



November 1, 2020

“Calm in the Storm” – An Election Day Addendum

Matthew 8:23–27

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In today’s teaching, Pastor Gary challenges Millennials and GenZ young adults to prioritize their compassion for others and to be guided by objective truth rather than subjective emotion. Is it okay to be a ‘single issue voter’? Should abortion be more important than other issues in an election, like immigration, health care, the environment, and social justice? Pastor Gary answers these questions and more in this message. He also reminds us that no matter who gets elected, our hope is in the Lord, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.

1. [Matthew 8:23–27](#) – *“Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are perishing!’ But He said to them, ‘Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?’ Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, ‘Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’ ”*
2. Pastor Gary said, “I want to remind us where our hope lies and who is the ultimate source of calm in the storm. ... This [was] a literal storm that came up on the Sea of Galilee in Israel. ... [Matthew chapters five through eight are about one single day’s events! Jesus had just finished delivering the Sermon on the Mount when he was met by a leper who asked to be healed. After healing the leper Jesus traveled about one mile to Capernaum, which was the town in which he based his ministry during his approximately forty-two months of public ministry. There Jesus met a Roman centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant who was sick. Jesus marveled at the centurion’s faith and with a word, Jesus healed the servant. Continuing a long day of ministry, Jesus then healed Peter’s mother-in-law, who lived not very far from the Jewish synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus and the disciples then made their way

to a boat for the journey from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other. After the storm and the calming of the sea, still to come was Jesus' encounter and subsequent healing of two men who were demon possessed!"

a. The Sea of Galilee

- i. The Sea of Galilee was and still is known for sudden storms or squalls, because of its geographic location.
- ii. The Sea of Galilee is the lowest body of fresh water on earth at 686 feet below sea level.
- iii. Storms suddenly arise when the winds of Mt. Hermon meet the cool winds of the Sea of Galilee.
- iv. In March 1992, one of these storms was so severe that waves were measured at approximately ten feet!

b. Fear

- i. Four disciples, (Peter, Andrew, James, and John), were professional fisherman.
- ii. These men and the other disciples were afraid for their lives which tells us that if professional fishermen who made their living on the Sea of Galilee were mortally afraid, then this was one of the worst, if not the worst storms ever.
- iii. Pastor Gary said, "Frankly, I feel like there is a lot of fear in our own country. It's a stormy season in our country. There are a lot of dark clouds and angry winds. People are afraid. They are afraid of what happens if Joe Biden gets elected, [and] they are afraid of what happens if Donald Trump gets re-elected. They are afraid if people take to the streets. Will it get violent? Will the election get contested? ... People are afraid of stuff that might happen. ... [With the pandemic and everything else that's going on, it's easy to become afraid.] And, if you do [become afraid], follow the example of the disciples and look to Jesus. In the middle of their storm, they went straight to Jesus."

c. Jesus

- i. Pastor Gary said, "[Where is Jesus? He was asleep!] ... Mark's Gospel tells us he was asleep in the stern of the boat lying on a cushion! ... Have there been [times] in your life when you've felt like Jesus was asleep in a storm you were facing? ... [Jesus had had a long day of ministry having preached his heart out. He had healed the leper, healed the centurion's servant, healed Peter's mother-in-law, and he was no doubt very tired and physically exhausted.]"
- ii. Pastor Gary said, "When you see Jesus sleeping, it does not mean that he is unconcerned. He [was] sleeping because he was completely at rest. Jesus was never hurried and never worried. He [was never] afraid. He [was never] anxious. He always had peace. He is the Prince of Peace. He was always calm in the midst of anxiety. And isn't that really

who you want when you are in a storm? Don't you want to go to Jesus knowing that he is the calm in the crisis? [Don't you want to go to Jesus knowing] that he is the steady [one] in the storm? ... [Jesus was never afraid and that's who we need to look to.]"

- iii. **Psalm 46:1-4** - *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling."*
- iv. **Psalm 121:1-2** - *"I will lift up my eyes to the hills - from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth."*
 - 1. Pastor Gary said, "[This] is what we need to be reminded of when the world gets crazy and perhaps may get crazier still, [and] that's that God is still on the throne."

d. Compassion

- i. Jesus had compassion for his disciples, so he stopped the storm.
- ii. **Matthew 9:36** - *"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd"*
- iii. More than a dozen times in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we read about the compassion, concern, tenderness, and love Jesus felt toward others.
- iv. Pastor Gary said, "[Let] me speak directly to those of you who are in [the Millennial or GenZ age brackets.] When you hear about compassion and the kind of compassion that Jesus [exemplified here], that is something that intersects your faith and life. [Your generations are made up of] very compassionate people. To your credit, you have a heart for others. You are really concerned, and with compassion you care about other people. You, to your credit, are aware of others' felt needs. And this is the reason why so many Millennials and GenZ [young people] are about social justice issues, [like matters in this election that include] immigration, the environment, healthcare, feeding the poor, [and] promoting equality. I don't want to discourage you for a moment in continuing with a heart of compassion, but what I want to challenge you about, if you will allow me, is how you prioritize that compassion. I want you to still be people who have a heart for the world, especially for those who are disadvantaged in some way or those who are somewhat voiceless. [This] is good for all of us, but particularly for GenZ'ers and Millennials who are really more hardwired to have more compassion and care for other people. [I want you to know how] to prioritize and harness that compassion for the benefit of society."
- v. Pastor Gary referred to an interview of three college students on Fox

