

As believers we know what faith is. We know we are to have faith. We know the bible says *"without faith it is impossible to please God"* We function in faith and apply faith each day. But applying faith when life is flowing smoothly compared to when unexpected things hit us is quite different. Because all of a sudden what we thought was deep faith, becomes shaky, doubting, and struggling.

We'll see today for the disciples it was through the storm on the lake, that God orchestrated, that created the crises of faith in them. Have you ever heard the saying we're in the same boat? Well we're in the same boat as them as we face faith crises. It is one thing to know Jesus is Lord and another to trust Jesus is Lord of all. This week, today even, it might be as if the sea water is breaking over your bow, and you feel as if you're going to 'drown'. And the Lord says to you *"where is your faith?"*, only to be amazed at what he can do when we call on him...

*Who Christ is to us as a powerful Lord and Saviour and believing that, is **how** we prepare for or recover from crises and storms where our faith is severely tested to the extreme. *How do we trust God in whatever circumstances confront us, particularly the unexpected? By expecting there will be storms and trusting God in faith through those storms that he is in control and that he is Lord of all.* What we'll learn from Luke 8:22-25*

(READ)

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."*

When we come to just a few verses like this, and read a simple story there's always the risk of attempting to find something more profound in the story than was intended in the first place. There's nothing profound here, except for two basic but powerful truths we must grasp: *Jesus is Lord of all and trust him.*

What started as a routine event for the disciples, fishermen, getting in a boat and crossing the Sea of Galilee turned into a hard but simple lesson of who their faith was in and what they believed about Jesus.

The first thing we're reminded of is that...

1. Jesus is Lord of all

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.*

Matt. 8:23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him.

Mark 4:35, 36 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.

Now there's a lot to be said from v.22 as Luke (& other gospel writers) set the scene for this event.

This would not have been just a handful of disciples. As Mark 4:36 says, "there were...other boats" So we're talking about a flotilla of boats heading out on the sea, full of disciples – pupils, learners, students and followers of Jesus. By the way, it is the winter of AD 29 when the weather can be at its worst.

So they set out to the other side of "the lake" It's actually the sea of Galilee, today known as Lake Tiberias or Kinneret¹. This is no ordinary lake. It is the lowest fresh water lake on earth – 200m below sea level – and 2nd lowest lake to the Dead sea (lowest). It is fed by 2 main tributaries, underground springs and the river Jordan. Approx. 10% of Israel's drinking water comes from this lake. It is approx. 21km long and 13km wide and sits in a bowl of surrounding hills and mountains.

So it is not a large lake – even compared to our own Lake Taupo – but one nonetheless that is well recognized for its unpredictable weather as at times cold winds flow through the hills and make contact with warm air over the lake causing extreme weather conditions.²

Author W. M. Thompson in his book *The Land and the Book* – a book about the character of the land of Israel - writes about an experience in those extreme conditions when he and some other visitors to Israel were tenting beside the lake, they had pitched their tents at the shore where they stayed for three days and nights exposed to the extreme wind.

¹ [Sea of Galilee - Wikipedia](https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63922564); By Zachi Evenor and User:MathKnight - Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zachievenor/12325753455/>, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63922564>

² Bock, Darrell L. "Original Meaning" In *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Luke*. By Darrell L. Bock, 236. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1996.

They had to double peg all the tent ropes and frequently had to put the whole weight of their bodies on them to keep the tent from being blown up into the air.

The whole lake was being lashed into a fury, the waves repeatedly rolling up to the tent door, washing over the ropes with enough force to carry away the tent pins. He writes the winds were not only violent, but they came down suddenly and often came when the sky was perfectly clear.”³ (last weekend’s winds not be a stitch on this!)

I didn’t mention all that to give a geography or history lesson. *This is no ordinary lake.* If God wanted to create a lake, where eventually the son of God would demonstrate his power – walk on water, catch tons of fish, teach 1000’s of people, calm a storm – it would be this lake. Jesus is God, the son. He knew the lake and he knew ahead of time a storm was coming and for what purposes. He’s God!

Now this was the same day (Mark 4:35) as the parable of the soils, and the lamp. Jesus had been teaching all day. He’s weary and tired. He’s God but he’s human as well and he needed sleep.... v.23...

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.

Matt. 8:24 ²⁴ *Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat.*

Mark 4:37, 38 *A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.*

Now again, these were experienced sailors. Many grew up in this area and would have known this body of water very well and would have recognised the signs of extreme weather coming and wouldn’t have been put off by a 2m swell. But even they couldn’t see what was coming. *And that’s the point.*

“As they sailed, he fell asleep” Then Luke says, *“A squall came down”* Matthew says (8:24) a *“furious storm”* (GK= seismos = shaking like an earthquake, a mega storm) Mark says (4:37) a *“furious squall”*. (P) This was a serious unpredictable mega-storm the disciples had not seen coming and were totally unprepared for. *And that’s the point.*

We get a glimpse of what that scene might have been like from Rembrandt’s painting⁴.

