

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

Luke 8:22-25

Key Verse: 8:25

“Where is your faith?” he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

In today’s passage, Jesus and his disciples meet a fierce storm at sea. They were almost drowned. Our life is often compared to a voyage. We have to face many small and big storms. How can we overcome our storms in life? Jesus points to one thing by asking us the question, “Where is your faith?” Let us think about what this means.

First, “Let’s go over to the other side” (22-23). As this passage begins, Jesus and his disciples set out to have a quiet retreat in a remote location. They had been working hard to take care of the crowds of people who came to them day in and day out. They had no time for themselves. Jesus knew that his disciples needed a short vacation. On their way, however, they met an unexpected storm, and their vacation plan was frustrated. But in the stormy sea, Jesus revealed himself--who he really is--and taught them important spiritual lessons for the future leaders.

Training his disciples to raise them up to be spiritual leaders was the main focus of Jesus’ ministry. From the outset of his ministry, Jesus chose the Twelve and began to train them. Jesus had very busy daily life as the Messiah. Everywhere he went, a large crowd gathered and demanded his attention. Frequently he and his disciples did not even have time to eat (Mk 6:31). Because he spent so much time with the crowd, he could use only bits and pieces of time for his disciples. Yet, he was always mindful of them, teaching them spiritual lessons. By enduring many persecutions of the religious leaders, he taught them the way of the cross. Most of all, he helped them open their spiritual eyes to understand spiritual things, especially the secrets of the kingdom of God. At the same time, in the midst of his busy schedule, he found time to pray—to have a personal relationship with God. He would get up early in the morning and go to a solitary place to have a quiet time. His daily routine was quite ordinary, but it was full of grace and truth.

Look at verse 22. *One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and set out.* Jesus and his disciples were busy everyday in taking care of the people who came to them. Jesus knew that his disciples were on the verge of burning out. They needed a time to rest. They needed personal fellowship with him, away from the crowd. One day, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” What was on the other side? This sounds mysterious. But the disciples understood what he meant; it was a short vacation. There was no crowd on the other side of the lake. The twelve disciples were excited. They were happy to go on a vacation with Jesus for the first time. Immediately they began to shout, “Let’s go!”

The sea was calm as they began the boat ride. Soon Jesus and his disciples were in the middle of the sea. The gentle water of the sea splashed and sparkled along the boat under the moonlight. The sound of their rowing was smooth and rhythmical because some of them were seasoned fishermen. The boat was gliding on the calm water. It was going to be a perfect vacation, they thought.

What did Jesus do while they were enjoying the boat ride? Look at verse 23a. *As they sailed, he fell asleep.* Jesus was catching a nap in the stern of the boat. It was a rare moment of quiet peace for Jesus. Then something happened to disturb their voyage. Look at verse 23 again. *As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.*

Suddenly a squall came down on the lake. The Sea of Galilee is surrounded by plateaus on the west and great mountains on the east. Rivers flowing from the mountains create deep ravines. These ravines play the role of funnels, drawing down cold wind from the mountains and thus causing sudden storms. Storms on the lake were unpredictable.

Giant waves beat into the small boat, and water began to fill the bottom of it. The boat was being swamped. Some of the disciples were seasoned sailors on the lake. They knew every inch of the lake. They had braved many storms in the past. Using all their skills, they tried to steer the boat through the storm. But it did not work. They lost control. The waves began to dump a lot of water in the boat. They frantically bailed, but it was a losing battle. They were in danger of drowning. Suddenly, all the terrible stories they heard of the fishermen lost in the sea became real to them. Their vacation spirit was gone. They began to panic. Meanwhile, Jesus had fallen into a deep sleep. Can you imagine sleeping through a category 3 hurricane, with wind howling at 120 miles per hour? His disciples were in panic. They didn't know what to do in the life-and-death situation. But Jesus slept soundly despite the commotion around him. He remained calm. How can we remain calm in the midst of a storm? Let us find the answer to this question as we continue to study this passage.

Second, “Where is your faith?” (24-25) Look at verse 24. *The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”* Finally, the disciples remembered that Jesus was with them in the boat. It dawned on them that Jesus could help them. After all, they had seen how Jesus had done miraculous things such as healing a quadriplegic on the spot and raising a dead young man from his coffin. So they went to Jesus and registered their SOS or distress signal directly. It was their 911 call. What did Jesus do when they woke him up? *He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.* This was an amazing thing that the disciples experienced personally. *In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him”* (25b).

The most important lesson they learned from the experience was that Jesus is the Lord of the universe. It taught them who Jesus is. He is the Creator God. Jesus can control the nature. Jesus can control the winds and waves of the sea. No man ever rebuked the raging storms of the sea. But Jesus did and they obeyed him. Jesus is the

Creator God who has authority over the nature. Julius Caesar was a great conqueror. Once he met a storm on the voyage to a battle. He struggled hard to save his battleships and finally fell down from exhaustion. He was a great conqueror in history, yet he was a mere man before the angry nature. Human beings often become proud because of many things they have achieved through science and technology. But many times they are humbled by the nature. We heard the sad news that dozens of people were killed by a massive earthquake in Kyusue, Japan. We saw pictures of people with terrifying looks on their faces as they huddled on streets. Then just this morning, a stronger quake (7.8 magnitude) struck Ecuador, killing at least 77 people. We become helpless when we are struck by natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods. But to Jesus, hurricanes, even the category 5 ones, are not a big problem. Our God is a great God. Our God is the everlasting God. This event revealed that Jesus is the Creator God.

