

## **“Water Proof Faith”**

**Mark 4: 35-41**

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What is the relationship between fear and faith? How does faith help us get through a crisis?

These questions emerged as I pondered our text for today. It appears to me there was no shortage of fear that night on the Sea of Galilee as a storm quickly descended upon the boat carrying Jesus and his disciples. There was, however, a lack of faith. Listen as I tell you the story.

Jesus had been teaching all day along the shore of the sea and was exhausted. Mark tells us the crowd was so large, Jesus taught from a boat just off the shore so everyone could see and hear him.

As evening approached, Jesus instructed the disciples to cross to the other side of the sea instead of staying in that location. I suspect he felt people would search for him during the night, and he would not be able to rest.

I would also be willing to say the disciples were not fond of the idea of crossing the sea at night. Four of them were seasoned fishermen and knew how quickly storms descended upon the Sea of Galilee. After all, it is 680' below sea level and surrounded by mountains on the north and east, which leads to rapid changes in the weather if the wind picks up, which it often does.

Evidently, this happened that night, and a monster storm came roaring down the valley onto the lake. In spite of their best efforts to keep the boat afloat, the disciples were losing the battle and convinced they were going to die.

To make matters worse, Jesus was asleep in the hull of the ship, which was an indication of how tired he must have been. To their dismay, he never woke up and offered to help them fight the storm, which caused them to shout out in unison, “Teacher, don’t you care that we perish?”

Jesus responded to their fear and frustration by rebuking the wind and calming the seas. Then, he voiced his own disappointment when he said, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

Now, it seems, they were as afraid of him as they were the storm and asked with a sense of wonder and awe, “Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him.”

While many parts of this intriguing story catch my attention, I am drawn to Jesus' words to his disciples after the storm subsided. "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

**Are you surprised by what Jesus said?** Do you think it was inappropriate? Would you have preferred he had been more empathetic and apologetic?

He wasn't, was he? Instead, he said, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

**Why do you think he said this?** It appears to me he seized another opportunity to teach them a valuable lesson.

He knew this would not be the last time their lives would be threatened, and they would be terrified. It would not necessarily be more storms on the sea that would unnerve them, but the Imperial Roman forces and some of their own self-serving religious leaders.

Their pursuit of justice and peace would not set well with those who were more interested in their own welfare than others'. As a result, they would become targets of suspicion and relentless resistance, just as he would be. Like him, they would come face to face with death many times, just as they had that night on the Sea of Galilee and needed to learn how to deal with fear so it would not crush them.

What do you think the disciples did after the storm passed that night? I am confident they asked Jesus questions about the role faith plays in confronting fear. It would not surprise me if the sun came up while they were still talking.

**Is this a conversation you are in need of this morning?** Would you like to know more about how faith can help you overcome fear? I suspect we all would. The fear of loss and failure stalks all of us.

Let's begin that conversation now. **How does faith help us overcome fear?**

**It helps us confront our fears instead of ignoring and suppressing them.** Faith reminds us how vulnerable we are, and we have far less control over events than we want to admit. This is hard for us to hear many times and even harder to admit. This is, however, the first step to greater understanding.

**Faith reminds us we are never alone, especially in the midst of a storm.** I'm sure many of you have seen Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1945 musical, *Carousel*, which featured the song, *You'll Never Walk Alone*. Nettie sang this song to Julie in the second act after Julie discovered her husband committed suicide. It was sung again in the final act at a high school graduation program, which included Julie's daughter.

When you walk through a storm  
hold your head up high  
And don't be afraid of the dark  
At the end of a storm is a golden sky  
And the sweet silver song of a lark

Walk on through the wind  
Walk on through the rain  
Tho' your dreams be tossed and blown  
Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart  
And you'll never walk alone  
You'll never, ever walk alone

Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart  
And you'll never walk alone  
You'll never, ever walk alone

One purpose of faith is to connect us to God and others who love us unconditionally and will walk with us in our darkest hours. Just as the disciples needed Jesus and one another that night, so we need our loved ones and Jesus when a storm is beating down upon us. Faith leads us to those we need when we are bailing water out of a boat and those who need us.

**Faith brings out the best in us and gives us confidence to meet life's stiffest challenges.** Simon Peter is an example of this.

The same man who feared for his life that night on the sea impressed the Sanhedrin when he was brought before them after healing a crippled beggar. Their purpose was to intimidate and silence Peter, along with the other disciples, but neither happened. Instead, Luke writes, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and took note that these men had been with Jesus." Luke 4:13.

Through faith, God provides wisdom, strength, courage, patience and perseverance. According to my friend, Tom Ehrich, each time the evils of life conspire to make us afraid and turn on each other, faith pushes back and shows us a better way. We may not be able to banish fear, but we can deny it the victory!

**Faith assures us no crisis will have the final word in our lives; God will and that word will be good.** All things will work together for good because our faith is in a God who is with us before, during and after every storm, eager to help us move forward.

**Do you need a faith which will help you to "walk through a storm and hold your head up high?"** Ask the resurrected Lord to come into your heart and accompany you on your journey. Cultivate that relationship through prayer, meditation, worship, Bible study and service.

**Do you need a church where you can find unconditional love and support?** Welcome to First Baptist, where you will be embraced by fellow strugglers who know how important companionship is.

**Do you know someone who is bailing water in a storm and needs you to grab a bucket?** Will you do it? For their sake and yours, I hope so.

