

Surrender

Finding strength beneath the sovereign hand of God

JOB 38:8-11

“Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt’?”

JOB 38:8-11

Standing there, covered by the mist of the sea, I was overwhelmed by the vastness of the ocean in a way I had never experienced before. The rhythm of the waves was steady as they rolled in one after another. Yet each wave carried its own character. Some seemed to lay themselves gently upon the shore, while others crashed against the rocks before me with unmistakable force.

Having spent my early years in California, served at various duty stations in the Army, and traveled often for work, I had seen the ocean many times. But never had it appeared to me like this. It seemed endless. Time itself felt still. Words failed me as I stood in reverent awe of the Lord’s command over creation.

Even now, my words fall short of capturing that moment, as would any photograph. It was more than scenery. It was a lesson. What first captured my attention was the strength of the sea: tireless wave after wave, advancing with power that seemed unstoppable. Its reach extended farther than the eye could see. Its force was undeniable. Yet for all its might, it remained contained, ordered, and governed.

Then I realized that a far greater power was present, though unseen until that moment.

How mighty is our God, who effortlessly restrains the strength of the seas and saves us from their undiscerning power.

Most days our eyes rest upon the work of human hands: our homes, our vehicles, the roads we travel, the buildings where we labor, the careers we build. There is value in honest work, and rightfully there is satisfaction when it is done well. But how often have we allowed our own hands to cover our eyes, preventing us from seeing the hand of God? How often have we given ourselves more fully to what has been created than to the Creator?

As I considered the unceasing rise and fall of the waves, I came to see that their beauty was not merely in their strength, but in their surrender: complete, continual, and unquestioning obedience to the Lord's command.

Left to themselves, would the waters not spend their strength until nothing remained, covering the earth in chaos as in ages past?

And which of us, though we may try, could hold back the sea?

How foolish we are whenever we set ourselves against the Lord, knowingly or unknowingly.

I know now that I too must surrender, lest my own strength fail me and my life drift into darkness. Let the Lord sustain me, as He sustains the seas and all creation.

**I shall surrender,
and He shall be my strength.**

A reflection on Job 38:8-11