

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

Luke 8:22-25

Intro: The account of this miracle is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels: Matt. 8:23-27; Mark 4:26-31; and here in Luke's Gospel. This speaks of its importance.

The setting: Both Mark and Luke place this event between the Lord's teaching of the parables which we find in Matt. 13, but Matthew placed it earlier. And so it seems that we can take Mark and Luke as giving us its right place historically. We must assume that Matthew had another reason for placing it earlier.

So the Lord had just finished a busy and exhausting day of teaching. We know that He was tired from the fact that He fell asleep in the ship. But we also know that it must have been early in the evening when they arrived on the other side of the Sea of Galilee because the Lord continued His ministry. How long it took them to cross the Sea of Galilee, we do not know.

This miracle is interesting from a number of standpoints, and I would like to consider it with you from those different angles.

For example, there is much to learn about guidance from this miracle. We can also learn several important things about the Lord from this miracle. And since the knowledge of Christ is very important for our spiritual growth, this miracle becomes extremely important when we look at what the miracle teaches us about the Lord. And then I would like to look at this miracle as a lesson in faith. I believe that all of these can be very profitable for each one of us in our walk with the Lord.

And so, let us begin with:

I. GUIDANCE.

If Mark and Luke are right in giving us the setting of this miracle (and I believe that they are), the Lord had been teaching in a small fishing boat (Matthew agrees with this). However, Luke tells us that the disciples "took him even as he was in the ship." This must mean that our Lord never left the ship before they set out for the other side of the Sea of Galilee. He had simply said to them, "Let us pass over unto the other side" (Mark 4:35). He did not tell them why He wanted to go at that moment. His work for the day very obviously was not yet completed. They had so much confidence in His judgment that without making any further preparation,

they headed for the other side.

As they went, a storm suddenly arose. It can do that on the Sea of Galilee. The weather can be good when you start out, but turn bad before you can get across to the other side. And this is what happened.

Now we need to remember that our Lord was traveling with experienced fishermen. They had been through many storms. They would not have been disturbed by a squall, that is a brief, sudden windstorm. But this was a major storm, and it came on them entirely unexpected. And they sincerely thought that they were all going to die.

To make matters worse, the Lord had not only gone to sleep, but the storm did not awaken Him. And so they cried out in their fear. Luke reported that they said, "Master, master, we perish" (v. 24). Mark said that they cried out as they awakened Him, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" So their dilemma was intensified by the fact that it looked like the Lord was not only unaware of what was going on in their lives, but that He didn't care!

The Lord rebuked the sea, and then He rebuked them. The sea immediately became calm, but they were still recovering from their fear when they said, "What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him?" (v. 25).

Now I realize that what this miracle teaches us about guidance, and the Lord, and faith are all blended together in this one account. And I am not going to be able to separate them completely the one from the other. They are woven together in this story as they usually are in our lives. But I think that it is important for us to look at them separately to see that there are many things involved in the way the Lord deals with us.

And so let me ask you, What was their guidance?

Their guidance was simply the Lord's word to them, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." He did not say, "Let us try to go over." Nor did He say, "Let's start, and hope that we will be able to make it." He said, "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." It was our Lord's intention, from what He said, that they would start out, make the trip across the Sea of Galilee, and arrive on the other side.

He did not tell them what they were going to experience on the way, but we can be sure that He knew! He did not tell them why He wanted to make the trip right then after He had

already had a busy day of ministry. Nevertheless, because they trusted Him and believed that He knew what He was doing, they set out.

When they said, "Master, master, ~~we~~ perish," it is thought by some commentators that they were fearful for the Lord's life as well as their own. That seems to be a true explanation of what they said. So it shows how terrified they were. Perhaps they thought, like Abraham in offering up Isaac, that the Lord would have had to be raised from the dead, but that is not very likely. When anyone is as fearful as they were, he is not inclined to think very clearly.

And for the Lord to have been asleep, and to stay asleep, looked to them as though He was not even concerned about them.

When we try to relate this to our experiences, the very fact that the Lord is not physically present with us, and we do not hear His voice speaking to us, puts us in a little different kind of a situation. But the principle applies nevertheless. I have never been inclined to look for a specific verse expecting the Lord to guide me in that way. But the Lord does guide us. He puts us in the families where He wants us to be. He guides as to whether we are male or female. He leads as to our schooling. If we are really trusting Him, He will guide us in marriage. But whatever our circumstances may be there, the Lord never takes His hand off of us. And He has reasons for even permitting the things that happen in our lives.

Whatever may be our circumstances tonight, we must believe that the Lord is in control.

Now, perhaps storms have arisen which we did not count on. And it may be that even now we are fearful as to what the outcome may be. It may seem to us like the Lord is asleep. In that respect we may feel that we are worse off than the disciples because they could go up to the Lord, and possibly even shake Him until He was awake.

Whatever our circumstances may be, let us be assured that the Lord does guide us. He guides us even when we do not have the wisdom to ask for guidance, or when we have mistaken His leading. He calls us to follow Him. He knows the trials that are ahead. And He knows our needs. He never does things needlessly with us.

Listen to some verses on guidance:

"The Lord shall guide thee continually..." (Isa. 58:11).

Psalm 23 is all about the Lord's guidance as well as His provision for us. (Quote.) And add to this great Psalm the words of our Lord found in John 10:3, 4,

...and he calleth his own sheep by name,
and leadeth them out.
And when he putteth forth his own sheep,
he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him:
for they know his voice.

