

Where is Your Faith?

E.T.S.: After entering a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee, a storm threatened Jesus and the disciples.

E.S.S.: Though our faith is challenged when storms arise, we are inspired to place our faith in Jesus.

Christ Follower: Put your faith in Jesus as you face storms, rather than succumbing to fear.

Christ Seeker: Put your faith in Jesus for the salvation of your soul.

Introduction

Please open your Bible to Luke chapter eight.

Illustration

Have you ever experienced a sudden, unexpected storm?

I feel silly asking the question because most of us here in the Rocky Mount area did recently.

Did you know that the deadliest weather-related natural disaster in American history was, essentially, an unexpected storm? On September 8, 1900, a level-four hurricane made landfall

at a largely uninformed, unsuspecting, and unconcerned Galveston, Texas. Isaac Cline, the local forecaster and section director for the National Weather Service at the time, wrote about the tragedy in his official report you can still read through the National Weather Service Heritage. Just hours before landfall, warnings started going out. It was too late. Many could not escape, and some simply chose to ignore the late-coming warnings. Isaac, himself, thought his home strong enough. He, along with his family and about 50 others who sought his home for refuge, attempted to weather the storm there. Only 18 of the over 50 survived. In his official report, completed some two weeks following the hurricane, Isaac reported the death toll to be at least 6,000 with a maximum estimate of 20,000.

Can you imagine, or identify with, the fear that people going through that ordeal must have had?

If you can identify with it, it's because you've gone through something similar yourself.

Introduction

Jesus's disciples certainly could identify. In Luke 8, following Jesus's teaching the multitude in parables, we read this account in Luke 8:22-25.

Bible

(22) Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. (23) But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of

wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. (24) And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. (25) And he said unto them, Where is your faith? 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.

Luke 8:22-25 - KJV

Explanation

Jesus entered a ship with the disciples, and He suggested that they sail to the other side. So, the disciples set out. During the journey, Jesus fell asleep before a sudden, unexpected storm blew in.

Pastor Tony Evans, who visited Israel, wrote that his guide shared that the sea's location in the Jordan Rift allows storms to blow in with little to no warning. One scholar pens that the Sea of Galilee is capable of producing storms violent enough to destroy a boat like what Jesus and the disciples would have used (Teach the Text).

The disciples, some of whom were experienced on the water, were terrified.

Is it any wonder?

Luke reports that they were filled with water and in jeopardy. *Jeopardy*, in this text, means to be in danger or run a risk.

Matthew records, "that the ship was covered with waves" (*King James Version*, 1769/2009, Matthew 13:24). Having been an eyewitness and participant of these events, I imagine he remembered it well.

While they grew more and more scared, Jesus continued to sleep.

Eventually, the disciples woke Him with fearful cries.

- "Master, master, we perish" (*King James Version*, 1769/2009, Luke 8:24).
- "Lord, save us: we perish" (*King James Version*, 1769/2009, Matthew 13:25).
- "Master, carest thou not that we perish" (*King James Version*, 1769/2009, Mark 4:38)?

That last one in Mark's account hurts. It's as if they said, "Are you even interest? Are you even concerned?"

Jesus rose up, calmed the storm, and spoke to His disciples. Listen to the question He asked: "Where is your faith" (*King James Version*, 1769/2009, Luke 8:25).

Quote

Jesus did not say, 'Wow, what a storm.' Instead, He asked, 'Where is your faith?' The storm could not disturb Jesus, but the unbelief of His disciples could and did (David Guzik).

Explanation

THAT demonstrates how this account connects with us.

We may never go out on a body of water in a ship and encounter a storm; however, we may encounter situations in life where we feel helpless and/or hopeless. In this way, the disciples' storm encounter relates to us. I wonder, based on my encounters with storms, would Jesus ask me, "Where is your faith?".

As we think about the question for ourselves, consider the aspects of the text.

1...Our encounters with storms

Explanation

For the disciples, THIS storm was literally a weather-related storm. It was a blast of wind, thick darkness, lightning and thunder, heavy rain, and choppy waves that threatened the boat and their lives. It left them desperate. They were helpless and growing hopeless.

Application

What storms have you encountered?

Let's define storms. Storms are any situation, circumstance, or experience that you didn't choose or plan for that leave you helpless and, potentially, hopeless.

