



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Luke 8:22-25

“Faith and the Night of the Tempest”

TRANSCRIPT

[AUDIO BEGINS]...reading for this morning is in Luke chapter 8, verse 22 through verse 25. A familiar portion that is found in all three of our synoptics -- Matthew, Mark, and Luke -- it is the incident of the stilling of the storm and you may remember the context. It was a day of busy ministry for our Lord and in fact the crowds were so great that he had entered into the bow of a little ship and the throng of people was gathered around him on the shore and he had taught them throughout the day. Among his instruction of the day were the series of parables that are recorded for us in Mark chapter 4 and, one of them at least, in Luke chapter 8. And then at the end of the day Luke tells us what happened. “Now it came to pass”, this is verse 22 of the 8th chapter,

“Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, (some of the renderings are, ‘And they were about to be swamped,’) and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish, (Mark says that they said, ‘Master, master, carest Thou not that we perish?’) Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they

ceased, and there was a calm, (Mark says, ‘There was a great calm.’) And he said unto them, Where is your faith? (Matthew adds something like, ‘O ye, of little faith.’) Where is your faith? (Luke says,) And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! For he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.”

May God bless this reading from his word. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the opportunity of this hour. We thank Thee that the open Scriptures are the means of our growth in faith and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Father, we recognize that in the days in which we leave it is his presence and his enablement that qualifies us and makes us meet for happy and joyous and significant existence.

We thank Thee, Lord, for the assurance of his presence, remembering his promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” And so we rejoice that at the end of 1971 we can look up to Thee and acknowledge his constant presence and his help for us throughout the days of this past year. And we want to worship Thee and give Thee the praise that is due Thy wonderful name.

We look forward, Lord, to the future with anticipation, for Thou hast not only encouraged us by Thy presence but Thou hast assured us through the Scriptures that Thou art coming again. And so we look forward to the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. We trust that we shall meet him in the air with joy and in the full experience of the salvation which our Lord has accomplished at infinite cost.

We express to Thee our gratitude for the ministry of the Spirit in faith and life. And so Lord, we rejoice and we praise Thee. We would bring to Thee the saints and not only of this particular fellowship but of all of those that make up the body of Jesus Christ, wherever they may be. We pray today Lord, for each one and may the Holy Spirit

continue his sanctifying ministry to the day of our perfecting and in our own individual lives, Lord, with the many problems and difficulties and perplexities, occasionally the tragedies that we must face. Minister to us Lord out of Thine ability and strength and consolation to the edification of the whole body. We pray that Thou alt guide the elders and the deacons of this fellowship. AS the future is faced, we pray Lord that we may be by Thy grace able to meet it, with joy and with fruitfulness. And so we commit ourselves to Thee, we pray that Thou alt minister to us through the hour of the word that follows. And Lord, we commit the time to Thee. In Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] The account of the stilling of the storm is found in Matthew and Mark and Luke, as I mentioned a moment ago, and in the Markan account in verse 40 of chapter 4, there are words which are rendered by one of our recent new translations, “He said unto them, Why are you such cowards? Have you no faith, even now?” My subject this morning is “Faith and the Night of the Tempest.”

Who is this man who calls men cowards because they are afraid of the storm? Who is he who speaks words to raving lunatics, as a reading of the context will indicate, terrified fathers and hopeless cripples, leaving them a peace that passes all understanding? Some answer, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?” But others, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Some answer with the words, “A gluttonous man and a wine bibber.” While others fall down before him and worship him, saying, “My Lord, and my God.”

It is remarkable how many people have attempted to give us a life of Jesus Christ in recent years. In the 19th Century it was estimated that over sixty thousand lives of Jesus Christ were written, most of which scholars would call reconstructions of the life of Jesus. And I think the remarkable thing about the sixty thousand attempts, if there were that many attempts, to reconstruct the life of Jesus have not caused our Lord to be lost in the midst of the manifold interpretations of him.

One thing we have discovered is that in spite of the thousands of attempts that have been made to explain Jesus, he persists long after they and these sixty thousand attempts for the most part, these reconstructions, have found their way to the cemetery of departed hypothesis, but Jesus Christ himself still lives on. This incident decisively answers that ancient question, “Who is Jesus Christ?” In phrases which many, unfortunately I think, consider the tired blood of ecclesiastical language it shouts that the man who sleeps from fatigue is also God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, as the council at Nicea phrased it.

