

“Where is Your Faith?”

Luke 8:22-25

Our focus this morning will be on faith. In verse 25 Jesus said to his disciples, “Where is your faith?” That will be the title for this sermon: “Where is Your Faith?” We are going to try to answer that question as we examine the behavior of the disciples in the different circumstances we see in this text and then to make application to ourselves.

Before we begin we need a working definition for faith. The word “faith” means a firm persuasion or conviction.¹

When the Bible uses this word to describe man’s relationship with God it signifies commitment out of conviction: because we have been convicted of the truth of the gospel by the grace of God we are now committed to Christ. It is the nature of saving faith, as described in the Bible, to live by the truth it receives. In salvation we become new creatures in Jesus Christ. Faith has a transforming affect on us that leads to a change in our lives. Faith rests on God’s promises, gives thanks for God’s grace, and works for God’s glory.² That’s biblical saving faith: not mere conviction, but transformation. A new birth.

¹ *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, entry on “Faith.”

² Adapted from *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology*, entry on “Faith.”

But faith is not a once-and-done exercise in the Christian life. We are called to live by faith. In every area of our lives, in every circumstance we face, in the good times, in the bad times, in the every-day events of our lives we are to live by faith.

What does that mean?

Convinced of the truth of the gospel by the grace of God, we are committed to Christ, and we are to live by the truth revealed in the gospel. This is a life of faith. Living by faith will affect everything we do.

The lesson for us from this text is **not**: Have more faith and you will be delivered from the storms of life.

But rather: in the calm, in the storm, and in every other circumstance of life our faith in a very real and practical way, should be in Jesus Christ.

Very often, as Christians, we do not live by faith in Jesus Christ. At least not in a practical sense. Our hope, our confidence, our fear, our worry is not based on the revelation of the gospel in the Word of God, but on ourselves or our circumstances. We exercise a practical faith in ourselves or in our circumstances and not in Jesus.

As we study this text we will see three separate settings where the disciples were convinced something was true and acted accordingly. And as we examine the faith of the disciples may we hear the words of Jesus as if spoken to us, “Where is your faith?” May this question ring in our ears and as we go about our lives may it

cause us to pause and examine our faith. The first setting we are going to study in this passage is before the storm.

I. Before the Storm (v. 22)

Jesus went into a ship with his disciples and told them to cross the lake. This ship would have most likely been one of the fishing boats common at that time. Recent archeology has given us an excellent idea of what these boats would have been like. In 1985 a first century fishing boat was found buried in the mud along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. The boat was 27 feet long, 7 1/2 feet wide, and 4 feet deep. These were small fishing boats. For context, a boat this size would fit on the platform here between the piano and organ.

The lake, as Jesus refers to it, is the Sea of Galilee. It is about 13 miles long and 6 miles wide. It is located in a deep depression in the Jordan Valley. This makes it prone to sudden and violent storms, like the one we see in this text.

The disciples and Jesus got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. And remember, the disciples were working men. They were not men of academia. Most of them were accustomed to outdoor, manual labor. Several of them had been fishermen. They would have been very familiar with this type of boat and the Sea of Galilee where they were sailing.

When they got in this boat and Jesus said to them, “Let us go over unto the other side of the lake,” what happened? The end of verse 22 tells us, “They

launched forth.” The disciples did not voice any concern. There was no protest. This was something they would have been very comfortable with. It would be like you and I getting into a car and driving to the next town down the road: so common and routine that it seems insignificant.

Keep in mind, Jesus knows what is about to happen. He crossed this lake on purpose. As we will see next week, Lord willing, there was ministry for Jesus to accomplish on the other side of the lake. Jesus could have gone around the lake on land, but He chose to go across the lake because during this journey Jesus was going to reveal more about Himself to His disciples, and more about the disciples to themselves. But the disciples didn’t know this. All they knew at this point was that they were in a boat with Jesus and were going to cross the lake.

In this setting, where was the faith of the disciples? I want to be very clear: I am not trying to be critical of the disciples. I simply want us to examine the topic of faith from the events we see in this text. What did the disciples believe to be true as evidenced by their actions. Where was the faith of the disciples at this point? What were they convinced was true at this point?

They believed, they were convinced, that they could cross the lake. At this point they could probably see the other side. Most of them had probably crossed this lake many, many, many other times before in boats just like the one in this text. When Jesus said, “Cross the lake,” they probably didn’t give it a second thought. They believed they could do what Jesus had said. They knew they could do it.

They were fully convinced and they acted on that conviction. They “launched forth.” At this point their faith was in themselves in a practical sense. That is, they believed they could accomplish the task set before them.

Now let’s make application to ourselves. The vast majority of our time is filled with the mundane. There are things we have to do every single day and we do them every single day and we don’t think about it. We get up in the morning. We get ready. We go to work. We eat. We sleep. We take care of our families. We mow the grass. Just the mundane, every-day things of life. We don’t think about these tasks, we just do them.

