

Text: Matthew 8:23-27

*Matthew 8:23–27 (NIV), “²³Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵**The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”** ²⁶He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. ²⁷The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”*

I. Introduction

A. Have you ever been in a place in your life when you were terrified? When you were gripped by fear?

1. The first time I was in a plane that landed in the winter (DTW) with snow on the ground.

B. Jesus and the disciples were in the process of crossing over the Sea of Galilee when a strong storm rose up on the water.

1. It was fierce because the text says water was coming into the boat.

2. It had to be unusual because remember these are seasoned sailors. They are used to being on the water in a variety of conditions.

- C. The disciples not just afraid of the storm but they were afraid of losing their lives.
1. Drowning is not a pleasant way to die. Illustration: Pearl Harbor sailors aboard Arizona/Oklahoma.
 2. Given the events of this past week in Louisiana, Minnesota (those two are black men shot by white officers) and Texas (five police officers killed by a lone sniper) (July 2016), people on both sides of the badge are on edge.
 - a. Black lives are at risk each time it seems we step outside of our homes.
 - b. Police officers are at risk each time they make a traffic stop or respond to a domestic disturbance call.
- D. What are you to do when life's storms sweep into your life and put you in a perilous situation? How are we to handle the fear that arises when it seems the storm has the upper hand?
- E. The way to handle fear is to understand how fear operates. Here are a couple of things to keep in mind when it comes to fear.

II. Fear Loves Ignorance

- A. The main things that fuels our fears is not knowing or being in the dark.
1. When the doctor tells us that we have cancer, we don't know what treatment will be like or what the end will be.
 2. When the car breaks down and requires \$1000 to repair and your emergency fund is depleted, you just don't know how it will get fixed or how you will get to work.
 3. When that plane was landing on ice and snow in DTW, I didn't know how this massive piece of metal that was falling out of the sky was going to stop.
- B. We are afraid when we don't know what's going on and we are experiencing something that has not happened to us before. To be truthful to the text, the disciples had not been with Jesus that long. They really didn't know Him.
1. Jesus was baptized in chapter 3 and then went through the temptations in chapter 4
 2. Jesus is teaching/preaching in chapters 5-7.
- C. Fear has a way of creeping up on us when we don't know Jesus. Because when you don't know Jesus, you don't know how Jesus is going to operate in certain situations.

1. That's why soldiers and combat units go through numerous drills before the heat of combat so you get to know your team mates. Hard to bond in the fox hole with fear all around you.
- D. When you don't know Jesus you tend to take things into your own hands and more times than not, our response is not God's response.
1. In these times in which we are living (and this is nothing new), it is beyond me how anyone could be aggressive towards a police officer when they are stopped for ANY reason when driving!
 2. What would Jesus do? If you don't know, THAT's a problem!
- E. One of the ways in which we overcome our fears is to get knowledgeable about who Jesus is and how Jesus operates.
1. Go back and reread chapters 5-7 to pick up all kinds of ways in which Jesus operates:
 - a. "Love your enemies" (5:44)
 - b. Let your "yes" be "yes" and "no" be "no". Don't waffle. (5:37)

- c. When in a dispute, settle the matter before it goes to court and the judge might hand down a sentence you REALLY don't like (5:25-26)
- d. Don't do things to be seen (6:1)
- e. In the midst of the racial turmoil that is swirling in the nation, we need to go back and see how Martin Luther King applied the teachings of Jesus during the civil rights struggle.
 - (1) When Izola Curry (a black woman) stabbed MLK in September, 1958, he didn't respond with hatred towards her. He said that he felt "no ill will" towards her and hoped that she would get the mental help that she needed. **Jesus principle: Love Your Enemies**
 - (2) When Deacon Smiley and the hundreds of other people on the Edmund Pettis bridge encountered the police on horseback and with tear gas on Bloody Sunday, did they respond with "burn baby burn"? No, they dusted themselves off and came back that Tuesday with a more peaceful, albeit short, march until they could get a court order march all the way from Selma to Montgomery.
 - (3) The only way you can act the way Jesus acted is to LEARN about how Jesus operates.

