"Where is Your Faith?"

(Luke 8:22-25)

Introduction

- There's an old saying that goes something like this: "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." It's true, people talk about weather on a regular basis. But all we can do is talk about it. Weather is a regular topic in daily conversations, and a staple in the daily news. Many people habitually read the weather reports every day, and some people are emotionally affected by the weather every day. But no one can do anything to change or affect the weather in any way.
  - ✓Illust: When we first moved to North Bend, we found out that the topic of weather was a big deal to many people. One person summed it up this way when he said, "The weatherman on the southern Oregon coast has the easiest job in the world. Every day the forecast is the same: '50-65 degrees with winds 5-15 mph; partly cloudy with chances of rain; partial clearing and periods of sunshine after morning fog.'" The other thing I heard about North Bend weather is, "If you don't like the weather, just wait five minutes because it will change."
- Obviously, the reason why no one does anything about the weather is because nobody can do anything about the weather! The best anyone can do is predict (forecast) the weather, and even with all our amazing technology and scientific knowledge oftentimes our predictions are but educational guesses as to what the weather will do.

  The truth is, only God can create or control the weather. He does not just accurately forecast the weather, His causes the weather. God alone has the power to create a storm, to control a storm, and to calm a storm. As the sovereign Creator, God unequivocably and unapologetically declares Himself to be sovereign over all creation.

  Gen 7:4 ~ "For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground."

  Job 38:8-11 ~ "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, [9]when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, [10]and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, [11]and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?"

  Ps 78:26 ~ "[The LORD] caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind"

  Ps 135:6-7 ~ "Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. [7]He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightnings for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses."

  Isa 45:7 ~ "I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things."

  Jonah 1:4 ~ "But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up."

- This is paramount for us to understand as we study Luke 8:22-25.

  Luke 8:22-25 ~ "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, [23]and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. [24]And they went and woke him, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a 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?'"

➢This short (four-verse) narrative is widely known and depicted in many drawings and paintings (the most famous is Rembrandt's "Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee", completed in 1633). It is important to note that this is not a parable (a fictional story to illustrate a spiritual truth). This really happened! It is recorded in all three synoptic gospels (Matt.8:18-27; Mk.4:31-35; Lk.8:22-25). This story showcases Jesus divine authority as the Son of God. In fact, starting with this narrative, Luke recorded several miracles that Jesus performed to prove that He is the Messiah, the Son of God: His divine power and authority over 1] nature (8:22-25), 2] demons (8:26-39), 3] disease (8:40-48), and 4] death (8:49-56).
➢This narrative unfolds in three scenes.

1. The calm before the storm (vs.22-23a)

➢After teaching on and by the Sea of Galilee (in and around Capernaum, Galilee – on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee), Jesus wanted to escape the crowd (Matt.8:18). So, *"he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side of the lake'"* (vs.22). Although the Sea of Galilee is often referred to as a "sea" it much more resembles a lake for our understanding. For it is only approximately 13 miles long (north to south) and 8 miles wide (east to west). This fresh-water lake is fed from the little Jordan River that flows down from Mount Hermon at the north point of Galilee. At the surface, this small lake is 680 feet below sea level.

Jesus and His disciples, *"and other boats were with Him"* (Mk.4:36), sailed (from the northwest shore) to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee *"to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee"* (Lk.8:26; the town and surrounding area of Gerasa).

➢Somewhere between the northwest shore and the eastern shore, Jesus *"fell asleep"* (vs.23). Many people speculate why Jesus as sleeping. Some believe He was testing His disciples. Some believe He was showing that He was not afraid of the storm. Some (ridiculously) believe Jesus was illustrating (reenacting) the story of Jonah (Jon.1:5). I think it was because He was tired – exhausted from all of His teaching and miracles (*"when evening had come"*; Mk.4:35). The further evidence for this would be that Jesus slept even during the storm (see vs.24).

This reveals the humanity of Jesus Christ. As God, the preincarnate Son of God had perfect knowledge of all things. The Son did not become flesh to "find out" what it meant to be human, but to physically experience humanity (see Phil.2:5-8; Heb.2:14-18; 4:14-16).

