

6/11/2023
Luke 8:22-25
Luke 7:17-23

Where Is Your Faith?

Introduction

Unlike most messages, this sermon is a direct outgrowth of my personal devotions. Usually I keep a “firewall” between sermon work for a congregation and my own spiritual growth. I need my own “manna from heaven.” But sometimes something from my own devotions “bleeds through.” Here’s how things got started.

- About a year ago, the story of the calming of the sea was part of my daily text
 - I remember it well, sitting on the back porch, watching the thunderheads grow
 - A storm cell would soon form over my son’s College Station house
 - Eventually his family of five would huddle in their “safe room” in a stair well
 - And I knew, just like the disciples, that I did not have faith to believe God would keep my grandkids safe
- I felt frustrated and weak. Should my faith not be stronger?

APPLIC: Has your faith ever felt that way?

- Why were my prayers not answered?
- How could God let this happen?

Body

PART ONE: Jesus Calms the Sea Luke 8:22-25

(22) Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.” And they launched out. (23) But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. (24) And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. (25) But He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, “Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!”

I. The Storm Is Stilled

Luke 8:22-25

(Matt. 8:23ff., Mark 4:35ff.)

Story appears in Matt., Mark, and Luke. It's a big deal

- A. Jesus directs the disciples to cross 8:22
 - 1. **A big lake: about 13 miles long, 8 miles wide, and harp-shaped**
 - 2. **It's something like 13 miles from my house to Union Grove**
- B. He falls asleep 8:23
 - 1. **Working hard**
 - a **Walking everywhere, sleeping rough**
 - b **Miracles, teaching, mentoring, confronting**
 - 2. **Humanity of Jesus: fully God, fully human**
- C. Windstorm strikes the boat
 - 1. **Sea of Galilee surrounded by hills**
 - 2. **Squalls often come pouring down through the gaps**
- D. Even the experienced fishermen are scared
 - 1. **Sea of Galilee surrounded by hills**
 - 2. **Squalls often come pouring down through the gaps**
- E. Boat is filling with water 8:23
- F. True danger (jeopardy)
- G. "Master, Master, we are perishing!" 8:24

1. When is the last time you were truly frightened, with reason?
 - c Cancer diagnosis
 - d Stroke
 - e Crazy driver almost hits you

II. Jesus Confronts the Wind and Water Luke 8:24b

A. He arises

1. No direct Greek connection between “arises” and the resurrection
2. But I hear shadows of it
3. Can you see him, standing on the swaying deck, hair and cloak caught in the gale?

B. He rebukes wind and raging waves

From weary sleep to great power

C. All is calm

1. How we long for this!
2. How we long to hear him pronounce, “Peace, be still”

D. Then he rebukes his disciples: “Where is your faith?”

1. A sense of awesome power still surrounds him
2. Now his stern rebuff turns from creation to his closest friends

E. The Disciples Respond
Luke 8:25b

1. They are even more frightened
2. They feared the storm
3. They fear its Master more
4. Also astounded (“marveled”)
5. Completely outside their experience
6. And they have seen a lot!
7. “Who can this be?
 - a **We’ve seen demons driven out**
 - b **We’ve witnessed healings left and right**
 - c **Jesus just raised a dead man right out of his coffin**
 - d **But *nothing* compares to this!**

F. Jesus’ Piercing Question: “Where is your faith?” Luke 8:25

Part Two: The Faith of John the Baptist

Context of Luke, Chapter 7:19-22

I. John the Baptist is in prison

II. He called out the sins of Herod Antipas

- A. Antipas fell in love with Herodias, his brother's wife
- B. He divorced his first wife, Phasaelis
- C. Married his new lover
- D. John: "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."
(Mark 6:18; Lev. 18:16)
- E. Antipas threw him in prison (Matt. 11:2)
- F. John will not leave prison alive (Mark 6:17ff.)

Do you remember the terrible story? (Mark 6:17ff.)

- Antipas' drunken birthday party
- Herodias' daughter, Salome, dancing to entertain the king and his guests
- The king's rash promise: "...Up to half my kingdom" (Mark 6:23)
- Herodias' horrible revenge: the severed head of The Baptist on a platter

G. Jesus has just raised the dead: widow's son in village of Nain (Luke 7:11ff.)

H. Disciples of John the Baptist report this to him . Luke 7:18

1. The Baptist is perplexed

- Mind you, *everyone* was perplexed at this point. Jesus met no one's expectations, Only after the resurrection did his nature become clear
- But sometimes, he *still* perplexes us. "What is God doing here? I just don't understand."
- Someone once said many of the Psalms begin with, "God, you promised to take care of us and frankly I don't see it."

2. He sends disciples to question Jesus

Our text: Luke 7:17-33

- (17) And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.
- (18) Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.
- (19) And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”
- (20) When the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ ” (21) And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.
- (22) Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. (23) And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

III. The Faith of John the Baptist Luke 7:17-23

- A. “Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?”
Luke 7:20
- B. Jesus lets his actions speak Luke 7:21
- C. He answers John Luke 7:22
- D. They see miracles first-hand
- E. “Poor have the gospel preached to them”
- F. “Blessed is he who doesn’t stumble because of Me”
Luke 7:23

II. Connections in these Stories

- A. Both episodes filled with doubt
 - 1. Disciples: “Master, we are perishing!”
 - 2. The Baptist: “Are you the Coming One, or do we wait?”

B. Both focus on the identity of Jesus

1. Disciples: “Who is this?”
2. The Baptist: “Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”
 - a These two stories mirror *my* doubts
 - b I know who Jesus is. I’ve preached about him for 50 years
 - c But sometimes my faith is not what it should be
 - d And I don’t think I’m alone

III. Life Applications

A. The believer’s life is good

B. “Taste and see that the Lord is good” Psa. 34:8a

C. But life on earth can be hard!

1. The fallen world bites us (storms)
 - Cancer comes
 - A bad back; broken hip
 - Infertility
 - Car accidents that take our loved ones
2. Evil people oppress us (Herod)
 - Bullies
 - Bad bosses
 - Abusive parents and spouses
 - Violent, cruel, hateful people
3. We make bad choices

D. Most believers have some seasons of doubt

- Perhaps not all. But I believe most, at least in seasons
- Why has God let this happen?
- Haven’t I followed him faithfully?
- How could an all-loving, all powerful God...

IV. Should Doubt Be Common?

V. No. Be steadfast in faith (Col. 1:23)

- A. But sometimes, we're just not
- B. Faith is like holiness

"Be holy as I am holy" 1 Peter 1:16

- 1. **Something we strive for**
- 2. **Sometimes imperfectly**
- C. Which brings us back to Jesus' question

VI. "Where is your faith?" Luke 8:25

A. Put your faith in the One in the boat

- That was the disciples' mistake
- They didn't trust the Man in the boat

- 1. **He'll get you through**
- 2. **No guarantees about the storm**

- Unless Jesus comes first, something is going to get all of us!
- But Jesus promises to get us through it all

3. Our Christian faith is bigger than our circumstances

B. You have a Savior

1. More than fire insurance
2. He is a constant presence in time of need

Conclusion

I don't know your heart this morning. But a minute ago Pastor Faber said you are here for a reason.

- Perhaps this is just a great day to be at church at Union Grove
- But perhaps you came bearing a burden; a trial of faith.