

“The Marvelous One”

Summary

This powerful message invites us to discover an often-overlooked aspect of Jesus’ character: His marvelous nature revealed through His care for us. Drawing from Matthew 8:23-27, we witness the disciples in absolute terror as their boat is overwhelmed by a storm. Yet when Jesus calms the winds and waves, their response is to marvel. Why? Not simply because of His power over nature, but because in that moment, He displayed His deep, personal care for them in their trauma and fear. The Scriptures prophesied that His name would be called Wonderful, and we see this wonderfulness manifest in His tender compassion. Like a mother who sacrifices comfort for her child, Jesus demonstrates a love that is undeserved, sacrificial, deeply personal, and steadfast. The sermon challenges us to recognize that our storms often serve as divine invitations to encounter this marvelous love. When we experience God's care in our moments of desperation, we cannot help but worship. This transformative love is not meant to stop with us but to flow through us to others, creating a community of believers who have been so well-loved that they naturally reproduce that love in their interactions with the world.

Small Group Study Guide – The Marvelous One

Opening Prayer

Begin by thanking God for His marvelous love and care, particularly as demonstrated through Jesus and reflected in the sacrificial love of mothers.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Share a story about a time when your mother (or mother figure) showed you sacrificial love or care during a difficult season of your life.

Key Scripture

Matthew 8:23-27 - Jesus calms the storm

Supporting Passages:

- Romans 5:8
 - 2 Corinthians 13:14
 - Romans 8:38-39
 - 1 John 3:16-18
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Main Points Summary

1. Jesus is Marvelous in His Care

The disciples didn't just marvel at Jesus' power over nature—they marveled that He cared enough to calm the storm *for them* in their moment of trauma and fear.

2. Four Characteristics of Jesus' Marvelous Love:

- **Undeserved Love** - He loves us while we are yet sinners
- **Sacrificial Love** - Greater love has no one than to lay down his life
- **Deeply Personal Love** - The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; we can feel it
- **Steadfast Love** - Nothing can separate us from the love of God

3. Loved Well, Love Well

What goes in must come out. When we are loved well by Jesus, that love reproduces through us to others.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Sermon (15 minutes)

1. **Pastor Zach said the disciples marveled not just at Jesus' power, but at His care for them.** Why is this distinction important? How does it change the way we view Jesus?
2. **Read Matthew 8:23-27 together.** What does it reveal about Jesus that He was sleeping during the storm? What does it reveal about the disciples that they woke Him in fear?
3. **The sermon mentioned "beloved enemy"—storms that force us to the feet of Jesus.** Can you identify a difficult circumstance in your life that ultimately drew you closer to God?

Going Deeper (20 minutes)

4. **Undeserved Love (Romans 5:8):** Jesus loves us "while we were yet sinners." How does this differ from human love? When is it hardest for you to receive love you feel you don't deserve?
5. **Personal Love (2 Corinthians 13:14):** Pastor Zach said, "You can feel God's love—it's not just in your head." Share a time when you tangibly felt the love of God. For those who haven't experienced this, what might be blocking that communion?
6. **Steadfast Love (Romans 8:38-39):** Nothing can separate us from God's love. Why do we sometimes *feel* separated from God even though we're not? How can we combat those feelings?

Application (15 minutes)

7. **Read 1 John 3:16-18.** Pastor Zach said we should "love not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." What's the difference between loving with words versus loving with deeds?
8. **The "spoiled dog" versus "pound dog" illustration:** How does being "loved well" by Jesus change the way we treat others? Can you think of someone in your life who might be acting like a "pound dog" because they haven't been loved well?
9. **Pastor Zach asked God to give him love for the unlovable.** Who in your life is hard to love right now? How might God be calling you to demonstrate His marvelous love to them this week?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose **ONE** of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Love Inventory

- Spend time in prayer asking God to pour out His love in your heart (Romans 5:5)
- Journal about times you've experienced God's marvelous care
- Thank Him specifically for His undeserved, sacrificial, personal, and steadfast love

Option 2: Sacrificial Love in Action

- Identify someone who needs to experience God's love through you
- Do something sacrificial for them this week (time, resources, comfort)
- Don't announce it or seek recognition—just love "in deed and in truth"

Option 3: The Unlovable

- Pray daily for someone you find difficult to love
 - Ask God to show you how He sees them
 - Take one concrete step toward reconciliation or kindness
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Prayer Focus (10 minutes)

Close with a prayer for those who need to experience God's marvelous love, and for your group to become people who love well because they've been loved well.