Hear the words of Jesus, “Where is your faith?” and examine your approach to the mundane, every-day things of life. Whose strength am I resting in? Where does my confidence come from? We would not proclaim boisterous self-confidence like William Henley who wrote *Invictus*: “It matters not how strait the gate, / How charged with punishments the scroll, / I am the master of my fate, / I am the captain of my soul.” We would not say that, but we often act that way in the mundane, every-day tasks of life. We go through life with faith in ourselves and we give no thought to God who enables, sustains, and provides for even the most mundane, normal, every-day tasks.

May we remember the words of Jesus and examine ourselves: “Where is your faith?” We are called to live with constant faith in Jesus Christ. Again, faith is not something we exercise once at salvation and then think about once a week at

church. We are to live by faith. (Hebrews 10:38). Every day, with every task, in every situation may we live with a constant attitude of dependence and reliance upon God.

We are examining the faith of the disciples in three settings found in this text. So far we have examined the faith of the disciples before the storm. The next setting we find in this text is in the storm.

II. In the Storm (v. 23-24a)

Jesus and the disciples began their trip across the lake and the beginning of verse 23 tells us that Jesus fell asleep. This is an evidence of Jesus' humanity. He was truly human. He was subject to all the same frailty and weakness of the human body that you and I face. Just as we grow tired and need rest, so Jesus grew tired and needed to rest. On this boat, away from the crowds, at this time of relative peace, Jesus slept.

But suddenly, the peace and quiet of this routine trip across the lake was shattered. Verse 23 tells us that a storm of wind came down on the lake. Sudden storms are common on the Sea of Galilee. Certainly those disciples who were fishermen had experienced several storms like this and knew how to handle a boat in rough water. They were experienced men, but this storm quickly got the better of them and the boat began to fill with water.

Maybe some of you have experienced something like this. My father loved to fish and when I was a boy he would take me out in all sorts of weather. One time we were on a lake in Minnesota called Mille Lacs Lake. It is a huge lake, over 200sq miles. It was late in the fall so it was cold and it was windy. When we got out to where my dad wanted to fish we had waves that were actually coming over the side of my dad's little 16' aluminum boat. I was nervous, but my father who was an experienced fisherman was prepared and he was calm. Because he knew what he was doing and he remained calm, that reassured me.

You wonder how some of the disciples who were not fishermen felt about this situation. Maybe Levi the publican, a former tax-collector, when the storm first blew up he was worried, but he looked over at Peter who had spent his life fishing this water and Peter was unworried to he was reassured. It's just some wind. It will pass. We will be fine. But as the storm continued and the boat began to fill with water even the professional fishermen began to worry. And that worry turned into alarm. Then fear. They were in jeopardy. It looked like the storm was going to take their boat down to the bottom and they would go with it. In this desperate situation look what the disciples do in v. 24.

They woke up Jesus. He must have been tired to have still been asleep. The wind was howling. Waves were washing over the boat. The boat was filling with water. The disciples despaired of life itself. And Jesus was still asleep.

So they woke up Jesus and said to him, "Master, master, we perish."

“Master, we are going to die!”

In Matthew’s account the disciples say, “Lord, save us: we perish.”

(Matthew 8:25)

In Mark’s account they say, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” (Mark 4:38).

In this setting, where was the faith of the disciples? What did they believe was true? What were they convinced of at this point? They believed that they were going to die in that storm. The boat would sink, they would drown, and that would be the end. This storm had blown up and totally crushed their faith in themselves and the storm became their new object of faith. First they were convinced that they could cross the lake and had acted accordingly. But in this storm they were convinced that they were going to die and they acted accordingly: “Master, master, we perish.”

Now let’s make application to ourselves. As we have already mentioned, we usually go through life dealing with every-day mundane tasks that we can handle ourselves. We have confidence we can handle them. We are convinced. We have faith in ourselves. And we do these things. And whether we realize it or not, we often do these things with a self-focused faith. “I can do this.” But sometimes storms come.

Hard things come our way. Bad things happen to us. Tragedy strikes. Things come upon us that are outside of our control. Things that we can’t handle. Things

that we can't escape. And like the disciples in this text we can quickly be brought to despair: "It's over. I perish."

If we are relying on ourselves to handle life, when something comes that we can't handle, when something comes that overwhelms us, we will despair and the storm will become the new object of our faith. We will go from confidence in ourselves to handle life to confidence that whatever trouble has come upon us will crush us and be our end. You may be in the middle of a storm right now. There may be something in your life that is beyond your control and you feel like you are being crushed. You are afraid. You are at a point of despair. Here the words of Jesus, "Where is your faith?"

If you are not a child of God, if you are not a Christian, you have reason to fear. There is not hope in yourself. There is no hope in the storm. Be like the disciples who, in their despair went to Jesus and said, "Master, save us, we perish."

If you are a Christian and you are afraid and full of despair, examine your faith. Are you trusting in yourself? Are you trusting in the storm? There is no hope there! Remember that God is with you and God is for you in Christ. Hold on to the rock of your salvation and you will be anchored in the storms of life. God does not promise to deliver us from all the storms of life, but He is with us in the storms and He is the Master of the storms. Nahum 1:3b, "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet." That's true of the natural world and it is true of every other circumstance we find ourselves in.