³ Adapted from: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-108/the-story-of-the-calm-part-2>
⁴ [With Jesus in the Storm: Rembrandt’s Meditation - Soul Shepherding](#)

Waves are breaking over the boat, filling it with almost enough water to sink it. They could be forgiven for thinking they were going to drown, right! This is a catastrophe.

But get this: Jesus didn't say: "now listen guys we're going to strike a bit of nasty weather, we need to be prepared, get your raincoats and the sails ready" No, while the disciples are fearing for their lives, Jesus has his head on a cushion (Mark) sleeping like a baby.

The only time in the bible you'll see Jesus sleeping and he chooses this moment. *But...Jesus was with them in the storm*

^{24a} *The disciples went and woke him, saying, "**Master, Master, we're going to drown!**"*

We don't know at this point how long the storm had been going on for, Luke gives no indication of that. We do know the storm was intense enough for Jesus to be woken up. The fact they say "*Master, Master*" (v. 24) suggests they were pretty desperate, like a combo of being respectful and terrified at the same time. And I think we can get the impression they didn't give just a gentle nudge...

They go to him, desperate, means there was some faith (despite what Jesus says in v.25?), doesn't it? Were they waking Jesus up because they believed he could speak to the storm and still it or were they waking Jesus up to have a committee meeting to throw around a few options of how they might get out of this mess? Did they even realise they had the creator of the universe sleeping in their boat?

They come to him, desperate. What other option did they have? And isn't that what happens, in a storm. Does this account all mean that it is only in extreme circumstances we cry out to Jesus in desperation - "*Master, master*"? No.

Does it mean we scale up our desperation depending on the severity of circumstances? No. No, Jesus wants us, at all times, irrespective of the severity of storm to be consistently dependent on him, and trust him. Coming to him as our Lord, and as Lord of all in desperation is what he wants. Remember he creates the environment of desperation (like he did here in Luke 8) to teach us to be desperate for him.

2. Trust Him

Let's look at what Jesus does next...

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

Matt. 8:26 ...it was completely calm.

Mark 4:39 "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

How do we trust God in whatever (level of) circumstances confront us? By expecting there will be storms and trusting God in faith through those storms that he is in control and that he is Lord of all.

Because here's the thing: God creates the storm, God allows the storm,

Isa. 45:7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things

Ps. 65:6-7 God (is) the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas, who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength, who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.

Ps. 89:9 You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.⁵

Controller of all the power of the universe, over natural forces, over everything. Sometimes we accuse Satan for the being the one "attacking us". Illness, finances, relationship, an untimely and difficult death. Though he is certainly at work. It is never without God knowing and allowing. And sometimes God creates the storm. God also calms the storm and God is the calm in the storm.

Author Larry Crabb tells the painful story of losing his brother suddenly in a plane crash on March 3, 1991. He writes about the stages of his reaction as he discovers a new depth in his relationship with God. He notes five steps in his walk with God: I need you; I hate you; I hate me; I will survive; here's how I will survive. Before light comes in the journey, darkness is usually there. At the foundation is trusting in God and not doubting him. God has never promised our lives would be empty of pain, disappointment, or storms. Anyone who tells you otherwise is not teaching about a true walk with God. What God does promise are resources to journey through the raging waters⁶

So if He is an almighty Lord, creator of the heaven and earth it should come as no surprise to us that he can at will choose to speak to and command the elements.

⁵ (see Ps. 107:23-32)

⁶ Adapted from: Bock, Darrell L. "Bridging Contexts" In *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Luke*. By Darrell L. Bock, 238. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1996.

We know from Luke, Jesus had power over Satan and power over demons. How can he do that if he is not Lord of all?! The devil – at present – does seek to steal kill and destroy - but Jesus Christ is in complete control! He's God. So the issue is less why is God allowing this or why has God orchestrated this, and more, will we trust him to get through.

Faith doesn't happen automatically. It is the substance of things hoped for and evidence of things not seen. This means it is something that we must choose to exercise. We have to flex and develop and grow our faith muscles. And the place we're forced to do this is when we face overwhelming circumstances. That's when 'that little 'voice' might tend to say *"God doesn't care about you. Ah no such person as Jesus. You're on your own mate, it's to big just give up"*

Those are the times we go back to when we know God has been faithful. And we go to the word of God that proves he is faithful. And when we actively pursue faith and flex those faith muscles our faith is strengthened in any current storm and for the next one.

He is Lord of all and all powerful, you and I at some point simply need to decide: *will I trust him?*

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."***

*Matt. 8:26a, 27 He replied, "You of little faith, why are **you so afraid?**" ...*

*Mark 4:40, 41 He said to his disciples, "Why are **you so afraid?** Do you still have no faith?"*

Even though Mark says *"do you still have no faith"*, when we look across all 3 gospels I don't see this as them having zero faith in Jesus, rather the level of faith required to trust him in those particular circumstances. Their fear – in fact absolutely terrified is a better translation – would not have caught Jesus off guard. This was a sovereign set up to test their faith.

