

The Most Excellent Way, First Baptist Church, Panama City

“Overcoming Worry and Fear”

Part 3 - “Faith and Fear”

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Mark 4:35-41 - On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

Our story begins at the end of a very productive day in the life of Jesus and His disciples. The disciples spent all day listening to His teaching and believing it even when they did not totally understand it. Afterwards He gathered them together to as a tutor would his students and privately explained more clearly the parable of the soils and shared with them other parables.

It had been a remarkable day of teaching and healing, but as remarkable as the day was, it would not end without a storm. We find in the Christian life that intermingled with great successes there will also be great difficulties. Pentecost was followed by persecution; Simon Peter's sermon was followed by his imprisonment; Stephen's bold defense was followed by him being stoned to death. And so it was with the disciples that a calm day of service with Jesus was met with a storm that tested their faith. In fact, it left so little of it that Jesus said to them, **"Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"**

As we read the gospels, we can find so many things that we can learn about Jesus and so many things that we can learn about ourselves. We find the unlimited power of Jesus and we find how limited we are on our own without Him. In fact, Jesus said, **"that without Me, you can do nothing."** I sometimes wonder why after hearing that truth we would ever head out on our own again to try and accomplish anything without Him.

Charles Spurgeon said, "Remember that we have no more faith at any time than we have in the hour of our testing. All that will not bear to be tested is mere confidence in our flesh. Fair-weather faith is no faith at all." We'll see in this story how all things are going well, and all things appear like they will continue to go well...then all of the sudden, out of nowhere comes a

storm. Something is pushed on the disciples that causes them to fear. It was something they would never have hoped for and something they had not prepared for.

This story gives us great insight to overcome fear and worry. This story teaches us that a lack of faith can initiate fear. Once again, we have a Biblical example of a spiritual problem that gives us the solution for that problem.

Several things that we see in this story:

1. **Verses 35 & 36 - An Intentional Decision** - On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

According to this verse, Jesus led them into the storm; it was His plan to "cross over to the other side." In this life we will always have our storms, some may be more intense than others, but we will ALL have our storms. Some He helps us avoid and guides us around, some He leads us through, and some we create on our own.

Our first initial response to the storms of life should be to take an honest look at our own life before we begin to look around. In other words, it would do us well to look from within before we begin to look from without.

Psalm 139:23,24 - Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Job 31:6 - let God weigh me with honest scales, that He may know my integrity.

Psalm 19:12 - Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.

Psalm 26:2 - Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart.

Jeremiah 17:10 - I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

Lamentations 3:40 - Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the LORD;

All the previous verses with the exception of one (Jer. 17:10) we see people initiating their opportunity to allow God to examine them from the inside out. In Jer. 17:10 we see the truth of the Lord's ability to do the examination that we ask Him to do.

The Application:

- We are sometimes reluctant to take this course of action when experiencing a storm simply because we do not want the answers that we might find.
- Whenever God reveals our personal responsibility for the cause of the storm, He will always provide a plan to help us make the proper decisions to walk us through.
- When the storm is self-inflicted, and we choose to ignore our responsibility we only extend the length of the storm and/or make it worse.
- Whether self-inflicted or not, storms can strengthen our faith in the Lord and bring us closer to the Lord.

2. Verse 37 - A Sudden Storm - And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

To have a better understanding of this storm we need to have a better understanding of the region in which it took place. The Sea of Galilee lies in a deep hollow, much below the level of the ocean, and in the sides of the cliffs and hills which shut it in, there are valleys and openings which act as funnels which blasts cold air down from the mountains often all of the sudden. When the time of storm is really on, the sea is not tossed about like an ordinary open sea but is heaved up and almost hurled out of its bed by down-driving and twisting whirlwinds! No sailor knew which way the wind would blow except that it blew all ways at once and particularly downwards—as if, with a direct downdraft from Heaven, it blew vessels into the water—and soon, changing its course, lifted them into the air!

We must keep in mind that they were doing what they were told to do. They were in the center of the will of God.

1 Peter 4:12-16 - Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

3. Verse 38 - An False Assumption - But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

The most unreasonable thing in the world that we can do is to doubt that God cares for us! We need to consider; their fears were opposed to their experience and were inconsistent with their observation. They had seen Jesus heal the sick and feed the multitude, but somehow in the middle of the storm they failed to consider what Jesus had done in the past that could have provided a great deal of strength and courage in the presence.

John 16:33 - These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

James 1:2,3 - My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

Look what they said and then look at verse 36 again.....that WE perish. What about the boats that were in greater danger than they were that did not have Jesus in their boat? Do not miss the fact that they were in even smaller boats. Could it be that there are times, as bad as we have it, others may have it worse than we do?

4. **Verses 39 & 40 - A Powerful Solution - Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"**

What calmed the storm? The same thing that calmed the storm would calm their fears, His word.

We do not need to look for a feeling when all we need is a word that will then be accompanied by a feeling...Peace be still. God can and does speak to His children the same way He can speak to the storm, directly. We see that their challenge was attributed to their lack of faith and/or the absence of their faith. We have a Biblical example of the importance of knowing the Word of God so that we can apply the Word of God to conquer our fears.

Psalm 46:10 - Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

John 14:27 - Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The Application:

- Memorize scripture that speaks to your worry and fear and speak these truths when you are experiencing worry and fear.
- Your faith will increase when you experience the power of God's word in these various experiences.
- Always remember that what God has done, He can do.

5. Verse 41 - A Speechless Response - And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

We cannot neglect to see how it started and how it ended.

Mark 4:35 - And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

Mark 5:1 - And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

Jesus does not want us to pass out; He wants us to pass over!

Philippians 1:6 - Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;