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**Facing Fear**

**Luke 8:22-25**

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Introduction –

Max was a young man just out of college. He and several of his buddies decided to invest in a houseboat on the coast of Florida. They were landlubbers, full of spontaneity, youthfulness and just liked the idea of living on this boat while getting started in life. As time passed, the began to learn sailing, boat operation, etc. – but weren’t ready for that first hurricane season.

All he and his friends could think of was “tie-her-down-tight”. Frantically, they got every rope they could scour up and tied their boat to everything they could find – the dock, nearby trees, even the marina itself. They even tied the boat to itself. Ropes and knots were everywhere! When they were finished, it looks like the boat was caught in a gigantic spider web!

About this time, a seasoned sailor came along – you know the kind that was surely born with a tan and wearing docksiders. He laughed at all the tying and knotting and hard work the fellows had done!

“Boys, if the storm is bad, it’ll snap those trees like toothpicks and shatter your boat like a box of wood matches being slung across the room.

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Take some advice, put her out to deep water, use 4 large anchors, strong rope. Anchor her deep off the 4 sides and leave plenty of lack in your anchor lines. And if it’s not too bad a storm, she’ll make it through. “

Transition: slide 4

What do you do when you are facing the storms that blow in and out of your life?

How do you face the fear?

What do you do to weather the storm?

Upon whom do you lean?

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We are in the midst of something we have never experienced before, Covid -19 ! 1. It is FEARFUL to think IT IS 183 countries and territories. 2. It is hurting so many people and many are dying, especially the elderly with health issues. And I am one in this vulnerable group since I just turned 65 and have a history of pneumonia and breathing issues! And if you stay glued to the TV then all that information and the commentating, well it will make you fearful. And it is serious. 3. So serious the government has declared business to close, schools to close, day care centers to close, not to have gatherings with more than 6 people. You can't travel by air and nor going out of the country. The churches are closed down. Can't even gather for worship! or Bible study, youth or children's meetings. And now it is spreading into Africa and into India. And those areas will be devastated beyond belief because of poor medical systems and because most in those areas are so poor.

4. It is a fearful time! And most of us have some level of that fear!

In reading Luke we come across many healing / miracle stories. And in the midst of this Corona virus scare we have to ask the question:

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Are the miracles of Jesus – preformed nearly 2000 years ago - relevant today? Can they give us a way to cope with our fears?

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Today, we look at the one commonly known as “Jesus calming the sea.” Jesus is with his disciples and crossing the sea of Galilee. He is weary from teaching the masses of people following him, so he goes into the stern of the boat, makes himself as comfortable as possible upon a pillow and is soon fast asleep. I imagine the disciples are getting a breather as well because they are back in familiar surroundings sailing across the water with the wind blowing in their faces instead of people crowding in on them! But while Jesus is sleeping, and the disciples are enjoying the sailing a sudden storm breaks upon them.

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The savage winds soon lash the sea into wild fury. The waves begin to spit their rage into the face of heaven and to toss the puny boat as a juggler might toss a ball into the air.

At first the disciples bear up bravely. Some of them are men of the sea and are not easily frightened. They hold on their course in spite of the storm. But their situation becomes more threatening each moment. Meanwhile, they begin to turn perplexed and fear-filled looking for Jesus.

Is he never going to wake up?

Is it possible that with Death blowing its chilling breath in their faces, he is going to sleep through it all?

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At last they can stand the storm no longer. They are really afraid! They don’t want to wake him, but they must.

Frantic with fear, one grasp him rudely by the shoulders and shakes him to consciousness.

“Master, Master, we are perishing! Don’t you care if we drown?”

It is a very human question! Sure, one we’d ask if we had been there.

And yet, it is one that has been asked countless millions of times since then.

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“God, don’t you care that we are hurting and afraid?” Do you not care about this world and this spread of the COVID-19? About all it is doing to your creation and your people?

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Then Jesus rebukes the sea and causes a great calm to come across the waters.

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In Luke, it simply says the disciples are afraid.

In Mark, Jesus asks “Why are you afraid?”

Where is your faith? And these men who have excellent reasons for being afraid are now utterly silent! Their fear seems silly now in front of the man to whom even the sea listens.

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Why are you afraid? – Jesus asked it over and over in his days.

Why are you afraid? – The early church asked it as the first century martyrs died for their faith.

Why are you afraid? – Jesus continues to ask that of us today.

We would probably not be so silent as the disciples. There’s lots of reasons to be fearful with a virus taking over the world!

