

“And being awakened, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Calm down, be silent.” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:39).

One of the central truths about God, which we must embrace whole heartedly, is that He is sovereign. Another way to put it is to say that God is always in absolute control of all things at all times. This is one of the key lessons we learn in the story about Jesus stilling the storm.

Awakened by the agitation of His disciples, Jesus executed one of His famous miracles. He spoke merely two words: in the Greek Language, “*Siōpa, pephimōso*” (Calm down, be silent), and at His bidding, the great storm transformed into a great calm! We hear an echo of this miracle in the words of the Psalmist:

“Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters; They have seen the works of the LORD, and the wonders in the deep. For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in *their* misery. They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, and were at their wits’ end. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distresses. He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they were quiet; So He guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, and for His wonders to the sons of man.” (Psalm 107:23-31)

In order for us to truly appreciate the power of Jesus’ words we must contemplate their immediate effects on the furious storm. Indeed, there is always calm after the storm. But the calm does not immediately follow the storm! There is usually a gradual waning of the swelling tides. As Hendriksen rightly explains: “Generally, it is well known that after the winds have perceptively diminished, the billows [of the sea] will continue to roll for a while, surging and subsiding as if unwilling to follow the example of the now subdued air currents above them. But in this instance, the wind and the waves synchronize in the symphony of solemn silence.”

As we consider this story, I want to make a few observations about Jesus’ command. First, when Jesus spoke the two words, He was not making a request of the sea. He was actually giving a command, an order. And prior to this command, He rebuked the wind. In addition, the phrase “Be silent” literally means to muzzle. As well, Jesus used the perfect tense which conveys both the action and its results. Therefore, Jesus’ command to the sea can be translated something like this: “Be muzzled and continue to be muzzled!” or “Be silent and remain silent!”

It may seem striking to some that Jesus is able to command the wind and the sea. However, this is not unusual, for He is the One who created all things (see John 1:3). In actual fact, the wind and the waves are His servants even as we are his servants, though in very different ways. For Jesus, the storm did not come “out of the blue.” It was actually called forth by Jesus Himself. He did not just command the storm *out of* existence, He also called it *into* existence! Recall the words of the Psalmist? “He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea” (Psalm 107:25).

The truth is, everything that exists in creation, both animate and inanimate beings, are under the control of our Sovereign Lord and must submit swiftly to His divine decree. Whatever He commands they must obey. Likewise, we too should obey the Master with unfettered obedience. And as we do, let us remember that although sometimes He seems silent, He is always in charge of every situation.