

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH? LUKE 8:22-25

Where is your faith? We spent 13 years in Taupo, and Taupo is well known as a sky diving mega. Planes go up every day. At Taupo Baptist, we had three sky dive instructors and one day at the door of church I said to one of them that I would love to do that one day. He took me at my word, and what was just an idea in my head became a reality. One of them took the video and photos while the other was attached to me. These guys were highly experienced. The chance of an accident was very very small. They told me the odds of the main chute failing was like 1 -1000 and the chances of the reserve chute failing were like 1 in 100,000. So I was probably at more risk of having a car crash then splatting into the ground around Taupo. But looking out the plane door, a nasty sick feeling gripped my stomach. It is quite different to looking at the ground out the window to looking at the ground with the door open.

Where was my faith? It was rapidly diminishing and if I was not strapped to Steve, I am not sure I could have propelled myself outside the plane. Where is your faith. The reality is that we can never be sure where our faith is until we are sitting in the open door of the plane. My head told me to have faith in Steve and the systems but my body was in full rebellion mode. Where faith out is is never clear until what we have placed our faith in is removed.

Where our faith is is one line in a 4-verse story found in Luke 8. There are just 4 lines of dialogue. Therefore, if this were a play, it would be easy to remember.

The first line is Master Master we are going to drown. Lake Galilee is notorious bit of water. The Sea of Galilee is a most unusual body of water. It is relatively small, only thirteen miles long, seven miles wide, but it is 150 feet deep, and the shoreline is 680 feet below sea level. Because the Sea of Galilee is below sea level and is surrounded by mountains, it is susceptible to sudden storms. Winds sweeping across the land come up and over the mountains, creating downdrafts over the lake. Combine those conditions with a thunderstorm that appearing suddenly over the surrounding mountains, the water of Galilee can instantly stir up into violent twenty-foot waves. The sea can be calm one minute and savage the next.

These guys were experienced sailors. They had been in storms before. Not like they had not been in rough water before. I remember years ago for our 10th wedding anniversary, Ros and I went to Stewart Island.

Problem is we got married on June 15. Tomorrow. Note to self. Do not forget. Crossed over on the catamaran. It was choppy. You could not see the island as we dropped down into the troughs. Only about five on board. Not really a popular time to visit for some reason. One woman was being sick into a bucket. Anyway, at one point the captain turned the engines off, to reposition the boat. Therefore, I asked the captain. On a scale of 1 to 10, what is this weather like. Oh, he said casually, probably about a three. He had crossed that strait many times. He knew what it could do. He was not worried. It was a three.

The fact these guys cried out Master master we are going to drown suggests it was probably a 10. They would have backed their ability because they had been in heaps of storms before. They were being challenged at their strength. Years of experience. They would have had faith they could ride this out. But they had got to the point of despair.

Someone once said. As a Christian we are about to go into a storm, either we are in a storm or we are coming out of a storm. Maybe that is a little cynical about life. As a nation, we feel we have just come out of a storm. Maybe for some of you though you are just heading into it as you think of your job or future. Alternatively, some other situation.

Where is your faith? We do not really discover where our faith is until it is removed. If your faith is in having a good job, or having financial security, then we are not going to know until it is taken away. If your faith is in your ability, you are never really going to know until it is removed. In addition, if your faith is in good health, you will find that out when it fails. I suspect for many of us, our faith is in the fact of life going relatively smoothly. I read Barnabus magazine sometimes and the stories of Christians around the world who are being persecuted. If your daughter was snatched from your home, and her body dumped on the side of the road because your family is Christian, where would your faith be?

Or if you were forced out of your job that you had worked years to get, because of false rumours by others that hated you for your faith, where would your faith be? Where your faith is is a challenging question? If your faith is in having correct doctrine, then your faith will be challenged if another believer



challenges you.] Where is your faith is the question to ask when you think about the things that you have stressed over this last few months. Where is your faith is the question to ask when you think about what did I worry about this last week? Right now

Matthew 6:25-34 What we worry about shows us where our faith is. We so focus on big sins, and yet this command is probably the most disobeyed command in the church. Where is your faith is a question that is relevant to the person who has been a Christian for many years as well as the person who has not made a commitment to follow Jesus

You might have been a Christian for many years, but your actions tell you where your faith is. It is not where you say your faith is, it is what your actions tell you about where your faith is.