2. But not only spiritual knowledge but we also need to get good and proper schooling.
 - a. There was a time in the black community when we really valued education (even over sports and entertaining). Get something in our heads was what Verner Matthews drilled into Darryl & Jonathan when I was growing up.
 - b. Our HCBUs came into being so that we would be just as educated as those coming out of the Harvards and Yales.
 - c. Booker T. Washington had no idea how he was going to get to Hampton Institute from West VA but he didn't let the fear of what he didn't know keep him paralyzed at home.
 - d. Understood that education was the key that unlocked the door to opportunity.
- F. You need to be a student of God's word and it needs to get in on the inside. What we learn effects the actions we will take. And as we live out those actions and see how God operates, fear subsides as faith gets stronger.
 1. Ill: my fear of going to Africa for the first time not knowing the language; the building of faith has allowed me to

operate more comfortably and do even greater things.

2. I learned later on that on that snowy night when the plane was landing in Detroit, it wasn't the brakes that actually stopped the plane but the reverse thrust of the end that slowed the plane to a stand still. Now I fly with confidence.

G. The devil loves for God's people to remain ignorant of who God is and who we are because he can then use fear to cause us to cower and buckle under its weight.

H. Become a lifelong student of Jesus Christ:

1. By being in Sunday School or Bible Study regularly. Listening to good Bible Teachers on the radio, TV or internet.
2. You don't have to go to seminary in order to know God's word. If you have a Bible, you need only to dust it off and read it and reread it to gain understand.

a. Psalms 119:8, “

I. Fear loves for folks to be ignorant and in the dark. It can flourish in such cases.

III. Fear Loves Isolation

- A. Part of the problem with the disciples was not only that they didn't know Jesus that well but that they were in the middle of a mess and felt isolated. They were cut off from land and surrounded by water.
 - 1. I have experienced this on a number of cruises I've been blessed to take. Even as big as those ocean liners are, they are still small in comparison to the vastness of the ocean.

- B. When you are dealing with a storm in your life, the devil loves to isolate believers on their own.
 - 1. Remember 1 Peter 5:8, "... Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."
 - a. Lions when they hunt seek to isolate their prey from the herd usually seeking the young or the sick and feeble.

 - 2. When you are in the midst of the storm, the worst thing you can do is to pull away from God's people and God's house.
 - a. Elijah after the victory at Mt Carmel, went and hid in a cave and became so isolated because Jezebel/Ahab was on his case that he desired suicide.

 - b. David ran away from King Saul and not only fled his

homeland but dwelled with the Philistine enemy.

- c. Judas created his own storm by betraying Jesus and because Judas remained isolated from the other disciples and the restoration that could have been available, he ultimately went and hanged himself. Peter denied Jesus and found restoration.

C. In the case of the disciples in our text, fear was able to take hold on the high seas because this band of men were overwhelmed by the angry waves and swirling winds. Storms are easier to ride out with other people joining you:

1. Hebrews 10:25, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
 - a. During the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1954, do you know that there were church meetings at the Holt Street Baptist Church on a regular basis to encourage the people to stick with the boycott.
2. 1 Corinthians 12:12, “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.”
3. John 15:5, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart

from me you can do nothing.”

D. And if you can't do anything, if all of your options appear to be cut off, fear will grip you and isolate you.

IV. Fear Submits To Prayer

A. Fear will back up when confronted with prayer. Where do we see prayer in this text? Look at what the disciples did after the water started coming into the boat. Remember Jesus was asleep.

