

Message #34**Luke 8:22-25**

One of the most amazing stories of a man who had faith in the history of the Christian Church was George Mueller. George Mueller was living deep in sin in England and actually spent the years 1821-22 in jail. In 1825, he went to a mission and heard the gospel and he believed in Jesus Christ. He spent the next five years intensely studying the Word of God and evangelizing others.

In the year 1830, he became the Pastor of a church in England. Mueller had a special heart for children who were poor. At the time he had this burden, he had no money, no house and no co-workers. All he had was his burden for children and his faith in God. He became convicted and convinced that God wanted him to open a home for poor children and he made a decision to never beg people for money. Instead, he took his requests to God and by 1875 he had cared for 10,024 orphans, he had established 117 schools to offer Christian education to children, he had preached to nearly three million people and he had handled nearly eight million dollars. George Mueller was a tremendous man of faith. He said this:

“God delights to increase the faith of His children. We ought, instead of wanting no trials before victory, no exercise for patience, to be willing to take them from God’s hand as a means. I say and say it deliberately—trials, obstacles, difficulties, and sometimes defeats, are the very food of faith.”

What George Mueller learned is that faith is developed and strengthened in the difficulties and storms of life. God uses rough waters and choppy storms to develop and strengthen our faith. That is what the disciples of Jesus Christ were about to learn:

WHEN CHRIST’S DISCIPLES FIND THEMSELVES IN STORMS IN LIFE, THEY CAN FULLY TRUST JESUS CHRIST AS GOD TO INTERVENE AND CALM THEM IF THEY TURN TO HIM.

It is not during the smooth-sailing moments of life when our faith is developed. Faith is developed when we are in storms. God will use difficult troubles and trials to develop and strengthen our faith in Him. That is clearly seen in this passage.

Now the context is that Jesus had just challenged the crowd that those who are His family believe His Word and obey it (Luke 8:21). One of the things that can really test whether or not one does is a storm.

There are five lessons we may learn from this amazing passage:

LESSON #1 – God’s people have a responsibility to obey the Word of God and that does not exempt one from going into storms. **8:22**

In the previous context Jesus Christ taught that only about 25% of the people would truly believe in Him and bear fruit. What that means is that 75% won’t and because of that there will be hostility, hardships and storms. Jesus wanted to teach His disciples a lesson of faith so in **verse 22**, He got in a boat and He asked the disciples to take Him over to the other side of the Lake.

Now the Lake Jesus wanted to cross was the Sea of Galilee (**8:26**), also known as the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1). Dr. Luke is the one who refers to the body of water as a “lake” (λίμνη). Matthew and Mark call it a Sea. The distance across this lake is 6-10 miles and typically this trip would take one to two hours. They are sailing the boat across the lake (**8:23**). The boat would have been large enough for Him and His disciples and perhaps the women who were supporting His ministry.

It is important to see in **verse 22** that the disciples immediately obeyed and “launched out.” They are literally obeying what Jesus told them to do. They are not in rebellion, but they are faithfully following what He requested. As we will see, this faithful obedience does not exempt these disciples from getting into a major storm.

When we are specifically obeying God’s Word, we may find ourselves right in the middle of a storm and when we do, we have nothing to fear for our God is there with us. In fact, the Apostle Peter would later write that when we find ourselves in some strange storm or fiery trial, we may rejoice, knowing we are blessed by God and knowing God will care for us (I Peter 4:12-14).

Obedience does not exempt us from troubles and trials.

LESSON #2 – God’s people who obey God’s Word may find themselves in the middle of a dangerous storm. **8:23**

There is no question that Jesus was physically exhausted, but I am in agreement with other commentators that even though that was true, this would teach His disciples a lesson they truly needed to learn. Typically a fishing boat carried a pillow of some sorts so a fisherman could get some rest when it was needed.

The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by mountains and hills and the cool air winds are known to sweep into this valley and swirl to the point of causing very strong squalls. The words “fierce gale of wind” implies that these winds coming off the top of these mountains were at “hurricane” and “whirlwind” levels.

In fact, the winds were so strong it rocked the boat and water was pouring into the boat and the disciples were in literal danger of drowning. This was a very dangerous situation. This storm was violent and the potential of losing one’s life was very real.

These disciples were not imagining the danger, this was real danger. Notice the pronoun “they” began to be in danger. This was not just a boat problem; their very lives were in danger.

These disciples had left their jobs and had abandoned their careers and had left their families and friends and houses in order to follow Jesus Christ and now they found themselves in a storm that could potentially kill them.

This scene certainly militates against the notion that if you are right with God, you will be forever healthy, wealthy and have a smooth-sailing life. That is heresy. When you purpose to obey the Word of God, you may find yourself in difficult circumstances. There are times when faithfulness to God can literally threaten your life.

All we have to do to see that is look at Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who faced a fiery furnace because they faithfully obeyed God and refused to worship the golden image. All we have to do is look at Daniel, who faced a lion’s den because he continued to pray to God. All we have to do is look at Jesus Christ, who ended up being nailed to a cross because He perfectly obeyed the Word of God.

Being faithful to God may lead us into the middle of a storm. Perhaps that is where you are now. Perhaps you are facing a fiery storm of financial pressure. Perhaps you are facing a major lion of some health problem that looks like may devour you. Perhaps you feel as if you are in a storm all alone. Know this. You are not in that storm by chance or you are not in it alone. Stay steady and faithful and the Lord will see you through it.