Memory Verse

Romans 5:8 - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Before Next Week

- Read through one of the Gospels this week and note every time someone "marvels" at Jesus
 - Practice your chosen application challenge
 - Be ready to share how God showed His marvelous love to you this week
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"What goes in must come out. When we're loved well, we love well."

Main Points – The Marvelous One

Sermon Summary: This message explores the marvelous nature of Jesus Christ, particularly focusing on His compassionate love and care for His people. What makes Jesus truly marvelous is not just His power, but His tender care for His disciples in their moment of fear and trauma. The sermon draws parallels between God's love and a mother's sacrificial love, emphasizing that Jesus loves with an undeserved, sacrificial, deeply personal, and steadfast love. The ultimate goal is that believers would be so well-loved by God that this love reproduces in them and flows out to others, creating a people marked by divine compassion and care.

Key Points:

- Jesus is marvelous not only because of His power but primarily because of His compassionate care for His people
- God's love is compared to a mother's love—sacrificial, protective, and nurturing
- Four characteristics of Jesus' marvelous love: (1) It is undeserved love—He loves us while we are yet sinners, (2) It is sacrificial love—greater love has no one than to lay down his life for his friends, (3) It is deeply personal love—the love of God can be felt through communion with the Holy Spirit, (4) It is steadfast love—nothing can separate us from the love of God
- The love of God is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" and is poured out abundantly
- When we are loved well by God, that love reproduces in us and flows out to others
- True worship comes from experiencing God's deliverance and marveling at His care
- We are called to love not just in word but in deed and in truth, laying down our lives for others

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 8:23-27 (Jesus calming the storm)
- Isaiah 9 (His name shall be called Wonderful)
- Exodus 34 (God revealing Himself as merciful and tender-hearted)
- Isaiah 66 (God comforting as a mother comforts)
- Romans 5:8 (God demonstrates His love while we were yet sinners)
- John 15:13 (Greater love has no man than to lay down his life)
- 2 Corinthians 13:14 (The grace, love, and communion of the Trinity)
- Romans 8:38-39 (Nothing can separate us from the love of God)
- 1 Thessalonians 2:7 (Gentle as a nurse cherishes her children)
- 1 John 3:16-18 (We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren and love in deed and truth)

Discussion Questions – The Marvelous One

How does Jesus calming the storm demonstrate not just His power over nature, but His deep personal care for His disciples in their moment of fear and trauma?

In what ways have you experienced God's love as undeserved, and how has that shaped your understanding of grace in your own life?

The sermon describes God's love as being poured out greedily in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. What does it mean to you that God doesn't just give a little, but abundantly pours out His love?

How does the image of God comforting us as a mother comforts her child in Isaiah 66 change or deepen your understanding of God's character?

Pastor Zach mentions that we learn patience and obedience through suffering. How have your own storms and trials forced you to the feet of Jesus and created something new in you?

What does it mean to love in deed and in truth rather than just in word and tongue, as described in 1 John 3:16-18?

If people who encounter you should feel loved simply by being in your presence, what might need to change in your life to make that a reality?

How does the parable of the prodigal son illustrate the steadfast, unchanging nature of God's love even when we rebel or walk away?

The sermon suggests that being well-loved by God causes that love to reproduce in us toward others. What evidence of God's love flowing through you to others can you identify in your daily life?

Why do you think worship and marveling at Jesus are often the result of overcoming difficulties rather than living a comfortable, trial-free life?

