

The Final Call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Jesus Stills the Tempest on the Lake

Next morning when Jesus went to the lake, which was about a quarter of an hour distant from Matthew's dwelling, Peter and Andrew were upon the point of launching out on the deep to let down their nets. Jesus called to them: "Come and follow Me! I will make you fishers of men!" They instantly abandoned their work, hove to their boat, and came on shore.

Jesus went on a little farther up the shore to the ship of Zebedee, who with his sons James and John was mending his nets on the ship. Jesus called the two sons to come to Him. They obeyed immediately and came to land, while Zebedee remained on the ship with his servants. Then Jesus sent Peter and Andrew, James and John into the mountains where the heathens were encamped, with the order to baptize all that desired it. He Himself had prepared them for it during the two preceding days. With Saturnin and the other disciples, Jesus went in another direction.

All were to meet again that evening at Matthew's, and I saw Jesus pointing out with His finger the way they were to take. While He was calling the four disciples, the others had waited for Him at a little distance up the road, but when He commissioned those four to go and baptize, they were all together.

Jesus had indeed, at an earlier period, formally called the fishermen from their occupations, but with His consent they had always returned to them. So long as they themselves were not engaged in teaching, it was not necessary for them to follow Him constantly. Their means of navigation and their intercourse with the pagan caravans were very advantageous, likewise, while He sojourned at Capharnaum. When, after the last Pasch, they had for a longer time been with Jesus, they had indeed taught here and there, and had even wrought some miraculous cures. In these latter, however, they were not always successful, on account of their want of faith. They had also suffered persecution at this early stage of their apostolic career.

In Gennabris they were led bound before the Pharisees and cast into prison. They received at that time from Jesus the power to bless the water intended for Baptism. This power was not imparted to them by the imposition of



hands, but with a blessing.

Peter was, besides his fishery, engaged also in agriculture and cattle raising; consequently it was harder for him than for the others to break away from his business affairs. To this was added the feeling of his own unworthiness and his fancied incapacity for teaching, which made separation from his surroundings still more difficult. His house outside Capharnaum was large and long, surrounded by a courtyard, side buildings, halls, and sheds. The waters of the brook of Capharnaum, flowing in front of it, were dammed nearby into a beautiful pond in which fish were kept. All around were grass plots, upon which bleaching was done and nets were spread.

Andrew had followed the Lord longer, and he was already more detached from worldly affairs than his brother. James and John up to this period were accustomed to return at intervals to their parents.

It is understood that the Gospels do not contain the details of Jesus' intercourse with the disciples, but only a short statement of it. This call of the fishermen from their boats to make them fishers of men is there set down as happening at the beginning of His public life, and as the only call that Saints Peter, Andrew, John, and James received. Many of the miracles, parables, and instructions of Jesus are afterward recorded as instance of His power and wisdom, without any reference whatever to their order of time.

Peter, Andrew, James and John went to the pagan encampment, and there Andrew baptized. Water was brought from the brook in a large basin. The neophytes knelt in a circle, their hands crossed upon their breasts. Among them stood boys from three to six years. Peter held the basin, and Andrew, scooping the water up with his hand three different times, sprinkled the heads of the neophytes three at a time and repeated the words of Baptism.

The other disciples went around outside the circle laying their hands on the newly baptized. These latter then withdrew, and their places were immediately filled by others. The ceremony was discontinued at intervals, and then the disciples recounted the parables they had learned from their Master, spoke of Jesus, His doctrine, and His miracles, and explained to the pagans points of which they were still ignorant regarding the Law and the Promises of God. Peter was particularly animated in his delivery and accompanied his words with many gestures. John and James likewise spoke very beautifully. Jesus meantime was teaching in another valley, and with Him was Saturnin, baptizing.

That evening when all were again assembled at Matthew's, the crowd was very great and pressed around Jesus. On that account, with the twelve Apostles and Saturnin He went on board Peter's barque and commanded them to row toward Tiberias, which was on the opposite side of the lake in its greatest breadth. It looked as if Jesus wanted to escape from the crowd that pressed upon Him, for He was worn out with fatigue. Three platforms surrounded the lower part of the mast, like steps one above the other.

In the middle one, in one of the apartments used by the sentry, Jesus lay down and fell asleep, for He was very tired. The rowers were above Him. From Jesus' resting place, although protected by a roof, there was an unobstructed view over the whole lake. When the party put out from shore, the weather was calm and beautiful, but they had scarcely reached the middle of the lake before a violent tempest arose. I thought it very strange that, although the sky was shrouded in darkness, the stars were to be seen.

The wind blew in a hurricane and the waves dashed over the boat, the sails of which had been furled. I saw from time to time a brilliant light glancing over the troubled waters. It must have been lightning. The danger was imminent, and the disciples were in great anxiety when they awoke Jesus with the words: "Master! Hast Thou no care for us? We are sinking!" Jesus arose, looked out on the water, and said quietly and earnestly, as if speaking to the storm: "Peace! Be still!" and instantly all became calm. The disciples were struck with fear. They whispered to one another: "Who is this Man that can control the waves?" Jesus reproved them for their little faith and their fear. He ordered them to row back to Corozain, for so the place of Matthew's custom house was called, on account of the city of Corozain. The region on the other side of the lake between Capharnaum and Giskala was named Genesareth. Zebedee's barque also returned with them, and another filled with passengers went off to Capharnaum.

There were in all about fifteen men on the boat with Jesus. We must not be surprised at the rowers' position above the sleeping place of Jesus, nor at the fact of Jesus' being able, notwithstanding, to take in the whole view of the lake. The oars rested upon the high sides of the boat and struck far out into the water. They were provided with long handles and the rowers were obliged to stand high. It was about one hour from Corozain to the southwest and a little to the north of Gergesa, which occupied a less elevated position.

