

20240721 'Keeping Peace in your life' – Ps Bruce McDonald

INTRODUCTION: Mark 4: 35 – 41

How was it that Jesus had such confidence that the sea would obey Him? He had done that miracle before. In Genesis 1 we read the awesome account of the creation story. I want to read a portion of it to you.

'The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (Genesis 1: 2).

The earth was a faceless, shapeless, dark wasteland. The waters foaming and covering everything, and then God comes into the situation to bring light, and order and structure.... normal.

That night on the sea of Galilee was similar, and Jesus once again spoke... 'peace be still' and the waters obeyed, and there was a great calm.

Jesus comes to do that in every life. A life may be chaotic, but Jesus enters and says, 'peace be still', and where there was chaos order comes. That starts eternal life. It begins at that moment, but it must be maintained. The storm in Mark 4 was not the only time that Jesus and the disciples faced storms on the lake. The waters arose at other times to overwhelm the calm. It is like that in our lives.

NB: Matthew 14: 22 – 32 (Peter walking on the water).

That is what it can be like day by day. Things will come to try and destroy the calm, take away your peace, but Jesus says, 'Peace be still!' Isaiah helps us with this. He says, 'You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in You (Isaiah 26: 3).'

Can anyone tell me what word Isaiah uses here for peace?

SHALOM.

I want to show you the pictogram for Shalom.

SHALOM = 'To destroy the authority that is attached to chaos!'

That is peace, that is the life of God on the inside of a person. It has been from the beginning. No wonder Jewish people greet and leave each other with the word, 'SHALOM'.

(NB: The normal greeting of God's people in the NT was 'Grace be unto you' – that is not the absence of something, CHAOS, it is the presence of something...God's enabling!) I do not believe that Grace is 'God's unmerited favour'. That is the wrong definition.

Jesus was full of grace... Noah had to find grace... in the NT we obtain mercy but find grace. Unmerited favour is an excellent definition for mercy, but grace is something else...

So, water is the Hebrew character for chaos. Moses was given his name because the daughter of Pharaoh said, 'because I drew him out of the water'. He was drawn out of the water (chaos) to bring order, and peace, to the people of God... a slave people to be set free.

Moses = Mosheh (Mo-sheh). The word Messiah = Mashiyach (Maw – shee- ach). The two names are similar / connected. Jesus also brings order and peace. That is why we should look forward to His second coming. He will calm the troubled seas... He will restore order and increase Shalom.

So, in Hebrew thought without God's intervention, presence, and power things will always descend toward chaos again. So, they keep saying SHALOM to each other. Once things return to normal, they consider that a miracle has happened. In normal life therefore they consider that they are living in a continuous miracle. That should be our thinking also. A miracle is not just extraordinary happenings, it is the blessing of things being normal, peaceful, prosperous and healthy.

Conclusion and challenge:

The life of God is the absence of chaos... now, and within. It is that blessing happening every day. If we are living with Shalom / Grace in our lives, then finally going to our eternal home is simply a matter of geography.

We can experience that reality now!