✓Illust: "Humanness involves undergoing, not just encountering, what mankind commonly experiences. From the start of his incarnate life until the end of his earthly journey, Jesus experienced birth (Matt.2:1), growth (Lk.2:40), exhaustion (Jn.4:6), sleep (Mk.4:38), hunger (Matt.4:2; 21:18), thirst (Jn.4:7; 19:28), anger (Mk.3:5), sorrow (Matt.26:37), weeping (Lk.19:41; Jn.11:35), compassion (Matt.9:36), love (Mk.10:21; Jn.11:3, 5, 36), joy (Lk.10:21; Jn.15:11), temptation (Matt.4:1; Heb.4:15), prayer (Matt.14:23; Heb.5:7), suffering (Matt.16:21; Lk.22:44; Heb.2:18), and death (Mk.15:37-39; Lk.23:44-46; Jn.12:24, 33; Rom.5:6, 8; Phil.2:8). … Jesus was, indeed, truly and completely human" (*Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*; John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., 265).

➢This would not have been a very long boat ride (again, the Sea of Galilee was only about 8 miles wide). Yet, during that time, not only did Jesus fall asleep but the calmness of the sea went away.

2. The danger during the storm (vs.23b-24)

➢It is important to note that some of Christ's apostles (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) were professional fishermen – before they chose to follow Christ (Lk.5:11) – who made their living on the Sea of Galilee. They were neither inexperienced nor squeamish about being in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. So, they were not overreacting to the perceived threat of the storm.

✓Illust: I still remember my first (and only) time in "a storm" at sea. In 1990, I spent the summer with missionaries in the Philippines. One particular Sunday, as we were traveling by boat between the southern islands where I was supposed to preach, we came upon a sudden storm. The storm approached us quickly like an ominous black sheet, and instantly changed our calm and enjoyable trip into a turbulent and alarming one. Within moments, everyone on board was drenched, and I for one was more than a bit concerned about how we were going to get to shore – if at all!

Two things vividly stand out in my mind. The first is the Filipino man who sat next to me. He appeared to be a bit inebriated, and consequently did not seem to be bothered by – or even aware of – the perilous storm all around us. He just kept staring at me, with a mischievous grin, and every time I looked at him, he shouted, "You wanna buy a chicken?" I'm not sure if he was just a relentless salesman, or if that happened to be the only English he knew. The only reason why I would want to buy chickens in that moment is if they could be used as flotation devices. Either way, he was great comic relief in an otherwise tense situation.

The second thing I remember was the captain. Assuming, he had experience in these sort of conditions (certainly more than me), I kept looking at him to gauge the seriousness of our predicament (if he was calm, I was calm; if he jumped overboard, so would I). But through it all, with eyes his fixed upon our destination, the captain remained composed and apparently confident. While he navigated the storm, I prayed. And by God's grace, we arrived at our destination – soaked to the bone, but alive and well. This storm, however, was nothing compared to the storm that Jesus and the disciples experienced.

➢In verse twenty-three we read that *"a windstorm came down on the lake"* (vs.23). This *"windstorm"* (*lailaps anemos*; lit. "a storm of wind" [KJV]; "a violent windstorm" [NET]; "a fierce gale of wind" [NAS]). Mark referred to it as *"a great windstorm arose"* (Mk.4:37; *megas anemos*). Matthew wrote: *"there arose a great storm on the sea"* (Matt.8:24; *megas seismos*) – leading some scholars to conclude that seismic activity (an earthquake) was also involved (*"raging waves"*; Lk.8:24). Clearly, this was no mild nor ordinary storm – a violent wind from above, and perhaps a quaking from below.

➢The severity of this storm caused the boats to be *"filling with water"* and everyone to be *"in danger"* (vs.23; *kindyneuō*). As is true of the English word "danger", the Greek word implies imminent and deadly peril. The disciples, many of whom were experienced fisherman, knew that their lives were in jeopardy. They woke Jesus up *"saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!'"* (vs.24; "perishing" [*apollymi*], to be destroyed or to die ["we are about to die" (NET); "we are going to die" (HCSB)]; Jn.3:16). The "double vocative" (*"Master, Master"*; *epistatēs, epistatēs*) is an emphatic and desperate plea. According to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, this was not the only thing the disciples said in the midst of the chaos and peril:

Matt 8:25 ~ "… 'Save us, Lord; we are perishing [*apollymi*].'"

