

The Astonishment of Grace

When Jesus calmed the storm that was on the verge of smashing their boat, the disciples looked at each other in shocked amazement. “What sort of man is this,” they asked, “that even winds and sea obey him?” (Matthew 8:27). True, Moses parted the Red Sea by stretching his staff over the water, but he was merely the conduit of divine power. It was God himself who drove the waves back with a strong east wind so that the people could go through the sea on dry ground (Exodus 14:21, 22).

Jesus was no mere conduit of divine power. He himself, alone, silenced the wind and flattened the waves with a single command. It was like the command of Him who in the beginning said, “Let there be light!”

The disciples knew that a man greater than Moses stood before them. But who was he? That he was no ordinary man none doubted. They knew he was the Messiah of Israel. Even at the outset of his ministry, one of the disciples, Nathanael, confessed that he was the Son of God (John 1:49). But this reality was slow to dawn on most of them, and its implications were only dimly understood. Yet their astonished question, “What sort of man is this?” was a sign that God’s grace was at work in them.

Only grace can create astonishment at Jesus. The natural man harbors nothing but hatred of him, or at best a grudging respect that is often the result of cultural conditioning. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, many were astonished enough to put their faith in him (John 11:45). The Pharisees only wanted to kill him (vs. 53).

What about you? Has your imagination been lit up by grace to the point of asking, “What sort of man is this?” Or will you try to do everything you can to squelch his claims and explain away his deeds? When the disciples saw the catch of fish they hauled in at the command of Jesus, they were so overwhelmed that they forsook everything and followed him (Luke 5:11). What do you see when millions of men and women are “hauled” into the kingdom of God by the net of gospel preaching?

The command of Jesus is powerful to change a raging heart into one of calm. That same peace can be yours. May God astonish you with his grace today.

Great

Is the

Lord

Psalms 145:3

Covenant Presbyterian Church
1623 University Avenue, Berkeley, California 94703
www.berkeleyopc.org

MORNING WORSHIP – 11:00 A.M.

THE LORD CALLS US TO HIMSELF

Salutation and Call to Worship

*Hymn of Praise # 368

“The Ends of All the Earth Shall Hear”

*Invocation

*Hymn of Praise # 271

“Sing, Choirs of New Jerusalem”

CONFESSION OF SIN AND THE LORD'S ASSURANCE

The Law of God

Matthew 22:37-40

Confession of Sin (Congregation in Unison)

Almighty, eternal God and Father, we confess and acknowledge unto thee that we were conceived in unrighteousness and are full of sin and transgression in all our life. We do not fully believe thy Word nor follow thy holy commandments. Remember thy goodness, we beseech thee, and for thy Name's sake be gracious unto us, and forgive us our iniquity which, alas, is great.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Psalm 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Psalm 103:10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

Psalm 103:11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

Psalm 103:12 as far as the east is from the west,
 so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

OFFERING OURSELVES IN THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

Worship in Giving

Hymn of Thanksgiving # 618

“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”

Worship in Prayer

Interlude

*Congregation Standing

We extend a cordial welcome to each visitor!

Wayne K. Forkner, Minister

510-928-8024

THE LORD FEEDS US FROM HIS WORD

*Hymn of Preparation # 411

“Shine Thou Upon Us, Lord”

Sermon Text

Isaiah 33:13-16

Sermon

HEAR!

*Hymn of Response # 308

“Jesus Paid It All”

THE LORD DISMISSES US WITH HIS BLESSING

*Gloria Patri (Praising our Gracious Lord)

734

*The Lord's Benediction

Announcements

Today, 10:00am. Adult Sunday School class.

Today, 12:30pm. A potluck luncheon will be held in the church. All are welcome.

Tuesday, 7:30pm. Weekly Bible Study at the church or via Zoom. We are studying the book of Deuteronomy. Our Bible study at the church begins with dinner at 7:00pm, followed by a time of study at 7:30pm. For information on attending the study via Zoom, please send an email to Pastor Wayne at wforkner86@mac.com.