



Luke 8:22–25

22 One day Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let us go over to the other side of the lake.’ So they got into a boat and set out. 23 As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. 24 The disciples went and woke him, saying, ‘Master, Master, we’re going to drown!’ He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided,

and all was calm. 25 ‘Where is your faith?’ he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, ‘Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.’

Reflection

(Today’s reflection is given by Justin Mof-fatt)

My passage today is a ‘Lord of the Storm’ passage. It’s Luke 8:22–25:

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on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. 24 The disciples went and woke him, saying, ‘Master, Master, we’re going to drown!’ He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. 25 ‘Where is your faith?’ he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, ‘Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.’

In the Bible, the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi:

4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by

prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

It's a great word, soaked in the blessing of knowing Jesus. Of course, it's not easy. Anxiety and fear are by nature never easy to control.

It's fair to say that through modern psychology, we've come to a much greater understanding of the nature of anxiety and of fear, and of how the brain functions. I'm no psychologist, but I'm thankful that work is being done in this field.

But I also want to say that the Bible has

plenty to say about fear. And that for thousands and thousands of years, people have been dealing with their fears by bringing them to God. Ever since Adam hid from God, fear has existed. And since Abraham on, God has been saying those beautiful words: 'Do not be afraid', to those who would otherwise be afraid.

Today, we have a real opportunity to do life well, without crippling fear.

Fear can be good, right? Fear is a great motivator, but a terrible master. Fear makes us wake up and act when danger is upon us. But living in fear – a chronic fear – is a terrible place to be. A place that Jesus can free you from.

I'm going to offer you one simple sugges-

tion from Luke's Gospel. The suggestion is this: that we need to identify that moment when fear shifts from being a motivating power for change to when it settles in and starts ruling your choices. We need to pick that moment and then place that very fear in the hands of your good God. It's called replacing 'fear' with 'faith'.

What happens in the story? Jesus and his disciples are in a boat (v. 22). The Jews were not generally a sea faring nation, and they feared the seas. They feared it so much that they equated it with evil. To them it represented the murky uncontrollable forces of evil. That kind of evil that tears away at the fabric of the human soul, the way a wave tears apart a rock face. The disciples are afraid when a storm comes (v. 23). Jesus was asleep.

24 The disciples went and woke him, saying, ‘Master, Master, we’re going to drown!’

The implication is that the only way to care is to join the fear. If you cared, you’d join our fret-party. Got the picture? Disciples: afraid, acting, pulling, pushing, controlling, bailing, and fretting. Jesus: fast asleep as the boat almost overturns.

What does he know, that the rest don’t know? We are about to find out.

24 He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.

Whoa. Now – that’s crazy. Try it next time

a storm comes. I suspect that storm will have no regard for your word. The next bit is the truly interesting bit:

5 'Where is your faith?' he asked his disciples.

You needed to 'have faith'. You needed to 'trust me'. And if you did, you wouldn't have been so crippled by fear. So it appears that fear and faith are competing for oxygen in the room of your heart.

Of course, we've never seen this. Neither had they, and it made them more afraid:

In fear and amazement they asked one another, 'Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.'

What should they have known? Well, apart from what they already knew: that Jesus had already been caring and loving and healing people, they ought to know Psalm 107, where God sends and calms a storm:

Some went out on the sea in ships;
they were merchants on the mighty
waters.

They saw the works of the Lord,
his wonderful deeds in the deep.
For he spoke and stirred up a tem-
pest
that lifted high the waves. [...]

They knew that God was powerful. And life in this fragile world fills a man with fear. So:

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble,

and he brought them out of their distress.

He stilled the storm to a whisper;

the waves of the sea were hushed.

They were glad when it grew calm,

and he guided them to their desired haven.

Psalm 107:23-32

Maybe they did know this passage, and that's why they were afraid: they had God in their boat. Jesus has the kind of control that YAHWEH has over the elements, and therefore over fear.

So – today, note this: through the storm, he is Lord. Lord of all.

Life can batter you. Suffering can wear you down. Circumstance can batter at your soul and take it apart. Life truly can be a whirlwind. Sometimes it can feel like a tsunami. But in the middle of the storm, Jesus is Lord.

Think

Fear and faith are competing for air in the room of your heart. Choose faith.

How? Pick that moment. There is always a moment, where you see something that is a danger to you; something that makes you want to act. Many times, you will act immediately. You'll need to act for your safety. But with the biggest fears, not just the ones that come upon you, you'll have

a moment. Take that moment to pray.

Pray

In this church where I am filming, there is a famous stained glass window that tells a very painful story. It tells the story of William George Summerbell. Summerbell died (aged 24) north of Newcastle (near Stockton) in 1877 in a storm aboard the now shipwrecked 'Yarra Yarra'. You can Google that ship. You can scuba dive it!

And if you want to see the window, go the Church Hill Anglican's Facebook page and post the 'wow' emoji. Let me know you were listening.

Summerbell's parents were followers of this same Jesus in Luke 8. And they erected

the window with Jesus calming the storm!
And Jesus walking on water! Even though
Jesus had not calmed that storm in 1877,
they also knew that Jesus is Lord, even in
the storm; even in death. The Psalm in the
window is Psalm 69:

‘Save me O God, for the waters are
come into my soul.’

Sad, but hopeful. So what to do?

6 Do not be anxious about anything,
but in every situation, by prayer and
petition, with thanksgiving, present
your requests to God. 7 And the
peace of God, which transcends
all understanding, will guard your
hearts and your minds in Christ Je-
sus.