

Resting in the Storm

Luke 8:19-25

INTRODUCTION: The passage before us today is one of the most familiar in all of the Gospels - Jesus calming the storm.

CONTEXT: Remember that Jesus had progressively revealed who he was to the crowds. He was openly performing miracles. The Pharisees had mobilized and were working to eliminate him. So crowds are growing but also are his enemies.

TEXT: Luke 8:19–25 (ESV)

¹⁹ Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. ²⁰ And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.”

A few things you might discern from this passage:

1. **Jesus had brothers** - Four half-brothers —James, Joses, Simon, and Judas— are mentioned as the brothers of Jesus. (See Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3.)

Now that in itself is fascinating. Can you imagine having a big brother who is God? He is literally perfection incarnate. How many times do you think Mary said, “Why can’t you be more like Jesus?”

NOW - there is a chance that these were sons of Joseph from a previous marriage, but that is highly unlikely since there is no mention of it in the text.

What does that imply?

2. **Mary was not perpetually a virgin** - The Roman Catholics teach that Mary was perpetually a virgin, that she was immaculately conceived, and that she ascended into Heaven. We see none of those things in the text. We see that Mary was used by God to bring the Messiah into the World; she and her husband had for other boys by ordinary means. That is why we don’t refer to her as the Virgin Mary after the birth of Christ.
3. **Jesus’ brothers were slow to believe** - Which is understandable. Who would believe that the greatest man in all of history was your brother Bubba?

But that also makes Jesus relatable. It’s not uncommon for a man to be awakened to the reality of the Gospel and his family of origin not follow. As our Lord said, “A man’s enemies will at times be those of his own household.” Jesus understands what it is like for your family not to get the calling that is on your life.

4. **Joseph has passed away** - At this point, it appears that Joseph is no longer living. He has not been mentioned in the text in several chapters, and here we see Mary surrounded by her sons without her husband. That is why I suggested a couple of weeks ago that Jesus had a special place in his heart for widows.

So, we see Mary and the four brothers desiring to see Jesus. Why? We don't know, but many commentators believe they were concerned about Jesus and thought perhaps this was all getting out of hand. They hoped to reign him back in a bit.

This week, many of you will gather with extended family to celebrate Thanksgiving. I must warn you - if you are faithfully following Jesus Christ, serving through the church, giving money to the church, and sharing your faith with other people... some of your family are concerned... where will this all lead?

In fact, they are arranging a subtle intervention as you carve the turkey. They don't want you to be weird, they don't want you a fanatic, they want you to be NORMAL like everybody else.

Just remember, NORMAL is depressed, anxious, addicted, broke, driven by the fear of man, coalescing to the way of the world. Don't be normal. Be weird, root your faith in the ancient truths, stand before the fires of hell armed with a book, and say with Joshua, "Choose you this day who you will serve, as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord".

Notice how Jesus responded...

²¹ But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

We are all blood kin eventually, but some of you are from the other side of the family tree. Some trace your lineage back to the Far East, and you are of Asian ancestry. Some of you are of African descent, some Hispanic or native American. Nevertheless, if you know and follow Jesus Christ, if Jesus is the center of your life, I have more in common with you than I do with my close relatives who do not follow Christ by faith.

That is a good reminder as we go into the Holiday season. Blood is thicker than water, but Holy Spirit is thicker than both.

NOW, every Gospel writer ties these two stories together, Jesus' words about Spiritual family and the Storm on Gallilee. That is not an accident. There is something that connects these two stories.

²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out,

Now 7 of Jesus' Miracles happened around the water, the waves, and fish... why is that? Well, because 4 of the disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew) were fishermen. I think it is fair to mention that not a single one played golf. Just an observation :).

So, Jesus says, "Let us cross the sea to the other side". The King of the Universe, the very Creator Himself said, "Let us cross over". So that is divine fiat - they are going to cross over.

23 and as they sailed he fell asleep.

So there they are, sailing along, wind in their faces, rocked by the gentle waves... it's at the end of a busy season of ministry. Jesus dozes off. Take note of that - Jesus is so human that he needs a nap and so Divine that the wind will obey Him.

23b. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger.

The Sea of Galilee is located in the middle of a couple of mountain ranges, like a bowl surrounded by mountains. At night, as the hot air rises off the desert, it mingles with the cold air and sends great gusts of wind down on the sea. Julie and I have been there when the Sea of Galilee was churning a washing machine.

The fishing boats these men were in were not designed for rough waters. They were around 20ft long, and fairly shallow.

I have been on a lake in a boat far superior to the one they were in with my family when a great storm arose. My kids were terrified. They weren't sure we were going to make it back to shore. There is nothing like seeing your vessel hit the waves in such a way that a wave breaks over the bow of your boat. I had a working bilge pump, but they can only work so fast. We had life vests. The disciples did not.

24 And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

According to Mark's account, Peter added, "Don't you care that we are perishing"?

I find it interesting that the wind, the waves, the thunder, and the lightning could not awaken Jesus... but the cries of his disciples did. Never underestimate the power of prayer.

24b. And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm.

If you speak to the wind and it stops blowing, that might be a coincidence. But if you speak to the waves and they stop rolling...that is different. The picture here is a sudden, dramatic, calm.

²⁵ He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?”

I want us to focus on Jesus’ question to the disciples - “Where is your faith?”

That question is sandwiched between two FEARS. The first was a fear of the storm; the second was a fear of the Savior. Understanding Jesus’ question helps us understand something about the nature of TRUE FAITH.

BTW, the bible warns that there is a Genuine Faith that truly saves a person, then there is a counterfeit form of faith... it seems right but the end is death. So, it is vitally important that you understand and know that you have true faith.