Scriptures – The Marvelous One

Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **Matthew 8:23-27** - Jesus calms the storm
2. **Matthew 8:26** - "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?"
3. **Isaiah 9** - "His name shall be called Wonderful"
4. **Exodus 34** - Moses asking to know God's ways; God reveals His character as merciful and tender-hearted
5. **Isaiah 66** - God comforts Jerusalem as a mother comforts
6. **Romans 5:8** - "God demonstrates His love in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"
7. **Romans 5** - The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost
8. **John 15:13** - "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends"
9. **2 Corinthians 13:14** - "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all"
10. **Romans 8:38-39** - Nothing can separate us from the love of God
11. **1 Thessalonians 2:7** - Paul was gentle, as a nurse cherishes her children
12. **1 John 3:16-18** - "Hereby we understand the love of God because He laid down His life for us"
13. **1 John 3:2** - "We shall see Him as He is"
14. **John 4:24** (alluded) - "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"

Devotional – The Marvelous One

Day 1: The Marvelous Care of Jesus

Reading: Matthew 8:23-27

Devotional: The disciples marveled not simply because Jesus calmed the storm, but because He displayed His care for them in their moment of terror. When we face our own storms—financial pressure, health concerns, relational turmoil—Jesus doesn't just have the power to fix them; He has the compassion to act on our behalf. His love isn't distant or theoretical. It's personal and present. Today, reflect on a storm you've faced where God showed up. Did that experience change how you see Him? The same Jesus who stilled the waves is attentive to your fears. Let that truth move you from anxiety to worship, from panic to praise.

Day 2: Undeserved Love

Reading: Romans 5:6-8

Devotional: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This is the scandal of grace—Jesus loved us when we were unlovable. He didn't wait for us to clean up our act or prove our worthiness. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus broke bread and made covenant with the very ones who would abandon Him. This undeserved love should humble us and transform how we love others. Who in your life seems unlovable? Who has hurt or betrayed you? Jesus calls us to extend the same radical grace we've received. Today, ask God to help you love someone who doesn't deserve it—just as He loved you.

Day 3: Sacrificial Love in Action

Reading: John 15:9-13

Devotional: "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." A mother's love mirrors this divine principle—going hungry so her children can eat, sacrificing sleep for their comfort, giving up dreams for their future. Jesus embodied this perfectly, surrendering everything on the cross. But sacrificial love isn't just about grand gestures; it's found in daily choices to put others first. What small sacrifice can you make today for someone else? Perhaps it's your time, your comfort, or your preference. When we love sacrificially, we reflect the heart of Jesus and become living testimonies of His marvelous love.

Day 4: The Personal Touch of Divine Love

Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:14

Devotional: Paul prays that believers would experience "the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost." This isn't abstract theology—it's experiential reality. God's love can be felt, not just understood intellectually. The Holy Spirit pours out God's love in our hearts greedily, abundantly, unmistakably. Have you felt God's presence in worship? Sensed His comfort in grief? Known His peace in chaos? That's the communion of the Holy Spirit making God's love personal to you. Today, create space to simply receive. Stop striving and intellectualizing. Sit quietly and ask the Holy Spirit to make God's love real to you in this moment. Let yourself marvel.

Day 5: Steadfast Love That Never Lets Go

Reading: Romans 8:35-39

Devotional: Nothing can separate you from God's love. Not your worst failure, your deepest shame, your greatest doubt, or your darkest moment. Like a parent's love for their child that transcends every rebellion, God's love is steadfast and unchanging. Even when the prodigal runs away, the Father's love remains constant, watching for his return. This steadfast love should produce steadfast lovers. First John 3:16-18 challenges us: if we've been loved this well, we ought to love others in deed and truth. The love you've received isn't meant to stop with you—it's meant to overflow. Who needs to experience God's steadfast love through you today? Let the love that never lets you go flow through you to someone who desperately needs to know they're not abandoned.