At the place where Jesus paused to address the multitude there was a stone seat intended for the teacher. The instruction had been announced two days before, and there were in all probability two thousand listeners in attendance. Jesus healed also a great crowd of people, the blind and lame, the dumb and leprous. As He began to teach, some of the possessed who had been led thither commenced to shout and to rave. Jesus commanded them to be silent and to lie down on the ground. Like frightened dogs they lay on the ground and moved not until, at the close of His discourse, He went to them and delivered them.

Among the numerous cures, I remember that of a man with an arm perfectly withered and a hand shrunken and crooked. Jesus stroked down the arm, took the hand in His own, and straightened out each finger one after the other, at the same time gently bending and pressing it. All this took place almost instantaneously, in a shorter time than one takes to say how it was done. The hand was restored to its proper shape, the blood began to circulate, and the man could move it although it was still wasted and weak. Its strength, however, momentarily increased.

There were in the crowd many women and children of all ages. Jesus had them brought to Him in bands, one after another. He walked about among them, gave them His blessing, and instructed them in tones loud enough to be heard by all. I saw Him during this instruction take a child by the hand and turn it here and there, to show how men, without complaint or resistance, should allow themselves to be conducted by God. He paid great attention to the children. Most of these people were heathens, others were Jews from Syria and Decapolis. At the spreading rumor of Jesus' doings, they had come in great caravans with their servants and children and sick to the teaching, healing, and Baptism. Jesus came to meet them here, that the crowd in Capharnaum might not become too great. Among them I saw the relatives of the woman mentioned in the Gospel, the woman afflicted with the issue of blood, who was then at Capharnaum. Those relatives were an uncle of her deceased husband from Paneas, in whose house she had been married; her grown daughter; and another woman. They spoke to the disciples, begging them to conduct them to Capharnaum that evening, and they inquired also after their sick relatives. They heard Jesus' instructions.

Baptism was administered the whole day at this place. As on the preceding day, the neophytes knelt in circles. I saw again many little boys baptized. They stood in circles, their hands joined on their breasts. The water had been brought in leathern bottles from the valley of Corozain. Present among the crowd of hearers were some Pharisees from the surrounding districts and some of John's false disciples, who acted as spies upon Jesus. In the evening He returned to Matthew's with the disciples. He related another parable, that of the treasure which a man found hidden in his neighbor's field. Without disclosing the secret, he went and sold all that he owned in order to buy that field. This parable Jesus applied to the great desire of the Gentiles to seize upon the Kingdom of God. To escape the crowd that pressed upon Him, Jesus again went on board a barque and there taught. He did not, however, go far out on the water, but returned and spent the night in prayer.

Next morning the disciples brought Him the news that Mary Cleophas was lying very ill at Peter's near Capharnaum, that His Mother entreated Him to come to her soon, and that a great multitude of sick of whom many were from Nazareth, were awaiting His arrival. Jesus again taught and cured numbers on the shore of the lake. Many possessed were brought to Him, and He delivered them. The crowd of people and the pressure of the throng were constantly on the increase, and no words can say how unweariedly Jesus labored and helped all in need.

That afternoon He and all His Apostles rowed over to Bethsaida. Matthew had delivered the custom house to a man belonging to the fishery. Since his reception of John's baptism, he had carried on his business in an altogether blameless manner. The other publicans also were honest in their dealings and very liberal men, who gave large alms to the poor. Judas is still good. He is uncommonly active and ready to render service, though in his distribution of alms somewhat close and calculating. A large number of Gentiles crossed the lake today. Those that were not going on further, to Capharnaum for instance, left their camels and asses on rafts towed by the boats, or led them over the bridge that crossed the Jordan above the lake.

It was approaching four o'clock when Jesus reached Bethsaida, where Mary with Maroni and her son, who had been here for two days, were awaiting His coming along with others. Jesus took some refreshments, while Mary

Cleophas' sons repaired at once to their sick mother. A crowd of people was assembled in front of Andrew's house, and Jesus taught and cured until after night had closed.

The throng of strangers to Capharnaum at this time, both Jews and Gentiles, surpassed anything that can be imagined. Great caravans were encamped in all the country around. Very probably the number of strangers sojourning all around the country on Jesus' account amounted to twelve thousand. The valleys and nooks of the surrounding districts were alive with grazing camels and asses. The fodder was put before them at a convenient height, and then they were tied to it. They browsed also on the numerous buds of the hedges and thickets, though to the great prejudice of the same. Tents were pitched everywhere. Since Jesus' sojourn Capharnaum had greatly increased in size, wealth, and importance. Many families from afar had there taken up their abode, and the throng of visitors brought money into the city. Zorobabel's house, as well as that of Cornelius, were now almost connected with the city proper.

Numerous sick were brought to Capharnaum from the towns and villages lying around. All had been thrown into excitement by the raising of the youth of Naim, and the other astonishing miracles. Many sick from Nazareth, even those that were considered incurable and others nigh unto death, had been brought hither to Jesus in all confidence by their friends. Peter's house outside the city, its courtyard, outbuildings, and sheds were crowded with them. Tents and arbors of all kinds were hastily put up and provisions provided. The widow of Naim, who was related to Peter, and Mary Cleophas, likewise a connection of his through her third husband, were there. Mary Cleophas' usual residence was at Cana, but she had accompanied the widow of Naim to Capharnaum. She had with her Simeon, the son of her third marriage, a boy of eight years. She was already fever-stricken on her arrival, and her sickness was on the increase. Jesus had not yet gone to her. I remarked some people from Greece among the multitudes here awaiting Jesus, some from Patras, Saturnin's native city.