What does true faith look like?

1. True Faith is Rooted in a Person, not an Experience.

The disciples were drawing conclusions about the Person of Jesus based on their experience of the Storm.

- **He must not know** - we must awaken Him and inform Him of our situation. They question His omniscience. Friend, he knew that storm was coming before water and wind existed.
- **He must not care** - I love that Mark included Peter’s question, “Don’t you care that we are perishing?”. That is human nature. We draw theological conclusions based on our experience and perspective. You see it after every natural disaster - where was God? Where was God on 9/11?

ILLUSTRATION: I heard about a great missionary with the Navigators whose son died in a tragic accident. He was brokenhearted and frankly confused. He had given his life caring for followers of Jesus Christ; then this happened to his son. In a moment of frustration, he prayed, “God, it seems like I have done a better job caring for your children than you have done caring for mine. Where were you when my son was dying?” He said, after a moment of silence, God spoke to his heart and said, “I was at the same place I was when my son was dying for yours”.

True Faith is more about saying “yes” to a person not simply a list of facts.

Romans 4:3 (ESV)

³ For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”

NOW, did Abraham know exactly how everything was going to play out? Not at all - but he knew God, and He trusted Him. Do you?

I have found that life is a series of storms followed by the ultimate storm. At the end of life, we face the storm of death, and we must step into the storm with faith. But to prepare us for that storm, God graciously gives us lesser storms... As the waves roll, and the thunder crashes... Jesus asks, "Where is your faith? Do you trust me?" Then comes the final storm - death itself, and all that matters is your answer to those questions - "Where is your faith? Do you trust me?"

ILLUSTRATION: Earlier this week, I was called to the bedside of Milt Crawford. Milt and his wife sat faithfully right there (halfway down to the right of the pulpit). He was one of the most generous, Godly men in this church. As we prayed together, he squeezed man's hand and praised God over and over. What was he saying? I don't know how this will end - but I will praise you in the storm, knowing that you will get me to the other side.

I don't know all of Mr. Crawford's story, but I can tell you this - that man has faced storms before. You won't face the ultimate storm with praise unless you have discovered that the Lord is faithful through many lesser storms.

Faith is Rooted in a Person, not an Experience....

2. True Faith is Accented by Godly Fear

Just as there is a kind of faith that has no power, there is also a kind of fear that is very powerful.

There is fear that we should drive out of our hearts. There is also a fear we should cultivate in our hearts.

Solomon tells us in Proverbs 29:25 (ESV)

²⁵ The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe.

The fear of man is one of the most dangerous threats to your faith in all of human existence. It paralyzes you.

This is the fear that gripped Peter when Jesus was arrested. Suddenly, when a little girl said she recognized Peter as a disciple, he was denying Christ with a curse. Why? He was trapped in the fear of man!

The fear of man - is why political leaders don't take a stand.

The fear of man - is why preachers shy away from the hard truths.

The fear of man - is why parents will not say no to their kids and get them in church.

The fear of man - is why teachers embrace worldly ideologies and indoctrinate kids.

The fear of man - is why men don't share the gospel with their work associates.

The fear of man - is a snare.

What delivers us from the fear of man? The fear of God.

Jesus himself said - Matthew 10:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

True faith is accented by a sense of fear. The same fear that gripped the hearts of the disciples when they heard Jesus command the wind and the waves.

• Isaiah was gripped by this fear - Isaiah 6:3–5 (ESV)

³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

You see, TRUE FAITH recognizes in the midst of a crisis that there is always a greater crisis.

Romans 1:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Psalms 7:11–13

¹¹ God is a righteous judge, and a God who is angry with the wicked every day. ¹² If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; ¹³ he has prepared for him his deadly weapons, making his arrows fiery shafts.

Solomon the wise, when he had considered all of the issues of life said, **Ecclesiastes 12:13 (ESV)** ¹³ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

A true fear of God will deliver you from the fear of man, and it will accent your faith properly.

3. True Faith Learns to Rest in the Storm

Let me show you something fascinating. Turn to the book of Acts...

Acts 12:1–7 (ESV)

¹ About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. ² He killed James the brother of John with the sword, ³ and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread.

So James is executed, the Jews are happy so Herod arrests Peter, no doubt intending to do the same thing to Peter.

4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. 6 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, **Peter was sleeping between two soldiers**, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison.

What is this? Peter, the same Peter who trembled before a slave girl... now, sleeping on the very night he was to be executed.... Sleeping soundly...in the midst of a storm.

7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands.

Apparently, Peter was sleeping so deeply that an angel arriving on the scene was not enough to wake him.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: Don't be distressed if you are not there yet. You will get there. It doesn't happen overnight. But rather, storm by storm.

Like David, when you face Goliath, you have developed a spiritual resume. You recognize that if God was faithful with the Lion, and God was faithful with the Bear, God can be trusted with this uncircumcised Philistine.

Besides, if you fold in the day of danger - you will have to face God at the end of the day.

ILLUSTRATION: When I was a boy, my dad told me - if I find out you are a bully and start a fight with the other boys, you will have to deal with me when you get home and it won't be fun. But if I find out you let the other boys push you around and bully you - you will have to face me when you get home, and that won't be fun either.

So I learned to never be a bully, but also not to tolerate a bully. I didn't win every fight. But I knew that even if I came home with a black eye, my dad knew I stood up for myself. And Franky, I cared more about his opinion of me than that of my peers.

Not only because I did have a reverential fear of my dad - but I also loved my dad and he loved me. And Perfect love casts out fear.

Put your faith in a person more than circumstance...
Allow Godly fear to accent your faith...

And as life goes on... you will learn to rest in the midst of the storm.