It is important for us to know that Jesus is the Lord God who created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." When we believe that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, he opens our spiritual eyes to see his kingdom and his righteousness. We can be truly happy, knowing that the Creator God is with us. John 1:3 says of Jesus: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." If we have faith in this Jesus, we don't have to be afraid even when storms of life rage around us. We can face the storms knowing that Jesus is with us in our life boat and he will help us to overcome the storms.

Jesus' disciples were living together with Jesus and traveling with him for quite some time. They sensed that Jesus was an extraordinary person when they saw his compassion and broken heart toward the thirsty and the sick. Yet they had not grasped the deity of Jesus--who Jesus really is. But when they saw Jesus rebuking the wind and the sea, they realized that Jesus is God who rules the heavens and the earth. *In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him"* (25). For the first time the disciples realized who Jesus really is.

Jesus had intended to have a retreat with his disciples so that he could explain more about the secrets of the kingdom of God. But the storm frustrated the plan. Instead, the storm became an opportunity for Jesus to train them. Jesus wanted to raise his disciples to be the future leaders for his people. They should be the men who could handle all difficult situations with courage and by faith in God. But when the sea became violent, they became fearful. They were overwhelmed by their human situation. Their fear showed that they had to grow in faith. Fear is inversely related to faith. When faith is lacking, fear becomes strong. When faith is strong, fear goes away. Fear is planted by Satan; courage comes from faith in Jesus.

Let us read verse 25a together. *"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples.* Jesus asked them the question, "Where is your faith?" He rebuked them for their lack of faith. He did not say to them, "Are you okay? That was some storm. I am sorry you had to go through the terrible storm." Instead he said, "Where is your faith?" The raging storm was not the real problem. Their lack of faith was. We must also hear the voice of

Jesus, “Where is your faith?” Do we have faith that Jesus is God who rules the heavens and nature? Do we have the reverent fear of God and fear nothing else in the world?

We all want to have a smooth sailing in our voyage. But the fact of life is that we have to face many small and big storms of life. Some people have to face the storm of a broken family. Some meet the storms of financial difficulty, health problem, job loss, school problem, and so on. Many college graduates become anxious about their uncertain future. No one’s life is without storms. In fact, life is about how to overcome storms.

But we don’t like storms in life. We want our life to be free of troubles. We even ask the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” when we face difficulties in life. Was it because the disciples had done something wrong that they met the storms? No. They were acting in obedience to Jesus’ command. In fact, if one of them had said, “No, I am not going to the other side,” he would have been spared of the storm. Then why did it happen? Did Jesus know that the storm would come? Absolutely! He is God. He is sovereign. He didn’t create the storm, but he knew about it. And he allowed his disciples to face it. Why? The Bible says that God allows his children to face trials in life so that they may become stronger. The Lord disciplines the one he loves (Heb 12:6). We must understand that God gives storms of life to those who love him. Sometimes those who work hard for the Lord expect a pleasant human condition in return. But we must remember that God disciplines those he loves through the storms of life. The storms of life are no accident. They are precisely God’s best love to each person.

In order to overcome the storms of life, we must discipline ourselves. Without discipline no one can be a useful man or woman of faith. Jesus is the best example. Hebrews 5:8-9 says, “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.” The Son of God had to face the biggest storm in life. It was to suffer and die on a cross in order to save terrible sinners like you and me. It was to obey God’s will for world salvation. How much more we need training to obey the Lord! To have faith in God in the midst of storms is not easy. To help and pray for proud young people is a hard thing for us to do. But we must know that this is what our Lord Jesus did. To follow Jesus as his disciples, we must do the same. Jesus didn’t promise an easy life for his disciples. He said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mk 8:34).

Jesus asked, “Where is your faith?” He wants us to have faith. What does it mean to have faith in God or to live by faith? It is easy for us to have theoretical faith, but we know that such faith means very little in overcoming our storms in life. Martha and Mary had faith in resurrection in theory, but they were inconsolable when their brother died, even though Jesus came to help them. So what does it mean to have faith? Once Billy Graham explained faith as he was preaching on the platform built in a football stadium. He said, “I am standing on this platform built by our carpenters. I have faith that it is strong to hold me. So I don’t have to be afraid.”

The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco was completed in 1937 after 4 years of difficult construction. The engineers and construction workers had to work on cables that were hung several hundred feet above the water. If they looked down, they felt dizzy. Their legs became wobbly. They were paralyzed with the fear of falling to the water and several of them did fall. Then the city officials decided to install safety nets to catch anyone who fell. Afterwards, the workers overcame their fear, knowing that there were safety nets under them. They had faith in the safe nets. Likewise, we Christians have a safety net in Jesus. We can walk confidently in times of good and bad, knowing that Jesus will catch us if we fall. We can trust him. This is faith. This is what Jesus wants us to have when he asked, "Where is your faith?"

When life throws us a curve ball, we can respond in two ways. We can kick and scream and curse, like many people do. Or we can put our trust in God and come out stronger by overcoming the trial by faith. Jesus asks each of us, "Where is your faith?" Jesus wants us to have faith in him as the Lord God. May God help us to have faith in Jesus our Lord so that we may overcome storms in life and render glory to God!