Mark 4:38 ~ "… 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing [*apollymi*]?'"

➢Common theme? "We are perishing!" Emotions were extremely high. Visibility was probably next to nothing (remember it was at night, Mk.4:35). The sound of the storm was undoubtedly loud. Death seemed imminent, and certain. And Jesus is asleep. Or, at least, He *was*.

Jesus *"awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm"* (vs.24). Amazingly, He merely *"rebuked"* (vs.24; *epitimaō*; to command or admonish) the wind and the waves. Jesus reprimanded nature. He commanded the weather. This could be comical if it were not so serious and sacred.

Luke 4:33-36 ~ "And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, [34]'Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God.' [35]But Jesus rebuked [*epitimaō*] him, saying, 'Be silent and come out of him!' And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm."

Luke 4:38-39 ~ "And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. [39]And he stood over her and rebuked [*epitimaō*] the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them."

Luke 4:41 ~ "And demons also came out of many, crying, 'You are the Son of God!' But he rebuked [*epitimaō*] them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ."

Mark 4:39 ~ "And he awoke and rebuked [*epitimaō*] the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace [*siōpaō*; stop making noise]! Be still [*phimoō*; stop moving]!' …"

- With just the authority of His will (His Word) Jesus calmed the storm. He *"rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm"* (vs.24). Both Matthew and Mark record that it was *"a great calm"* (Matt.8:26; Mk.4:39). At the command of Christ, the storm (and the effects of the storm) immediately and completely went away. The storm did not dissipate slowly. The noise was silenced. The sea was flat like glass.
- As His sleeping clearly displayed His humanity, Jesus' authority of nature convincingly displayed His deity.

3. The fear after the storm (vs.25)

- It is perhaps surprising to read that Jesus gently chided His disciples: *"He said to them, 'Where is your faith?'"* (vs.25). Matthew recorded that Jesus accused the disciples of having *"little faith"* (8:26), and Mark more sharply added that Jesus asked, *"Have you still no faith?"* (Mk.4:40). To whatever degree, and to various degrees, the disciples were struggling to put their whole faith in Jesus Christ.

  It is important to note the difference between "saving faith" and "trusting faith." They are distinct but inseparable. It is possible to have a strong saving faith and a weak trusting faith. Simply put, saving faith is believing in God and trusting faith is believing God. It is possible to believe in the person and work of Christ, and struggle to believe in the provision and promises of Christ. A Christian can fully believe that Jesus is the Christ, and yet still struggle with fears, anxieties, and doubt (Matt.6:25-34; Phil.4:6).

  Pain, sorrows, and trials have a way of stress-testing our faith. They can expose the cracks in our spiritual foundation, the chinks in our spiritual armor, but it can also expose the falsity (or façade) of one's Christian profession (Lk.8:13). It is relatively easy to trust in Jesus when life is tranquil and pleasant; peaceful and prosperous. But when storms arise – when our life or livelihood is in jeopardy – our faith can seemingly wane, as our lack of faith is exposed. Ultimately, this should cause our faith to grow.

James 1:2-3 ~ "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3]for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness."

Dan 3:16-18 ~ "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. [17]If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. [18]But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.'"

Mark 9:24 ~ "Immediately the father of the child [who was demon-possessed] cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'"

- The measure, purity, and/or strength of the disciples faith was being tested. They were following Christ, but they were struggling to fully trust Christ. Can you relate? While they had seen Jesus perform countless miracles for others, they struggled to believe that Jesus could/would perform a miracle for them. Similarly, we can read all about the miracles Christ performed – we can read all about His sovereign authority over nature, disease, demons, and even death – and yet struggle to believe that He can deliver us from, or see us through, a trial.

➢After all this, the disciples *"were afraid, and they marveled"* (vs.25). They were *"afraid"* (Matt.8:26; *deilos*; timid, cowardly) of the storm, and now they were even more *"afraid"* (*phobeomai*) of the Savior. They were afraid during the storm, and they were terrified after the storm.

