

**Text:** Luke 8:22-25 (see also Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41)

**Title:** Stormy Seas

**Truth:** Jesus has truth *and* power over nature, so we can fully trust Him.

**Date/Location:** February 25, 2024 at FBC

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## Introduction

Luke continues to set forth an orderly narration of those things which happened among the first century Jews. By so doing, he introduces us to Jesus Christ and intends that by so doing he conveys a thorough certainty of the truth about Christ and His work.

In our section today, Luke gives a brief account of the weak faith of the disciples.

### I. Understand the narrative about the stormy sea, v. 22-25

A. Jesus often traveled across the Sea of Galilee. Windstorms come quickly on this lake because of its geography. Conditions may look favorable at the beginning of the journey, but soon they can turn adverse. Depending on the season of the year (summer to early fall when windstorms typically come), this might give anyone pause to even begin a journey across the lake. In this instance, the boat began to fill up with water. They did not have the ability to keep up and it was terrifying. I say tongue-in-cheek that the bilge pump failed on their boat. Of course, in that ancient time there was no such pump, but even if there were, a modern bilge pump is not large enough to save a boat in dire circumstances. It is noteworthy that there were other little boats on this journey with them (Mark 4:36). Perhaps the disciples felt they were speaking on behalf of the other boaters in the fleet.

B. Sleep shows Jesus's humanity, and a very relaxed humanity at that. He let the disciples do the driving. With large crowds and a busy schedule, there would be bodily stress. The body has its limits, even at 30 years old, and requires rest. But we could not fault the Lord for His stress management! In our rest, we depend upon God to keep us safe and that His design will work to repair and restore what is needful from the wear and tear of the previous day. But his nice nap was disturbed.

- C. Sleep shows Jesus's *humanity*, and the miracle over the wind proves His omnipotent *deity*. He commanded the storm and waves to stop, and they obeyed. They knew their master because He created them (John 1:3, Col. 1:16-17, Heb. 1:2). Jesus personified the natural elements by *rebuking* them, as a disobedient man would be rebuked. In so doing, however, do not think that the Lord believes the natural elements themselves to be evil spirits. Perhaps there was a personal power *behind* the elements, a devilish one, but this is a bit of speculation and the disciples do not seem to be aware of it.
- D. The disciples had succumbed to fear of something other than the Lord, in the very presence of the Lord. Their desperation was a sign of lack of trust in Him and a lack of spiritual maturity. Therefore, He asked them where their faith was.
- E. They asked their own question among themselves: "Who can this be?" The supernatural action demanded an answer as to the identity of the person. Anyone who can do *that* is special. Remember that they were not in full possession—yet—of the knowledge that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The demons had that knowledge (Luke 4:41) but it was not until later in Jesus's ministry that the disciples really grasped this (Matthew 16:16). This incident awakened inside of them a new level of fear and respect for Jesus, which is part of faith. This test, I believe, helped to build and strengthen their faith. It provided a solid foundation that would help them to serve beyond Christ's physical presence even to trials that included their own martyrdom.

## **II. Now, think about how to relate the narrative to your life.**

- A. While carrying out the directives of the Lord Jesus, do not be surprised if difficulty arises, whether from nature or accident or people or even the supernatural.

Based on this portion of God's word, I must limit the scope of this application to the times when you are doing the Lord's will. If you venture off into disobedient territory on your own, God's word does not promise you "smooth sailing" or rescue from shipwreck. To remain in good territory, do not drift away from the direction of

God's word. Instead, while you are doing what Jesus asks you, and you face trials, keep your attention toward the Lord.

- B. Given the tendency of this lake to have rapid onset windstorms, the inherent risk in undertaking the journey in the first place would stop some people from obeying the Lord's direction at all. Sadly, this is the case for Christians today who refuse to consider doing something "risky" for Jesus: a short-term mission trip, or pulling up stakes and going to a different place to plant a church, or testifying their faith to another person! Has the discomfort, uncertain outcome, or fear of man stopped you from doing for the Lord what you know needs done?
- C. Do not give in to fear. Instead, strengthen your faith in Christ and trust Him to go with you as you obey Him, and if trials come, to either carry you through or deliver you from those trials.
- D. Because He has the power to still the wind and waves, you know that the Lord has all the power needed to save you from or through your difficulty.
- E. The Lord's question about faith examines the deepest part of our souls: "Where is your faith?" Think about the answer. In the boating situation, wherever the disciples' faith was, it was *not* squarely in Jesus. They had repeatedly seen Jesus heal people; remove demons; even raise a dead man. It seems reasonable that they could trust that Jesus was not going to let them die by sinking. Their faith was somewhere else.