Did they fail spectacularly? No. This wasn't a pass/fail test. This was a teaching opportunity for them to see where their faith was at and secondly *who* their faith was in. He wanted them to see, know and experience the fact that **he alone is Lord of all**, and it is in him alone they can trust and put their faith. He was effectively saying in the storm I'm in charge here, I have power over the earth, I'm fully man but fully God, guys, don't look out there, put your faith in me. *"where is your faith?"*

And then we read that Luke has the disciples – after fear turns to amazement – asking: “*Who is this?*”

Actually our English word “*amazement*” does little justice to what the disciples were experiencing. They were (thou-mad-zo) out of their minds/senses with astonishment.⁷ Not (low) “*who is this*”, but (excited) “*who is this...*” Couldn’t we do with a little thou-mad-zo? Astonished out of our minds about Jesus?

“*Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!*”

They know who he was, and now they’re seeing Jesus fully unleash all of his power – not least over the elements. They knew he’d beaten Satan in the wilderness (4:1-13), driven our evil spirits (4:31-37), healed many (4:38-41), healed the leper (5:12-16), healed the paralysed man (5:17-26), converted the tax collector (5:27-32), healed the centurion’s servant (7:1-10), raise the widow’s son from death (7:11-17) *and on the other side of this event*, they’re about to see more healings, more miracles, and twelve will be chosen as his disciples...that’s all coming up! Yet they were surprised!!

This is not an insignificant event just popped in between Vv. 21 and 26. This was to test their faith and to demonstrate his power and show his glory. **Amazing!!** “*who is this?*”

Let me tell you who he isn’t. He is not or never sitting in the back corner of heaven, with his arms folded trying to figure out the universe, or, your life. Our ability to exercise faith rests in how much we fully comprehend the magnitude of God. **Faith depends entirely on who he is!** *Who is this Lord who our faith depends entirely on?*

I believe Paul’s prayer in Eph.1:17 – 23 offers us the most succinct yet comprehensive answer *who our Lord is*.

Eph. 1:17-22 *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order **that you may know** the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his **incomparably great power** for us who believe. **That power** is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*

⁷ Strong’s Greek: 2296. θαυμάζω (thaumazō) -- to marvel, wonder (biblehub.com)

Paul prays that Christians will understand that the power at work in us, is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, it is the same power present at creation, same power over the elements, same power that is able to deliver us, walk with us, as he wills, through whatever we face. Faith and trust in the power God go hand in hand.

Ps. 62:11 *One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: "Power belongs to you, God*

Rom 1:20 *For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse⁸.*

Think of the power of a formula 1 car, where does its power come from? Engine. Power. Where does Gods Power come from? Himself!

The power of God sustains the universe, keeping all the planet's in our solar system – and only he knows what's beyond that - moons and stars (Ps. 8), suns and galaxies all, perfectly in their place, as he holds all that in his hand (Ps. 24:1) To say nothing of the complexity of the human body, with its 30 trillion cells⁹, and really how we function with our brains and hearts and pumping blood, and to believe that all started with a bang! Amazing (thou-mad-zo)!

Our faith depends entirely on who this Lord is. And who the Lord is, is all powerful. This is who Jesus Christ is. King of kings Lord of Lords, the highest authority in the universe. One day every knee will bow, to him. Paul prayed that we might know that incomparably great power. Power, that is at work, in you and I. And all he asks is that we put our faith and trust in him, in the storms of life.

Corrie Ten Boom, author of *The Hiding Place* and survivor of the German concentration camps, said that people often came up to her and said, "Corrie, what great faith you have." She would smile and respond, "No, it's what a great God I have."

There might be someone here today, you want to believe this God, the story I've explained from Luke, you want to have faith, but can't quite make that step, maybe you think this is a bunch of spiritual nonsense. But when you put your faith in Christ it is in an actual person who did live and was resurrected from death and is absolutely true.

The bible is not a fictitious book; it is an historical account with eye witness testimonies of actual events. And it tells you this: that Jesus died on a cross, for our sin, sin that otherwise separates us from God. *"While were sinners Christ died for us"*.

⁸ Ps 29:3, 4 *The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic.*

⁹ [How Many Cells Are in the Human Body? Types, Production, Loss, More \(healthline.com\)](https://www.healthline.com/health/how-many-cells-are-in-the-human-body)

Only through accepting what Jesus has done can we be made right with God, which is necessary to be with him in eternity when we pass on.

Some of you are in a storm right, it's intolerable and painful, you don't know what to do. "*Master, master*" The story of the storm is about trusting that Jesus is Lord of all. If you have never known Jesus as your Lord, today you can commit your life to him and put your trust, faith and hope in him, you can, will learn to be amazed at who he is.

**For those who know Christ, trust him in whatever circumstances confront you. How? By expecting there will be storms and trusting God in faith through those storms that he is in control and that he is Lord of all.*

TAKEAWAYS

Know Christ as Lord

Trust Him in all storms

Expect storms

Trust He is in control

God, has, does, can, will allow the storms of life to build your faith. If it's not a level of faith you have needed yet, or need now, it will be faith you need for some unplanned crises that will be ahead of you, that is inevitable. Be ready for that...**He's in the boat, with you!**