Mark 4:39-41 ~ "And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. [40]He said to them, 'Why are you so afraid [*deilos*]? Have you still no faith?' [41]And they were filled with great fear [*phobeomai megas phobos*] …"

➢They had never seen anything like this before. They said to one another, *"Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"* (vs.25). The phrase *"Who then is this?"* (vs.25; Mk.4:) could loosely translated, "Who can this be?" (HCSB)? Clearly, Jesus was not like any other man. In his Gospel, Matthew used a similar but different expression to convey what the disciples were thinking:

Matt 8:27 ~ "And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of [*potapos*] man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?'"

> **Luke 7:39** ~ "Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of [*potapos*] woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.'"
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> **1 John 3:1** ~ "See what kind of [*potapos*] love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. …"

➢The disciples were asking the right question. Who then is Jesus? Clearly, possessing the authority over the elements of nature, Jesus is God.

Psalm 89:8-9 ~ "O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you? [9]You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them."

Job 42:5-6 ~ "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; [6]therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Is.6:5; Lk.5:8)

➢While Jesus (the incarnate Son of God) was fully and truly human, He also was fully and truly God (Jn.1:1-3, 14; Col.1:19; 2:9). Jesus was completely like us and, at the same time, completely unlike us (see Heb.2:14-18; 4:14-16). Later, in the midst of a different storm, the disciples knew exactly who Jesus was – what sort of man He was!

Matt 14:22-33 ~ "Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. [23]And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, [24]but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. [25]And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. [26]But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, 'It is a ghost!' and they cried out in fear. [27]But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.'

[28]And Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' [29]He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. [30]But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, 'Lord, save me.' [31]Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?' [32]And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. [33]And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God'" (also Mk.6:45-52; Jn.6:16-21)

Matt 16:13-17 ~ "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' [14]And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' [15]He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' [16]Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (also Mk.8:27-30; Lk.9:18-21)

Conclusion

- It is important to note the difference between "hopelessness" and "helplessness" because it is easy to conflate the two. Oftentimes, being helpless can cause us to feel hopeless. This feeling is seated in ignorance and/or arrogance.

  Ultimately, we feel helpless because we are helpless. As humans, we are often helpless – there are an infinite number of things we simply cannot do. But that does not mean that there is no hope. For example, the disciples were utterly helpless in the midst of the storm. They literally had no ability to calm the storm or to save their own lives. But that did not mean that they had no hope.

  Life is hopeless without God. The only true hope that we have in this life is in God and comes from God. God is never helpless (Ps.115:3; Lk.1:37; 18:27); He is never ignorant or wrong (Is.46:9-10; 1Jn.3:20), and He never lies (Num.23:19; Heb.6:18; Tit.1:2).

  Heb 6:17-20 ~ "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, [18]so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. [19]We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, [20]where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (see 1Pet.1:3, 13)

- While God has never promised to save us from every "storm" in life, or "stormy" circumstance of life, He has promised to save us from the most perilous storm in life – His just and eternal wrath. We are utterly helpless to save ourselves. There is literally nothing we can do to merit God's salvation or to cleanse ourselves from sin. We are in desperate need of God's saving grace (Rom.5:1-2; Gal.2:16; Eph.2:1-10).

  Rom 3:21-24 ~ "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it – [22]the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: [23]for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24]and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"

  Rom 6:23 ~ "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

  1 John 5:11-12 ~ "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. [12]Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

  John 3:16-18, 36 ~ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. [17]For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. [18]Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. … [36]Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

- Ultimately, the story of Jesus calming the storm shows (proves) that He is God – the incarnate Son of God. Jesus is the one and only Son of God, and the one and only Savior from God. Through His sacrificial and substitutionary death on the cross, Jesus paid the full penalty for the sins of all who would ever believe. God has promised to save all those who – by faith – receive Jesus Christ as their one and only Savior. Salvation is by God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

  Jesus' question to His disciples is for all of us: *"Where is your faith?"* (vs.25). Hopefully, your faith – both your saving faith and your trusting faith – is in Jesus Christ!

[This sermon was preached at Skyline Baptist Church by Pastor David Woodruff on November 1, 2026]