seemed to *have no faith* at all. It was out of the way, when they had occasion for it, and so it was as if they had not had it. "How is it, that in this matter ye have no faith, that ye think I would not come in with seasonable and effectual relief?" Those may suspect their faith, who can entertain such a thought as that Christ *careth not* though his *people perish*, and Christ justly takes it ill.

*Lastly*, The impression this miracle made upon the disciples, is here differently expressed. In Matthew it is said, *The men marvelled*; here it is said, *They feared greatly*. They *feared a great fear*; so the original reads it. Now their fear was rectified by their faith. When they feared the winds and the seas, it was for want of the reverence they ought to have had for Christ. But now that they saw a demonstration of his power over them, they feared *them* less, and *him* more. They *feared* lest they had offended Christ by their unbelieving fears; and therefore studied now to give him honour. They had *feared* the power and wrath of the Creator in the storm, and that fear had torment and amazement in it; but now they feared the power and grace of the Redeemer in the calm; they *feared the Lord and his goodness*,

and it had pleasure and satisfaction in it, and by it they gave glory to Christ, as Jonah's mariners, who, when the *sea ceased from her raging, feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord,* <sup><III></sup>Jonah 1:16. This sacrifice they offered to the honour of Christ; they said, *What manner of man is this? Surely more than a man, for even the winds and the seas obey him.*