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Perhaps in your life the storm is brewing, and the water is rising, and you can see the tree starting to bend.

1. You’ve done everything possible, but your marriage still won’t stand. It’s just a matter of time.
2. You’ve bit off more than you can chew – you shouldn’t have agreed to do that project. There’s no way you can meet the deadline. And when that due date comes, and you don’t produce . . .
3. Health problems, Virus related problems

Perhaps the winds have already reached gale force and you’re holding on for your life.

1. “Why our son?” are the only words you can muster. The funeral is over, and the words of comfort have been politely said. Now, it is just you, your memories and your question – “why me?”
2. The tests were positive. I have the corona virus. I don't even know where I was exposed to it and by whom?
3. You thought that life had finally settled down. You could work and raise your kids. You had found a good community, safe - - -just a good place to live. Then the company decides to move you! or the family breaks up!

Yes, there are storms in our lives that suck the joy right out. Rising tides seep under the doors of our lives and cover the floors of our hearts. Winds that rip out our hopes by the roots.

And we become afraid!

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How do we face such fears that threaten our lives and the lives of the people we love?

1. Perhaps we clinch our fists and brace ourselves and say come hell or high water, I’m not going to let fear defeat me!

That’s what Max and his buddies were doing. They were tying down the boat, bracing for the storm. They were going to overpower it with the sheer strength of the ropes and trees and buildings.

But how foolish as the experienced sailor indicates! Some fear can be dealt with in this manner but how foolish we are when we think we can, by shear force of will, manipulate, control and direct all our fear. Fear is irrational and wells up from within. It is powerful and needs a powerful force to counter it’s destructive, paralyzing effects.

1. Some feel fear can be dealt with by simply ignoring it. IF we simply distract ourselves long enough, then eventually it will go away. We are like the young adults on spring break in Florida going to bars and just laughing like nothing is going on and the corona virus is nothing.

After all, this method worked sometimes when we were children. We tried it a lot! But it is not an adult response!

Many people get a diagnosis of cancer and just can’t believe it and go for weeks before they’ll submit to treatment. Many times, this time makes the cancer harder to deal with.

Many people get the warning from their body that they are eating the wrong foods, not getting enough exercise, or living with too much stress – yet they ignore all this hoping it’ll just go away.

And when we do this, we are simply driving our fears down into the subconscious and thus sow seeds for future problems.

Ignoring our fear may work temporarily but it’s just temporary. Ignoring fear allows it to fester and hurt us more deeply at a future date.

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-How do we face our fears?

**-Jesus said it is by faith we can face all that seeks to beset us.**

All that comes our way and threatens us!

**-The antidote to fear is Faith!**

To the disciples’ fearful response to the storm, Jesus says, “Where is your faith?”

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**When faith comes in, fear flees the scene**.

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Jesus knew this from his own experience. His was a tempestuous life. His popularity eventually changed to hate. He faced bitter opposition. He was nailed to a cross.

But through it all, his faith in God turned his fear into faithful action and obedience.

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EX: Bob Woods in Pulpit Digest, tells the story of a couple who took their son, 11 and daughter, 7 to Carlsbad Caverns. As always, when the tour reached the deepest point in the cavern, the guide turned off all the lights to dramatize how completely dark and silent it is below the earth’s surface.

The little girl, suddenly enveloped in darkness, was frightened and began to cry.

Immediately, we heard the voice of her brother “Don’t cry. Somebody here knows how to turn on the lights.”

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In a real sense, this is the message of the gospel – When we face loneliness, unpopularity, bitter loss, intense suffering, **you’ll be frightened** but that fear can be conquered because Jesus turns on the light. Faith is not a light that scatters all the darkness but a lamp that guides our steps in the night.

FAITH does not make things easy; it makes it possible -to let go of our fears

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**Faith in God, through Christ, has power that will overcome any of our fears**.

**Faith in God, through Christ, will not allow us to be paralyzed and racked with pain of fear.**

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**Faith is God will give us a deep set of anchors that will allow our boat of life to ride out the storms of life.**

**Facing fears? You can do it - successfully – through faith in Christ Jesus.**

**Slide 23**

Isaiah 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers,they willnot sweep over you. ... when facing stormy seas, God will be with you, with calm and endurance.

If fear is racking your life some way today – then pause right now and give your life to Jesus. Jesus can take away your fear or give you the strength to face and defeat it!

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Keep calm Jesus is in the Boat

Slide 25

Peace is not the absence of Storms. Peace is the presence of God, **which dispels FEAR**.

Amen

Amen.