

## **In the Midst of a Storm**

### **On the Sea of Galilee**

Welcome to a trip on the Sea of Galilee. My name is Andrew. My brother Simon, cousin and I were reared and lived on the Jewish side of Bethsaida. We had fished commercially in this Sea of Galilee with our fathers since our youth. I suppose that you know that the Sea of Galilee or Sea of Tiberias is really not a sea at all. It is a fresh water lake often known as Lake Gennesaret or Lake Chinnereth. It is my privilege this morning to be your guide as we explore the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee.

This lake is 12 3/4 miles long, north to south and at its widest point just south of us near the city of Magdala, it spans a width of 7 1/2 miles across. If you will turn and look to your left, you will see the eastern banks that rise 1,000 feet from the water's edge. Beyond it out of sight, you will find the gentile cities of Bethsaida and Gerasa. To my immediate north, you will observe the low point where the Jordan River empties into the Sea. When we walk around the lake, we often cross there. Capernaum is due west of us. Far to the south and behind me, the Sea of Galilee empties into the Jordan again and continues for many miles until it reaches the Dead Sea.

I would ask you to remain seated for the duration of our trip because at times violent winds rush unannounced from the northern heights. Let me tell you a story about one of those times.

It had been 2 1/2 years since we left our fathers' nets to follow the man named Jesus. We were on our way from Capernaum to Bethsaida when suddenly a violent wind began to churn the lake around us. I thought that we would surely perish. I looked up at the stern of the ship and Jesus was calmly asleep on a cushion. Peter ran up to him saying, "Teacher, do you care that we are perishing?" Our Lord awakened, stood up, waved his arms above his head and said, "Peace, be still!" The winds ceased, the waters became smooth and there was a dead calm. Then Jesus said, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" I cringed with embarrassment and Philip whispered, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey?"

This according to Mark is Jesus Christ, the Son of God who was written of by the prophets. He is the one who, as God's incarnate, has power over nature, evil spirits, disease, and even death. He is the truth of God, the way to God and the life of the world for God. He is the one who died at Calvary, left the tomb of Joseph empty in the garden of Gethsemane, stayed with his disciples 40 days after his resurrection and now resides with the Godhead, interceding for you and for me. He is the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the end-the one to whom you can turn to still your storm and to calm your sea in any situation. Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the anxiety and fear of the world!

Friends, we have now arrived at the western shores of Bethsaida, please watch your steps as you depart from the boat. We are pleased that you took a trip with us. You come back real soon now! Andrew, brother of Simon Peter.

## **Riding Out the Storms in Our Lives**

**In life, I am sure that you would agree with me, violent storms often buffet us about at unexpected times. A church member of ours found that her son, whose body was discovered Monday, had been murdered. The Rev. Rebecca Ragland, our assistant priest, received the call on Monday and was trying to minister to the Payne family by telephone. The family was trying to understand what happened and to make arrangements for his funeral. Then she received a call that another parishioner's 94 years old mother was dying at a nursing home. For the mean time our rector, Brooke Myers, was away on vacation and I was initially scheduled to be away on Saturday as well. Storms of life rage. We can not control that. What we can by the grace of God, the example of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit control how we react to them.**

**The lessons for today give us the message of men of faith going up against the greatest of odds and overcoming them because of their faith—David against the Philistine giant Goliath and Paul and his companions against all kinds of calamities. They were able to do that because of their unshakable faith in the Lord of the storm. We can as well.**

**The disciples in the boat with Jesus were not so courageous. They had seen the miracles of Jesus. They had followed him for two years and they still had little faith .Let us not be too judgmental on the disciples. If we were to be honest with ourselves, there are times of doubt and uncertainty on our parts as well. Therefore, we have to ask who is this that even the wind and the sea obey? And, what difference does it really make for each of us?**

**As fathers, today, we ask the same question and how we answer it will depend on how we fair as husbands, fathers and mentors. Hopefully, Jesus is the stiller of your storms and seas, the one who enables you to be the best that you can be.**

**Therefore, let us honor fathers today by expression from those who love us most. (Seek some testimonies from children and wives about their fathers and husbands).**

**Thank you for those testimonies of affirmation for fathers and husbands.**

**Let us pray. O God who is known as Father: look with mercy and love upon the men and boys whom you have made. Help us to depend sole upon you as we seek to fulfill our roles and responsibilities as sons, brother, uncles, husbands, fathers, grandfathers and mentors. Guide the men of this nation and of this world to peace and security, as we seek to protect, care for and nurture our families and loved ones. This we pray in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**