LESSON #3 – God’s people should draw near to Jesus Christ when in storms. **8:24a**

These disciples did exactly what they should have done; they went immediately and directly to Jesus Christ the Lord.

It is interesting that in the two other parallel accounts, each writer points out how the disciples collectively addressed Jesus in this storm:

Matthew points out they identified Christ as the Lord. Matt. 8:25

Mark points out they identified Christ as the teacher. Mark 4:38

Luke points out they identified Christ as the Master. **Luke 8:24**

Luke records that the disciples used a double emotional vocative, yelling “Master, Master.” This specific Greek word (*επιστατα, επιστατα*) specifically refers to one who is the chief commander and master (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 174).

So these disciples had a complete picture of who Jesus was—He was their Lord; He was their teacher and He was their Master. **They obviously knew that He could help them, but they seemed to lack faith that He would help them.**

The first thing we should all do when we find ourselves in some serious storm is to immediately go to the Lord and talk with Him and cry out to Him for help.

Some people who find themselves in storms get running around talking to everyone else but the Lord. There is a place for seeking sound counsel. There is a place for careful thought. Nothing will replace getting close to the Lord.

We just recently saw a picture of our old house in Pocatello that was in Buckskin Valley. It was butted up against mountains and I used to love to ride my horse or go hike in those mountains. One time I was riding my horse and spotted some deer and I decided to tie my horse and see how close I could get to them. There were about six deer and one was a baby. Well I sneaked through the timber and got real close to them without them knowing it and then I decided I would step out in an opening so they could see me. I wanted to see what they would do. When I stepped out that little baby immediately ran to its mother. I was a dangerous threat to him and he ran right to his mom.

That is a lesson we need to learn. When we are threatened we need to run right to the Lord. That is exactly what these disciples did in this storm.

LESSON #4 – God’s people should not doubt Jesus Christ is God when in storms. 8:24b

The disciples had the right response in the storm, but they did not have the right faith in the Lord. They had convinced themselves that He was going to let them die. Mark says that some even doubted to the point that they thought He didn’t care if they did die (Mark 4:38).

The verb “we are perishing” suggests that they thought they were going to be utterly destroyed and that Jesus was not going to do anything about it. That is not a good faith; that is a crazy faith.

When we find ourselves in the storms of life we can begin to think in ways that are totally and completely ridiculous. We can get so caught up with our problems that we begin to question whether or not Jesus Christ really cares.

Even the most faithful of people can begin to think in ways that are strange. We cannot help but think of Elijah. He was a very faithful prophet of God who predicted a drought and publicly demonstrated his faith in God to King Ahab on Mt. Carmel. He called on God to send fire down on an altar doused with water (I Kings 19:4-6). But when Jezebel threatened him later, he went out into the wilderness and sat down under a juniper tree and wanted to die (I Kings 19:4-6). The pressure got to him.

The disciple’s lack of faith was not in the fact that they went to the Lord; it was in the fact that they doubted He would help them.

According to **verse 24**, Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves and the wind and the waves obeyed Him. **Of course the wind and waves would obey Him, He is God!!!** The man in their boat was the God/man. The man traveling with us through life is the God/man.

Only God can speak to a storm and it will obey Him (Ps. 104:3-4; 107:23-30). In Acts 27:8-44, the Apostle Paul warned they would go into a horrible storm, which they did. Paul said no life would be lost and it wasn't, but Paul could not speak to the storm and have it obey him.

LESSON #5 – God's people should develop and demonstrate faith in Christ when in storms.
8:25

When the storm subsided, Jesus said to these disciples of His, "Where is your faith?" Your faith in Me is supposed to kick in in times of trouble.

Notice their response:

- 1) They were fearful.
- 2) They were amazed.
- 3) They were questioning Christ's identity.

Putting this in the context, what He is asking is did you guys really believe I would let you die out here in this lake? Did you really believe I would do nothing? That I would let you die? Don't you have any confidence in Me?

Actually there are four factual realities that should have caused them to trust Him and have confidence in Him:

Factual Reality #1 - They should have remembered what Christ asked them to do. **8:22**

Jesus initially asked these guys to take them to the other side of the Lake. I told you this before, but I heard Dr. Howard Sugden preach this text and he said they apparently forgot what He said. He said, "Let's go to the other side of the Lake" and they thought He said, "Let's all go out to the middle of the Lake and drown."

This is an important point to see. Solid faith comes from an accurate and precise knowledge of what the Word of God actually and literally says.

Factual Reality #2 - They should have remembered who Jesus Christ actually is.

They should have said wait a minute, this storm is no threat to us because the guy on this boat with us is God. He is not just anybody on this boat; this is God on this boat. There is no enemy or problem too big for Him.

Factual Reality #3 - They should have remembered Biblical prophecy.

Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 clearly predicted that the Messiah would not die by a boating accident. He would die on a cross. Faith is strengthened by accurately understanding Biblical prophecy.

I have known of believers who were panicked over the thought that we would have a nuclear war that they purchased an underground bunker. If they would have known Biblical prophecy, they would see that is not what will happen.

Factual Reality #4 - They should have remembered what they already had seen Christ do.

Think of what they had already seen Jesus Christ do. He had healed a paralyzed man, he had raised a dead man, he had commanded demons to do what He wanted them to do. If they would have remembered that, they would have had more faith.

In the storms of life, it is good to remember what we have seen God do.

Jesus Christ is the one Person who can calm your life, bless your life and restore God-honoring order to your life. Go to Him and you will see Him do in your life, what He did in this boat.