News on Thursday, October 29, 2020. ¹

1. “While many evangelical voters are selecting abortion as their primary issue, I think a more wholistic perspective of what it means to be prolife is leading me to vote strongly for Joe Biden because of his care for human life and humanity dignity in all walks of life and in all vulnerable communities.” – Elsa Barron
2. Pastor Gary said, “I truly do believe that her position is given out of a heart for compassion. You can hear [her compassion in her remarks.] ... For her, as an evangelical Christian, in her own words, a more wholistic approach to a more prolife position is not specifically related to abortion, but it is related to these other issues that will help improve the quality of life; for people on a more wholistic level. Let me tell you what she is saying in effect, and I sincerely mean this without any distortion of her words, but I’m going to reframe it. What she is saying here is, ‘I am okay with or at the least, I will put up with a policy that kills some in order to support policies that helps others who haven’t been killed.’ ... She’s in effect saying, ‘I am all about improving one’s quality of life, I just won’t fight for one’s right to life.’ That is what she is saying, and I need to challenge you about this. ... **Your passion must not be based on subjective emotion; it must be based on objective truth. And as Christians the objective truth is the Bible.** ... Here’s why this is so critical. When you start talking about heartfelt issues and having genuine compassion for people, it triggers an emotional response. ... The danger with that is that if your standard is based on your subjective emotions, rather than objective truth, and as for Christians our standard of truth is the Bible, then you are going to end up compromising things in an effort to try to do something right. ... **If you don’t start with the basic premise, based on the objective standard of God’s Word, that all life is valuable because God created life in your mother’s womb – the Bible makes it clear that life begins at conception – then the rest of your talk about social justice doesn’t matter if you are allowing the greatest social injustice in our culture.**” (Emphasis added)
 - a. **Psalm 139:13–15** – *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place,*

¹ https://video.foxnews.com/v/6205489456001?playlist_id=930909787001#sp=show-clips

when I was woven together..." (1984 NIV)

vi. Nazi Germany

1. Pastor Gary said, "From the years 1934 to 1938, when [Kristallnacht happened], the majority of Germans, including evangelical Christians, supported Hitler. ... Why? Because Hitler promised a better quality of life for the German people, and Hitler promised to put down anarchism and communism... all the while the same people, the majority of whom supported Hitler, were turning a blind eye to the extermination of millions of Jews. We are repeating history! This is the very thing that is being touted today! [They are saying], 'We want to improve your life, [and] we have all of these different things that are going to help you.' All the while... denying people the most basic human right, which is life. There are some things on a moral scale that are more important than others. ... When I start talking like this, I can hear the objections, but listen, I plead with you, if you really want to make a difference and use the compassion that God has given you for our world, that is wonderful, but get on the side of life first, be a voice for the ultimate, [those who are] voiceless, and then fight to improve the quality of life of others from a platform that supports life! That's where it begins! ... [Some would say,] 'You are making it sound like you are a single-issue voter...' So, first of all, I'm not, but even if I were, that's fine. Sometimes you are a single-issue person because [the single issue] outweighs the other issues [because] it's that important. ... There are some issues of greater moral weight than others. [This] is where we have to engage an understanding of God's perspective on things."

3. The Lord God Almighty

- a. **Psalm 89:8-9** - *"O LORD God of hosts, Who is mighty like You, O LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them."*
- b. Pastor Gary said, "Do you know what was happening in the hearts of the disciples? [The disciples realized] that the only one who could calm the waves and stop the stormy sea is God himself. Do you know what Jesus was doing for them? He was allowing the storm to come because often God is most visible when the storms are most terrible, and he wanted to display himself [to them] so that they could begin to realize, 'This is God!' ... Jesus [was] letting them know that he is God. ... God is still God and God is still on the throne and we can trust him. Don't look to government; look to God. Always remember [that] he is sovereign, and he is high and lifted up and he

is seated on the throne! ... God is sovereign, and we have a responsibility and God often operates his sovereignty through human vessels. So, be a part of the process. Vote your values and make righteousness known. ... I hope you are taking a stand for righteousness; that you want God to be exalted.”

- i. [Daniel 2:20-21](#) - *“... Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings...”*
- ii. [Psalm 47:8](#) - *“God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.”*
- iii. [Psalm 33:12](#) - *“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD...”*

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Matthew 8:23-27](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s opening remarks. (See #2 and #2a above)
3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments about fear. (See #2b above)
4. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they’ve had the sense that Jesus was asleep and was unconcerned about the storm they were in or the storm they were heading into. (See #2c above)
5. Read and discuss [Psalm 46:1-4](#) and [Psalm 121:1-2](#). (See #2c-iv above)
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s specific challenge to Millennials and GenZ young adults regarding their understanding of compassion. (See #2d-iv above)
7. Use a tablet or other device to play the video clip of the interview Pastor Gary referred to concerning three college students who were asked which candidate they were voting for and what the reasons were for their decision. (See #2D-v above)
8. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments about Christians living in Nazi Germany (1934-1938). (See #2d-vi above)
9. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s outline about what the Lord was doing for a greater purpose in the lives of the disciples. (See #3b and #3c above)
10. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)