Some of you will know the story of the famous tight ropewalker Blondin. In 1859 in cross, the Niagara falls several times. Once he crossed in a sack, another time on a bicycle. On July 15 he walked backwards across it, and then back again with a wheelbarrow and blindfolded. Then he asked the crowd if he they thought he could do it with a person in the wheelbarrow. They all said absolutely he could do that. However, no one was willing to be the volunteer.

You might not be a Christ follower now. However, the question is just as relevant. Where is your faith? Maybe it is in the idea that there is no God. Alternatively, that there is no future beyond death. How strong is your faith? Where did these beliefs come from? Is there any evidence to back them up? No one can prove that God is real, or what happens after death. Therefore, whatever position you hold, it is a position of faith. In fact, it takes a lot of faith to believe there is no good, when the world around us screams that everything is designed and fit together in an incredible fashion. Secular scientists have marveled at how perfectly suited this planet is to human life. If you just change one variable of over 100 by the tiniest fraction, you do not have life on this earth. It is as if it has been purposed to have life. Everyone has placed their faith in something.

Who is this anyway. Even the wind and waves obey him.

Again, if you are today, and not a Christ follow, this is a key question you need to answer. He is a person claiming to be God, for whom there is more historical evidence for than any other historical figure, for whom there is eyewitness evidence of him dying and rising

from the dead. There is no more important question in live to answer. Who is this anyway, this figure who has changed the course of history with their live and teaching? The most influenza person who has ever lived. Lunatic, liar, who he says he is

It is a key question for those who profess Christians too. The disciples had been with Jesus and seen him perform miracles, but they had not fully grasped the reality of who was in the boat with them. They did not have just a charismatic faith healer in the boat. They had God. God was in the boat

If you are a Christian today, God is in your boat. The God who created you is in the boat. The God who parted the red sea is in your boat. The God who raised Lazarus from the dead is in your boat. The God who heals is in our boat. Often when the rough stuff hits our life, we think God has left us. What we need to realize is that God has not left our boat. He is right in our boat in the middle of the storm. In addition, while you might think he is not doing anything, he has not left you.

Often people screw up their noses at the word theology. Word simply means the study of God. You see the more we truly know God, the less fear and worry and anxiety will rule our lives. The more we can truly grasp who God is the more we can live in freedom and with courage. How well do you really know Jesus? The more you know Jesus the more you know God.

Do you know the heart of Jesus? Do you listen to him regularly? Do you know him, really know him? Are you falling in love with Jesus more and more?

It says the disciples were in absolute awe and staggered. When was the last time you bowed down in awe before Jesus? When was the last time you raised your hands in worship to Jesus? When was the last time you were filled with gratitude towards Jesus and you felt overwhelmed with love for him? When was the last time you really spend some serious time pondering the words of Jesus.

You see the more we know Jesus, we truly know him. The easier it will be to thrive in the storms. Storm is a metaphor. Trouble we see in the world today. Rioting, violence, racial abuse. The storm is a metaphor for the challenges you are facing today in your life.

The more we can know Jesus the more we can answer that question Where is your faith.



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LOVE GOD : LOVE OTHERS

In Jesus Christ, the creator and sustainer and restorer and healer, and saviour, and the way maker, and the miracle maker, and the promise keeper.

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REFLECTION + DISCUSSION

- *Reflect on a time of despair in your life. What led you to that place? How did you get out of it?*
- *Are you naturally more optimistic or pessimistic? What are the advantages / disadvantages of each?*
- *What helps you gain a sense of perspective on the greatness of God?*
- *What lies from the enemy are you vulnerable to in tough times. What Scriptures counter them?*
- *What helps you experience the depth of God's love for you?*
- *What hope sustains you as you consider the future?*
- *How can you encourage someone who is in despair?*



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