

Text: Luke 8:22-25 (Pew Bible pg.1024)

Title: “A Strong Savior for Life’s Storm”

INTRODUCTION

Let’s open our Bibles to Luke 8:22. I’m taking a break from the series on the Beatitudes this morning. It’s been a fantastic week of ministry in our VBS and we’re so happy to have many guests with us today. Read text.

ILLUSTRATION – Jesus and His disciples are suddenly caught in a storm. When you travel to the Holy Lands you likely will take a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee (more like a big lake). The guides will always say that there’s something about the region that creates a certain meteorological condition where fierce storms can blow up on the lake with very little warning. Of course, in that day they didn’t have Doppler weather radar to warn them when storms were coming.

Luke 8:23b - A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

The other Gospel writers back up these details:

Matthew 8:24 - Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat.

Mark 4:37 - A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.

FOR 11:00 SERVICE - **ILLUSTRATION** – The boys and girls in VBS this week had a fun time with the Colossal Coaster World ... Facing Fear, Trusting God. Remember the boy who was afraid to ride on the Vaporizer 3000 roller coaster. He was terrified, and that’s the way the disciples felt out in the middle of the lake during this storm.

ILLUSTRATION – TWO PHOTOS – If you’ve ever been whitewater rafting you know it can get pretty crazy. Many times the companies that do these whitewater rafting expeditions will have photographers perched at various places on the river to shoot photos of the people in the boats. These riders are scared out of their wits. But at the back of the boat is this cool guide who has everything under control. It was something like that for the disciples of Jesus.

The fact is that storms are going to come in life. We’ll all have to shoot the rapids of some dangerous waters. We all face storms. There will be storms in our personal lives. There will be storms in our family. There will be storms in our nation.

I have to confess to you that as I see what’s happening in our nation today, I feel like my family and my church is in a boat that is caught in a sudden storm. What are we going to do?

Well this experience for Jesus and His disciples on the Sea of Galilee was no thrill ride. It was serious business. But from the Scriptures we learn about “A Strong Savior for Life’s Storms.” What

if there had been a camera positioned over the boat out on the water in the middle of the storm, what would it reveal? What if the disciples, when they got to the other side of the lake, could go up and buy the photo of what they looked like during this frightening experience on the lake with Jesus.

The photo would reveal:

1. A SECURE SAVIOR

What do we see about our Savior in the storm?

- **He's on a mission.**

It's important to know that this event happens in the course of Jesus' mission. They were not on a pleasure cruise.

ILLUSTRATION – Maybe you remember that earlier this year there was a Carnival Cruise ship that caught fire out in the Gulf of Mexico. For several days the ship was adrift with no power and no fresh water. And a pleasure cruise turned into a nightmare for thousands of passengers.

Well Jesus was not on a pleasure cruise. He was going somewhere on a mission and He invited His disciples to join Him on that mission.

Luke 8:22 - One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out.

You see, obedience to Christ doesn't mean freedom from the storms of life. Storms happen even when you're in the center of God's will. Now, where were they going?

Luke 8:26 - They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee.

They are on their way to the other side of the lake. What awaits them on the other side of the lake is an opportunity for ministry where Jesus will confront a demonic spirit. Jesus is going head to head with the powers of darkness. And Jesus' followers are with Him ... they are going with Jesus, but that doesn't mean they will go without storms and trials.

Sometimes we get into storms because we've been foolish. We cause our own storms. At other times the storms come even when we're right in the center of God's will. God knows that during the storms of life He can do great things in our lives.

This snapshot of Jesus shows something else about our secure Savior.

- **He's at peace in the storm.**

Luke 8:23a - As they sailed, he fell asleep.

Mark 4:38a - Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.

The stern is the back of the boat. How could Jesus sleep at a time like this? This was not the sleep of complacency. Sometimes people sleep when they should be awake doing something. Jesus could sleep because He had perfect peace.

Psalm 4:8 - I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Jesus could sleep in peace in the middle of a storm because He knew that He had power over the storm. He knew that His Father would watch over Him. And that's the next thing this snapshot of Jesus shows us.

- He's in control of the circumstances.

Luke 8:24b - He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.

We need to know this about our Lord. He has the power to do anything He wants to do. He can calm storms just like that. The Bible says that everything in this universe was created through Jesus Christ. So what He creates, He also controls. I know there are times when we feel our lives are out of control, and that there's nowhere to turn. So look to Jesus.

QUESTION: Are you in the boat with this one who controls the universe? Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? Have you entrusted your life into His strong hands?

So this picture reveals something about our secure Savior, but the picture also reveals...

2. SOME ANXIOUS DISCIPLES

Now just put yourself in their shoes (or sandals). If you use your imagination you can understand what they felt.