But I'm bringing you to this account this morning not because of that question, although one cannot escape it as we expound the verses, but because it asks a further question, one that queries the unbelieving world, “Who is Jesus Christ?” But the believing world, “Where is your faith?” That, I think, is a question that concerns us who believe. The rabbis call the Sea of Galilee, the chosen sea. They said God made all of the seas but this one was his chosen sea and it surely is a beautiful place. If you were to travel to the land of Palestine you would discover that it is not the land where Jesus walked anymore. For abounding on every hand are the familiar tourist traps that make a land somewhat different from what it used to be.

But there is one place that is the same and that is the Sea of Galilee. To the East are the brown fields and with hills that rise several thousand feet high. To the North is ultimately great Mount Hermon, snow capped throughout the year. The lake itself is oval, about thirteen miles or so long, about seven miles wide. But in the midst of the things that are about it, it is a beautiful little place and someone has called it a sapphire stone set in gold. It's chose, too, because of the great part that it plays in the ministry of our Lord. If we went through the gospels and we took out all of the incidents of these gospels which have to do with the Sea of Galilee, we would decimate our New Testament gospels. For it is around the sea that many of the great events in our Lord's life took place. For example, it was around the sea that he chose his disciples. It was around the

sea that he fed the five thousand. It was around the sea that he himself lived, for he lived in Capernaum when he was carrying on his ministry. It was on the sea itself that he walked at one time and it was the sea that he stilled in this story that we are looking at this morning.

He had been busy for the day preaching and nothing is more exhausting than preaching. And if one preaches for hours there is tremendous exhaustion and the Lord was tired from the day of ministry. And at the conclusion of it when the crowds were dismissed, he spoke to the apostles and disciples and said, “Let’s cross over to the eastern shore.” And he himself entered into the little boat, perhaps the very one from which he had preached, he went over to the place where the steersman sat, he took the cushion, Mark tells us, which was used by the steersman, the pilot, and he put it over by the side of the boat and there he lay down in order to rest.

If I have a good picture of what follows I think I can imagine Peter assuming the captaincy of the little skiff and I think I can see him directing Andrew and John and the others into the boat, and there was also a little flotilla of other boats with them, and perhaps he was the commander-in-chief of the whole fleet. And after he had given them proper instructions he himself shoved off and jumped into the boat and they began to make their way across the sea. It was probably Peter who ordered the black horizontal sail to be raised and after they had settled down they looked up at the skies and as the skies darkened they saw the stars come out. It was a nice, cool night. There was a very, very light breeze and soon our Lord had fallen asleep. As someone has said, “He was calmly sleeping, his respiration in rhythm with the pulsation of the sea. There was no sound but the voices of the apostles speaking. I think I can imagine John leaning on the bosom of our Lord and Peter saying a few words to Andrew.

Soon they felt a cool breeze and then a sharper cool breeze. And it is customary on the Sea of Galilee for storms to come down the waters from the North and East. And very frequently these storms do turn that little sea into a boiling caldron in the matter of a

few seconds. And I think I can imagine Andrew saying to Peter, “It looks as if we may have a bit of a blow tonight.” And Peter then saying, “Yes, perhaps so, that does feel cool, perhaps we better shorten sail.” And as they get up to shorten sail the wind really strikes them like the rapport of a Colt 45 and before they know it mast and sail are hanging over the side of the ship and they are in the midst of a tremendous storm.

And as the storm grew in intensity the apostles grew in fear. Now this sea was undoubtedly a beautiful place for a storm like that because it was small and it is not relatively deep and so you can imagine that it was not long before the black thunderclouds, the furious gusts, the floods of rain, for that is what the Greek word translated storm here means, had come and they were terrified. Matthew uses the term ‘seismos’ to describe the storm and that is the word from which we get seismograph. It really means an earthquake. And so this storm was of such a character that it literally shook that lake and they felt it.

And remember, too, that Peter and the others were men who made their livelihood on that lake, they were familiar with it. They knew every nook and cranny of it and they were frightened. And if they were frightened with all of the experience that they had, it must have been a terrible storm. And so as we look at the storm and notice the creation, it is shaking with all of the fury of the storm. But when we look at the creator, what a contrast; Jesus had fallen asleep.

You know, this is the only time that we see Jesus sleeping. We see him tired, resting, preaching, rejoicing, commanding, playing, but we never see him sleeping. This is the only time. Now I’m sure that our Lord has regular sleeping hours, just as anyone else, whether he slept eight hours or not a night, no one will ever know. But he was truly man and this is one of the evidences of his true humanity. And so if we were to ask the question who called men cowards for being afraid of the storm we would say, “Well, he is a man.” He sleeps in the midst of the storm and the fatigue of preaching is fatigue for him too. He is a man just as we are men, apart from sin.