Sometimes the storms of life come upon us suddenly and we are immediately tempted to fear and despair. In those moments of temptation may we be reminded of the words of Jesus, “Where is your faith?” May we raise the shield of faith and quench every fiery dart of the enemy (Ephesians 6:16).

We are examining the faith of the disciples in three settings found in this text. First we examined the faith of the disciples before the storm. Then we examined the faith of the disciples in the midst of the storm. The third and final setting is after the storm.

III. After the Storm (v. 24b-25)

At the end of verse 24 we see a powerful demonstration of the deity of Jesus Christ. Jesus arose out of his sleep. He heard the panicked disciples say, “Master, we perish. Don’t you care? Can’t you save us?” And then He rebuked the wind and the water, and the storm immediately stopped and there was calm. As a man, Jesus slept in that boat. As God, Jesus stood in that boat and rebuked the elements of creation and they obeyed Him. He was fully God and fully man, and through this miracle He continued to reveal Himself to His disciples.

And then, in verse 25, Jesus turned to his disciples and asked them the question that has been our focus in this text: “Where is your faith?” The storm is gone. The sea is calm. Jesus is standing in the boat. And he asked the disciples, “Where is your faith?”

In this setting where was the faith of the disciples? Let's look at their response to this change in their circumstances. A while ago they had been confident that they could cross the lake. A moment ago they had been confident that they were going to perish in the storm. Now the storm was gone, but the disciples were afraid. Verse 25 tells us, "And they, being afraid."

In the late 1800's, as Darwin's theory of evolution began to gain traction, it affected the way people thought. Darwin's influence was not limited to biology. Though this was not a new idea, it certainly became more popular and people applied this idea evolution, of the complex arising out of the simple, to many other areas, one of them being religion. And one of the theories that was advanced by men was that ancient man invented gods to control things that were outside of man's control: natural disasters, growing seasons, storms, things like this. Religion is just man's coping mechanism to help him deal with the difficult things in life. If we create a god who controls these things and we believe we can appease that god, then we have regained some control over these things that are beyond us.

But that is not the testimony of Scripture. In fact, we see the opposite in Scripture. In this text the disciples were face-to-face with the power of God to deliver them from the forces of nature which were beyond their control and threatened their imminent destruction. The God-man, Jesus Christ, saved them from the storm. But we are not told that they were happy. We are not told they

rejoiced. We are not told they were given any degree of assurance. Instead, they had the opposite response.

They were afraid. This is a strong word for fear. It indicates that they were terrified.

Why were they terrified? Look at what they said. “And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.”

They were afraid of Jesus. Why? Because what he had just done was not normal. Who can command the winds and the water? Only God. Psalm 89:9, “Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.” Psalm 93:3-4, “The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.” At the revelation of God’s power in Jesus Christ, the disciples were terrified.

Where was the faith of the disciples at this point? What did they believe was true? What were they convinced of at this point? They believed that Jesus was not like any other man. And they had an appropriate response: they were afraid.

Now let’s make application to ourselves. Where is your faith, right now? What do you believe? What are you convinced is true?

First, an application to the unbeliever, someone who is not trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation. Where is your faith? It is in yourself? Are you trusting in

yourself? In your goodness? In your ability? In your strength? You will never be enough. You may gain the whole world, but you will still lose your soul.

Are you living at the whim of your circumstances? On a good day, you are happy. On a bad day, you despair. Like a wave on the sea you are driven by the wind and tossed every direction.

Hear the words of Jesus this morning: “Where is your faith?” You will fail. Your circumstances will change. Trust in Jesus Christ.

God alone is worthy to be feared, worshipped, and obeyed. In reverential fear bend the knee before Him. Humble yourself before your Creator. Repent and believe the gospel. That Jesus, God the Son, came to earth. That he lived a perfect life. That he went to the cross and gave His life so that your sins may be forgiven. And three days later he rose from the dead, demonstrating that God was satisfied and that redemption had been accomplished.

You must have faith in Jesus Christ. Moral reform isn't enough. You can't try harder to be a better person. You can't improve your life and hope God will be pleased. That's not enough. You are on a sinking ship. It won't do you any good to re-arrange the deck chairs. You need a Savior and the only Savior is Jesus. You must have faith in Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Where is your faith?

Now application for believers. As I studied this passage this week I was convicted of areas in life where I live without any thought or reliance upon Jesus. There are so many things that I do simply because they must be done and I give no

thought to the Lord. That should not be the case. When we live that way we will swing between self-reliance and despair. Self-reliance when we think we can handle life. And despair when life handles us.

As we see Jesus as He is revealed in this passage, may we be moved as the disciples were moved, to fear. May we remember that we are but dust. May we be humble before our King and our God. May the words of Jesus ring in our hearts as we go out of this place and about our daily lives: “Where is your faith?” And by the grace of God, may we rest in our faith in Jesus Christ in every situation and circumstance of life. Whether in the calm or in the storm, may our faith be in Jesus Christ. Convinced of the truth of the gospel by the grace of God, we are committed to Christ, and we live by the truth revealed in the gospel.