- It could be a health-related problem,
- a relational breakdown,
- a financial hole,
- a job loss,

- or an unexpected piece of news.

Have you had experiences like these?

Illustration

I vividly remember two times of job uncertainty while at a previous ministry. In both cases, there were serious questions and considerations about our future, and how I would take care of my family.

We've experienced pregnancy concerns and loss.

We have faced the "is it cancer?" question.

Application

When you feel helpless and grow more and more hopeless, you are right where the disciples were when they faced the storm.

What was true of the storm they faced?

A...Storms occur even in places of obedience.

Explanation

Jesus went into the boat with His disciples, and He suggested that they cross over to the other side. It was while following Jesus that the disciples encountered this storm.

Application

We naturally think that the right path is the easy path.

Isn't that true?

Have you ever had an experience where you believed God closed a door or you went through a wrong door because you encountered difficulty?

You may be going along in life and, suddenly, you're in the middle of a storm. Do you think, "What did I do wrong?"

The presence of a storm does not mean that you are in a place of disobedience. The right way is not always the easy way. Just because you encounter a storm does not mean that you have done something wrong or that you have gone a wrong way.

B...Storms are not a reply to faith, but they reveal faith.

Explanation

Did the disciples encounter the storm because of a lack in their faith, or did the storm reveal a lack in their faith?

The disciples did not encounter the storm because they failed to trust, as if it were a punishment; however, the encounter with the storm showed that there was growth needed in their lives.

After He woke, rebuked the sea, and calmed the storm, Jesus questioned the disciples, "Where

is your faith?"

Of the disciples' response and Jesus's question, one writer wrote that "difficult circumstances – storms, so to speak – are not evidence of unbelief. Unbelief is the rejection of a promise or a command of God relevant to a particular situation" (David Guzik).

Was there a promise or command that the disciples had or received for this situation?

When He suggested that they go on the sea in the boat, what did Jesus say?

He said, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake" (*King James Version*, 1769/2017, Luke 8:22). Jesus told them that they would go to the other side. If He said that, then that would be the result of their journey; therefore, they could not go down in a storm in the middle of the sea.

Application

Experiencing storms is not a matter of faith. In other words you do not experience storms because you have no faith or weak faith, while others who have faith or great faith do not experience storms. However, storms will reveal any weaknesses or gaps in faith.

- Everyone encounters storms, regardless of the level of faith they have.
- Storms will reveal the gaps or weaknesses in the faith of everyone.
- That gap or weakness in the faith reveals rejection of a promise or command of God that is relevant to the situation.

2...Our encounters with the Savior

Explanation

Think about the experiences of the disciples. At this point, they had been with Jesus for some time. Reflect on what they have experienced with Jesus during their time with Him. If we start in Luke 6, where Jesus officially called the twelve to follow Him that they might be His apostles, thinkk about what we have learned that they had seen: Jesus preached God's kingdom agenda, He healed the centurion's servant from a distance, He raised a widow's son to life, He healed people of demon oppression and possession and infirmities, and He taught the Word of God with authority and power. This is not all of the experiences they had with Jesus, only the ones recorded in the Gospel according to Luke from the time of their official call. Yet, that's a lot! Still, they struggled with faith.

Application

However, it is not nearly as much as we have encountered Jesus, and we struggle with faith. So, let's see more about their encounter with the Savior and reflect on our own.

A...The Savior's Presence (vv. 22 & 24)

Explanation

Jesus was there! He was in the boat! They could go to Him at any moment!

Quote

"This account shows the abiding care Jesus has for His people. 'There are many

Christians today who seem to think the boat is going down! I am tired of the wailing of some of my friends who take that view. The boat cannot go down. Jesus is on board”

(Morgan; as cited in David Guzik).

Application

Have you ever had that response to things?

It's natural, isn't it?

However, if you are God's child, Jesus is in the boat! He's there. He's here. He is always near enough for you to get to Him when you want to get to Him!

B...The Savior's Power (v. 24)

Explanation

What power did the storm have in the face of Jesus's presence and power?

None!

Application

Does Jesus still have that same effective power today?

He sure does!

Conclusion

Christ Follower: Put your faith in Jesus as you face storms, rather than succumbing to fear.

Christ Seeker: Put your faith in Jesus for the salvation of your soul.