But look at the creatures, they are terrified. And we read that they came to him and they awoke him saying, “Master, master,” and as Mark says, “Carest Thou not that we perish?” The experienced fishermen are tremendously afraid and apparently confused because in the accounts of this incident, these various accounts give us different words for the things that they said to him. In one of them they come and say, “Teacher, carest Thou not that we perish.” In another, “Lord, we are perishing.” And still another, “Master, we are perishing.” And so did Didaskale, Kurie, Epistata or epistata, all of these words are used so I can imagine that three or four on the boat came to him in a group and one said Teacher, one said, Master, one said Lord, but they all agreed in one thing, for this word is found in all of them, “We are perishing.” We are lost.

Now anybody who has ever been around a sea knows that lost is a very unpopular, I should say, but common word. And that is the word they center their attention upon. And isn't it striking, too, in the light of the things that people say about Jesus of Nazareth that these men who were fishermen and who were men who knew all about that lake and knew all about sailing, they come to, according to many of our men who have reconstructed the life of Jesus, they come to a man who is supposed to be only a carpenter. Isn't it striking that in the midst of the storm those who are sailors and true sailors, come to the carpenter for help? Apparently they thought that he was more than just a carpenter. And so they come to him.

Harold Sengen has said, “There were two storms in that lake that night. There was a storm in the water and there was a storm in the heart of the disciples. “Carest Thou not?” Now that is rude. Later on it is Martha who uses words similar to that, “Carest Thou not?” This is a rude vote of no confidence at the moment of despair. They had not yet learned, apparently, that the storm with Jesus is better than a calm without him. We perish, self-centered fear, perhaps, that we will fail. Very personal, and very common, “Lord, carest Thou not that we perish?”

Now I think we might if we wished to say that they were thinking about his safety as well but I really doubt that is the force of this passage. They were thinking about themselves, “Master, carest Thou not that we perish?” Now our text says, “Then he arose.” I’ve said it many times and I still say it, this is a great scene for a great artist. No better picture could be painted, to my mind, than this raging storm with the flashing of the lightning, the crashing of the thunder, the furious gusts, the water that is rolling over the boat so much so that they’re almost swamped and some are bailing water out of the boat and Jesus, in the midst of the storm, in the midst of all the fury of the elements, he rises in the boat to give the command that stills the storm. Now there’s a scene for you.

I once said this over the radio in Chicago and someone sent me in a scene and some artists had already recognized that this was a great scene for a great artist and had attempted to paint it. Isn’t it striking, too, that Jesus hears their cry but he doesn’t hear the storm? He can sleep amid the thunder, he can sleep amid the lightning, he can sleep with the water rushing into the boat, but he sleeps, he does not awaken. But when the disciples come, he awakens to their cry.

Some years ago I lived in University Park and I lived on Caruth near the railroad track. And every night about two o’clock we could look forward to the train coming by which would not only make its customary noise but would be so close to us that it would literally shake the ground of the house of which we were, and we learned to sleep right through it. I discovered about my wife, though, that she could sleep right through that storm of that sound of that train. But our children were little then and they were down the hall in their bedroom and the moment one of them made some unusual turn in the bed that was out of the ordinary, she was immediately awakened and on her feet to see what had happened.

Now our Lord is like that, you see, because in the midst of the storm he can sleep but when the disciples come with their cry he immediately is awakened. And what a tremendous encouragement that is, you know, for a Christian to know that while Jesus is

able to sleep in the storm, he cannot sleep when his disciples come with need for help. Now Jesus arises and he is tired from the fatigue of the day but even though he is tired and fatigued, he is still the terrifying Lord of lords and King of kings, for he speaks to the wind and to the waves. The words that Mark gives are that he says to them, “Peace, be still!” The “peace”, perhaps addressed to the wind, the “be still” to the waves.

My teacher for a long time was Donald Grey Barnhouse and he commented many years ago before I had ever looked up this Greek word that is translated “be still”, that it was from a root that means, literally, to be muzzled and was often used of animals, even dogs. And so he liked to translate it, “Jesus stood and he spoke to the winds and waves, Peace, back to your kennels.” [Laughter] And I noticed when I read this in the Greek text that the tense is perfect, which refers to an action that takes place in past time, the results of which continue and I think we can improve on Dr. Barnhouse’s translation. We could say, “Peace, or hush, back to your kennels and stay there!” That’s the kind of word that he spoke.