And then we have those wonderful words in Psa. 32:8:

I will instruct thee and teach thee
in the way which thou shalt go:
I will guide thee with mine eye.

I could read many more verses, but this will assure us that, whatever may be the circumstances in our lives tonight, and I might add, however we got there, the Lord is guiding. He guides even when we don't know that we need it, nor ask for it. Nothing is clearer in Scripture than that the Lord is always guiding us. He guided His disciples right into the storm.

Now let us go on to see what this miracle teaches us about:

II. THE LORD HIMSELF.

I believe that all of us have been guilty of thinking that the disciples knew more than they actually knew. We may be inclined to feel that because they were disciples they became mature and knowledgeable almost overnight. But this incident in our Lord's life, and in their lives, shows us that was not the case! They learned just like we have to learn. They grew like we do--a little at a time. They gradually learned how very wonderful the Lord is.

Here in this miracle we have an excellent illustration of both the humanity and the Deity of the Lord.

We see His humanity as we look on a weary Savior. We see Him asleep, so sound asleep that not even the storm which made those fisherman panic, could awaken Him. And remember that it wasn't night yet, and so we can say that the Lord was taking a nap! As God, our Lord never fainted nor grew weary; as a Man, He experienced both. And so He is able to sympathize with us in our weariness.

We see His Deity in these words in Luke 8:24:

Then he arose, and rebuked the wind
and the raging of the water:
and they ceased, and there was a great calm.
The Lord did not need Moses' rod. He did not need the trum-

pets of the Israelites when the walls of Jericho fell down. He did not need Elijah's cloak. He simply spoke the words, "Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (quoting Mark 4:39).

And what did the disciples say? (Read the latter part of Luke 8:25.)

The disciples may not have realized it at that time but they were getting a very important lesson in theology! They were in a boat with the Lord of the universe Who had become a Man! They had seen Him do things that no mere man could do, and they were still learning Who He was.

As you know, we were with Don and Pat Rutledge this week at their place on Orcas Island. Don is the pastor of the Calvary Bible Church in Wenatchee, WA. Don asked me what I was preaching on now, and I asked him the same. He told me that on Sunday nights he was preaching through a series on the Person of Christ. What did he mean? He was dealing with this greatest of all miracles, how the eternal Son of God could become Man without ceasing in any way to be God. There is nothing deeper or more wonderful in Scripture. I can understand the amazement of the disciples as this truth began to grip their hearts. What a place for a course in theology --out in the Sea of Galilee, in a fisherman's boat, during and after a terrible storm!

You know, it is one thing to be told, and to know in our minds, that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God in human flesh, but it is quite another thing when we really begin to understand it in our hearts. The Lord knows exactly how we feel when we get weary in the work and feel like we can't take one more step. But He also knows how to calm our storms. And isn't it wonderful to know that whatever our boat may be, He is always there to hear our cry. It may seem sometimes like He is asleep, and doesn't care. But we need to keep crying to Him, and the answer will come.

But let me quickly get to my last word:

III. FAITH.

I chose to use Luke's account because he said that the Lord said, "Where is your faith?" Matthew tells us that the Lord said, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 8:26). Mark (4:40) reported our Lord's words this way: "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"

Which question is what He really said? I believe He said all three. At the moment they had been acting as though they had

no faith at all. However, the very fact that they awakened the Lord showed that they had some faith. Matthew tells us that they awoke the Lord and said, "Lord, **save us:** we perish" (Matt. 8:25). That was faith.

You can see that this experience was a test of faith. To begin with they had implicit faith. When the Lord said (as Luke recorded His words in Luke 8:22), "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake," he added, "And they launched forth." That was faith. They did not ask why. They did not ask if they could wait until the next day. They did what He told them to do! This is faith!

But then the storm came up, and their faith began to dwindle. It dwindled until it was as though they had "no faith" (Mark 4:40).

But Luke says, "Where is your faith?"

This can mean, "What happened to it? Where has it gone?" But it could also mean, "Was your faith in the weather, or your ability to predict the weather?" Or, "Was your faith in your boat, how sturdy and storm-worthy you thought it was?" Or, "Was it in your experience as fishermen?"

I will tell you for sure that if I am going out in a boat where storms are likely to come up, I want to be in a good boat, and I want to know that those who are running the boat have had a lot of experience. Maybe I should change that. If I am where storms are likely to come up, I don't want to be in any boat. How about you?

But let us all ask ourselves, "Where is our faith?" But even better let us ask, "Where does the Lord want our faith to be?" Are we trusting in ourselves, in our abilities, in our experience, in our friends, in our possessions? Where is our faith?"

The Lord ordered the circumstances of the disciples so that they would realize how quickly they could come into a situation where they would so quickly realize that only the Lord could help them. He must always be the object of their faith, just as He must always be the object of our faith.

Concl: Perhaps you can see some other lessons in this miracle. I don't profess to have exhausted all of the truth that is to be found here. But I hope that, as you read about this miracle in the future, you will remember these three truths which we have talked about tonight: GUIDANCE, THE LORD, and FAITH. The Lord will always guide us. We never know all that He has in mind, nor do we know

what unexpected trials may come our way. But whatever they may be, they always have a twofold purpose which we can see illustrated in the experience of the disciples on the Sea of Galilee:

- 1) They are designed to enable us to know the Lord better.
- 2) Knowing the Lord better, as much as we may have trusted Him in the past, out of our trials it is always our Lord's purpose that we should trust Him more than we do. How wonderful it is to have this story to help us to understand the sufficiency of the Lord in every trial that we may face.