Is *your* faith in Christ? Is it somewhere else? Is it *nowhere* because you do not have any? Do you live solely by sight, or so you think? Or is your trust in yourself? Do you believe mostly in your own capabilities and mind and self-determining authority to guide you through life? Or is your faith in other people? Or in material things? Or in your husband or family? Or in other things that give you a sense of security? Just *where* is your faith?

- F. Faith in God and Jesus Christ is a gracious gift from Heaven (Eph. 2:8, Phil. 1:29, John 1:12-13). God's Spirit strengthens our faith, and cultivates faith's fruit. He indwells the Christian for that purpose (Gal. 5:22). Whether you understand how that works,

know these other truths about faith: In terms of intermediate means, faith begins and is increased by meaningful exposure to God's truth, which we find in His word (Romans 10:17). Faith is strengthened by testing (James 1:3, 1 Peter 1:7). Your faith is *yours*. You are responsible to keep it, develop it, build it out, etc. See 2 Peter 1:5-9. The kind of faith we are talking about is faith in Jesus, not faith in oneself, or faith in "the system," or faith in faith, or blind hope or luck. Faith is confidence, trust, belief, loyalty in Christ. In fact, it is our *ultimate* confidence, trust, belief, and loyalty. When you have genuine faith in Christ, that faith produces good works.<sup>1</sup>

- G. Luke does not mention Peter because his "walking on water" experience happened on another boat ride across the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 14:28-30). But he is a good illustration of the principles of faith and fear while obeying the Lord. He asked the Lord to command him (Peter) to come to Jesus on the water. Jesus did issue that command. Peter left the boat in willing obedience and began to walk to Jesus. But then Peter focused on the surrounding situation and became fearful and began to sink. He lost sight of his confidence in Christ—that Jesus was able to enable him to obey the command no matter how difficult it seemed. He knew from a prior boat ride (this one in Luke 8) that Jesus had power over the wind and waves—the natural order itself.
- H. Jesus well knows that you and I need rest. He Himself did! But do note that He had a very busy schedule from which to rest. In other words, He had a reason to rest. He exemplified purposeful accomplishment, not lazy inactivity or unimportant busy-ness. He did not rest all the time, nor even most of the time.
- I. Thinking about the bilge pump again, there are some situations for which human ingenuity is completely insufficient. Natural means, such as medical technology, mechanical devices, artificial intelligence, computer software, hard work, and the like sometimes simply are not up to the task of solving difficult problems. Consider the Fukushima nuclear reactor in Japan. With this and that "fail-safe" capability, an earthquake followed by a

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<sup>1</sup> God saves. Faith is the channel. Good works are the result.

power outage followed by a tsunami overwhelmed the station and caused a large release of nuclear radiation. There was a situation ten times worse at Chernobyl, Ukraine in 1986; there is simply no way to wave a magic wand and heal the exclusion zone.

In similar fashion, there was also nothing that the disciples could do to stop the storm. But there was a Person who could deliver them. Good for them that they called out in their fear to the right Person, but their attitude was one that lacked trust and was desperate. When you start to feel that “Master, Master” feeling of lostness, you know you are in the wrong lane. Faith is in the other lane, so move over!

## Conclusion

If the ship had gone down, our salvation would have sunk with it. But there was nothing to worry about. Jesus demonstrated that He is the sovereign and supernatural ruler over nature.

Whether this storm arose because of the natural tendency of weather or was demonically influenced (Job 1:19), God permitted it (Job 1:12). Its purpose was to get the disciples to marvel at who Jesus is and to compare their problems with what He can accomplish. These are good foundations for *faith*.

We too must keep our Lord in the right place in our eyes. Our hurts, emotions, fears, concerns, anxieties, diagnoses, family problems, awkward moments, and all the rest are insignificant when sitting next to Jesus Christ. Take those things and admit that He is bigger than all of them. He is with us, so we can be confident in Him and not fearful of circumstances (Heb. 13:5-6). He is with His church, and His body will be built, and it will not “sink.” You stick with Jesus, and you will not sink either. At the worst you will rise!

The next sections of Luke shows Jesus as ruler over supernatural beings and human health problems. Keep in mind that all of this reinforces the preaching ministry of Jesus—about the sown word, the soils, and the light of divine revelation. We must give earnest heed to these things because of who Jesus is.

In closing, think of Psalm 107:23-32. Jesus shows Himself to be *that* LORD with power over the stormy wind and waves. May we in faith give thanks to Him for His goodness in caring for us too.

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