1. They sought Jesus out!

2. They woke Him!

3. They talked with Him as though He could do something only God could do! “Lord, save us!”

a. Didn't someone used to sing, *“Have a little talk with Jesus, tell him all about your troubles. He will hear your faintest cry and He'll answer by and by. Feel the little prayer wheel turning. Know a little fire is burning. Just a little talk with Jesus makes things right.”*

B. Why does fear have to submit? Two things happen when we pray

1. We acknowledge our own limitations. "I can only do so much"
 2. We acknowledge our dependence on God. "With God all things are possible"
- C. Prayer has a way of sustaining you through the storms of life
1. Jacob knew on the backside of the desert with his brother Esau gunning for him that he could do nothing but he wrestled and talked with God who turned Jacob's fear of Esau into fellowship with Esau.
 2. Sampson found himself blind and in bondage to the Philistines but he remembered the phone in his bosom and he dialed up to heaven one last time.
 - a. Judges 16:28, "Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "O Sovereign LORD, remember me. O God, please strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes."
 3. Jonah found himself in the belly of a large fish and he went to praying (being digested will do that to you) and ended up back on the beach in Joppa ready to do God's will.
 4. Daniel ended up in a storm because he was a praying man but do you think that stopped him? He prayed some more and he was able to get a good night's sleep in a most

unusual place.

5. Brooklyn Tabernacle sings a song, "All The Way To Calvary He Prayed For Me". The path to Calvary was covered in prayer.
 - a. In the garden of Gethsemane: ". . . 'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'" (Matthew 26:39)
 - b. When they nailed him to the cross Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them . . ." (Luke 23:34)
 - c. When His time on the cross was complete Jesus prayed, "Father in your hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46)

(1) And you can't be in better hands than in God's hands. Look at what God did: raised him from the grave. Storm on Friday, All power on Sunday!!

- D. So I don't know about you but when fear raises up, I'm going down. Down on my knees.
 1. Fear might be trying to put me on shaky ground but prayer will say "I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (Psalm 27:13).
 2. Fear might be saying that God is moving too slow you

better handle this storm yourself but prayer will say “Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD” (Psalm 27:14)

3. Fear will say you better stop being a goodie two shoes and get yours but prayer will say, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58)
 4. Fear will ask the question, “Who is this God you worshiping? Can he really come through?” and prayer will respond, “Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle” (Psalm 24:8)
 5. Fear will say, “Look, Jesus is sleep. You really think He cares about you?” and prayer will respond, “³He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber; ⁴indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalm 121:3–4)
- E. No matter where you are what situation you're in, prayer will keep you.
1. When your load gets heavy, prayer can lighten it.
 2. When police lights are flashing in your rear view mirror, prayer can give you the calm assurance that this too will pass.

3. When your friends turn their backs on you, prayer remind you “What a friend . . .”
4. When your heart is broken, prayer can mend it.
5. When your feeling all alone, prayer reminds us that God is right here with us and that He’ll never leave us nor forsake us.
6. When you feel like you’re in over your head, prayer throws you a life preserver.
7. When you feel like you’re about to faint, prayer will prop you up and then take you to higher heights.

V. Conclusion

- A. Fear is real and something that we all have to deal with at some point in our lives.
 1. Some people choose to camp out in the valley of fear and take up residence in doubting castle. An increase in knowledge can help to drive fear away and set you free.
 - a. John 8:32, “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”
 2. Fear wants you to be on your own—isolated and cut off from

people and the God who loves you and can help you.

3. Prayer is the key that unlocks the door to wonderful communication with God.

B. But the devil loves to trick us. He has us fearful of stuff in this world and the stuff of this world is temporary. What we really need to be fearful of is falling into the hands of a holy and righteous God without the covering of the blood of Jesus Christ.

1. 2 Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

C. If you intend on standing before God without the covering of Jesus Christ, “I’M fearful for you!” There is a prayer that you can pray that can set you free, “Lord Jesus, come into my heart”

Date Preached	Placed	Number Who Came To Christ
2014 August 03	St Mark Missionary Baptist Church - Tampa FL	

Date Preached	Placed	Number Who Came To Christ
2016 Jul 10	First Baptist Church of College Hill - Tampa FL	
2016 Sep 25	New Millennium Community Church - Tampa FL	