- They were fearful.

Jesus was at peace, but the disciples were in a panic.

Luke 8:23b - They were in great danger.

Remember that this storm came up suddenly. And that happens. Our lives can be going along smoothly, then all of a sudden we get a call from the doctor's office that the test report was not good. We can suddenly learn that we've lost our job, or that there has been a sudden death in our family.

Part of what made this such a fearful situation for the disciples is that it was unexpected. It came out of nowhere.

Note: Things that surprise us often reveal what's really in our hearts. Your first instinct when you're caught off guard by a situation usually reveals what's really in your heart. How quickly does it take you to turn to Jesus?

So they were fearful. But also...

- **They were forgetful.**

The disciples throw up some panic prayers. We know about that kind of praying, don't we?

Luke 8:24a - The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

The statement, "We are going to drown," was true if Jesus wasn't in the boat. So often our fears do not take into account the presence of God.

In fact their own language betrays them: "Master, master..." = leader, leader. This is how they had come to relate to Jesus. Just think of all they have witnessed to this point in their following Jesus.

If you go back and look at what has happened to this point you'll see that the disciples had seen Jesus heal the sick, and drive out demons, and make paralyzed people to walk again. They had even seen Jesus raise a young man who had died. But when the storm comes on them, they forgot everything they had learned about Jesus.

The difference is that those all involved someone else. Now it was personal. They were the ones in the storm.

Now ideally they should have taken their cue from Jesus. What was He doing? Sleeping in absolute peace. You see, their eyes were on the storm and not on the Savior. One of the great panic-preventers is to keep your eyes on the Lord.

But we see something else about these anxious disciples:

- **They were doubtful.**

Luke 8:24a - The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

But Mark's account shows something deeper in their fear:

Mark 4:38b - The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Sometimes when we go through the storms of life we doubt whether God loves us. We may wonder if God is punishing us. And so in times of storms we might even doubt God. But hear

this: In any storm, God may be doing a hundred different things. But one thing remains unchanged in it all ... God's love for us.

ILLUSTRATION – I can't tell you how many times I've sat with hurting families in a hospital with a sick loved one. And they ask, "Why doesn't God heal my loved one? Why do they have to suffer?" Sometimes I'll remind them that there is more going on here than just what's happening with the sick person. God is at work in their life, but also in the life of each family member, and each doctor and nurse who attends to them. God loves each one and is working through this storm.

So what is God doing? It has to do with faith.

Luke 8:25a - "Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples.

Note: Jesus could have shielded them from the storm but He didn't. He chose, rather, to allow them to go into the storm so they could see His power over the things that threaten them, and be strengthened in their faith.

This is the whole issue of the storm ... theirs and ours. Jesus takes us into the storms to get at this question. For whatever reason, the storms reveal the weaknesses in our faith. And only when we understand that weakness will we cry out to Jesus, find Him faithful, and grow in our faith.

ILLUSTRATION – A few months ago a young lady came to my office to inform me that her fiancé had broken off their engagement. I was supposed to perform the wedding ceremony, and she wanted me to know that the wedding was off. She was heart-broken and in tears. But out of that storm her faith was coming through. This precious young lady shared with me how God had ministered to her through a song ... and she quoted some of the lyrics of the song. I was so amazed with the way she was handling this that I went and looked up the lyrics to the song. It was called "Blessings."

We pray for blessings, we pray for peace
Comfort for family, protection while we sleep
We pray for healing, for prosperity
We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering
And all the while, You hear each spoken need
Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things

We pray for wisdom, Your voice to hear
We cry in anger when we cannot feel You near
We doubt your goodness, we doubt your love
As if every promise from Your word is not enough
And all the while, You hear each desperate plea
And long that we'd have faith to believe

When friends betray us
When darkness seems to win
We know that pain reminds this heart

That this is not,
This is not our home
It's not our home

'Cause what if your blessings come through rain drops
What if Your healing comes through tears
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near

What if my greatest disappointments or the aching of this life
Is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy
What if trials of this life
The rain, the storms, the hardest nights
Are your mercies in disguise

Question: How could the disciples be so panicked with Jesus in the boat with them?

ONSCREEN Principle: The smaller our faith the greater our panic; the larger our faith the greater our peace.

Now look at how this episode ends:

Luke 8:25b - In fear and amazement they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

God’s design in every storm is for His glory to be displayed. And that happens. The disciples were amazed. And in each storm, look for how God wants to display His glory and His power. And when you see it, praise Him. The other thing God is doing in the storms of life is He is strengthening our faith ... our ability to trust Him.

Friend, you don’t want to go through the storms of life without Jesus in the boat with you. Is Jesus in your life? Many boys and girls this week made that choice. Will you do that today?