Now one might think, you know, well he speaks as if he has some resentment and I am inclined to think that that is true to the text. For in many of the cases of the incidents of our Lord’s life, it is evident that there is a demonic force behind the circumstances and in this incident too it probably, because Jesus rebuked the texts, says, “The wind and the waves,” there is an evidence of the fact that he regarded them as the instrumentality of the evil one at this time, with the express permission, of course, of God. And so he rebuked the wind and waves as if they were under a false master at that moment. So he rebukes them and he said, “Hush, back to your kennels and stay there,” and immediately there was a calm. Now we often refer to this as the miracle of the stilling of the storm but we could easily refer to it also as the miracle of the calming of the waves, too.

I lived in Charleston, South Carolina for many years and the storms came in the fall, usually, and we looked forward to a tornado or a hurricane or at least a good blow

every September. And I learned that when storms come the waters, after the wind is gone, continue to surge too and fro for hours, often, afterwards. But when Jesus speaks to the storm there is an immediate calm and Mark is so impressed by it that he calls it a great calm. In other words, the water was just like glass when he spoke his mighty word.

Well, it is evidence of the fact that he is not at nature's mercy, but nature is at his mercy. Now I think it is at this point that we have the answer to the question, “Who is this man that calms the storms and calls men cowards for being afraid.” For, you see, he is not only true man of true man but he is also true God of true God. I do not think it can be recalled too often that the article of Christ's deity is the theological expression of the evangelical experience of his salvation. The reason we call Jesus Christ, God, is because he has saved us and only a god could save us. And the reason we look at an incident such as this and see that not only is our Lord a man who has power over men's minds, they might say, “Well that's simply psychosomatic, and we know that scientifically the minds of individuals may have authority and power over other's minds.” But he is a man who has authority and power over nature itself and so he is more than a man. He must be God.

The Christian effort to grow in the knowledge of the Son of God has taken three historic stages. And I do not think that any Christian should ever be without this knowledge. The first stage was the Ebionitish or the Socinian stage. Now the Ebionites were an early false cult. They stressed the saintliness and the moral superiority of Jesus Christ. And that, of course, is fine so long as you do not regard that as the final interpretation of him. They said he is our religious hero, he is a religious genius unsurpassed. He is the grand and perfect receptacle of the Holy Spirit of God. He is a man, God's mightiest prophet. God's perfect prophet. Now a lot of that is true, of course, and unfortunately many people think that that is all you can say about Jesus Christ. In fact, as you know from hearing me preach, I have to read a lot of scholarly literature and I have to read a lot of the lives of Jesus Christ that are written by men who

are in the forefront of New Testament scholarship today. Almost without exception these are the attitudes that men have had to Jesus Christ in the 20th Century and the latter part of the 19th. They regard him as a man, a religious hero, a religious genius. They regard him as a man who is characterized by saintliness and moral supereminence but they do not regard him as God. They are Ebionites. They are Socinians. Faustus Socinius or Socinus was a man who believed that Jesus Christ was not truly God and just as the Ebionites flourished in the age after Christianity, so the Socinians have flourished in the age of the Reformation not into the present time. And in Dallas, Texas in 1971 if you were to enter into the great majority of the Christian churches of this city you would find that their views concerning Jesus of Nazareth are Socinian. They do not regard him as God, they regard him as a saintly, morally super eminent man, a religious hero, but that is all. This is the foundation of the theology of the Unitarian church, they are Socinian. They are not giving us anything new; they are giving us things that are old as the 2nd and 3rd Centuries of the New Testament period.

Then there is the Arian stage, the second. Arius was a presbyter who contended with Athanasius of Alexandria at the Council of Nicea. Arius felt that Jesus was a superman, he was God's plenipotentiary, he was his superhuman chancellor. The most private secretary of his eternal praise and so far invested with his power and prestige, yet he is not of one nature with God, though of like nature with God. Not of one nature with God, of like nature with God. And the struggle over homoiousia which means “like nature”. And homoousia, the “same being” or essence, or nature. That struggle was the struggle that came to a head at Nicea and the Christian church, guided by the Holy Spirit, came to the conclusion that Jesus Christ was of the same nature with the Father. He was not only Son of God, but God. And it is safe to say that that controversy, which actually hinged over one letter and iota, marks the difference between Christianity and all the religions of the earth. And if the Christians had not been led by the Holy Spirit to make the correct decision there, Christianity today would be something that we study in our

history books as a philosophy, a way of life that flourished in the early centuries of the present era, that's all.

Now I've had some good friends down through the years with whom I've discussed theology and one of them I have in mind in particular. He and I often discussed whether Jesus Christ was God or Son of God. He often contended Jesus Christ was only Son of God, not God. We discussed the texts; they did not seem to make an impression on him. We discussed the things that he did; they did not seem to make an impression upon him. We discussed the things that the New Testament says about the knowledge of Jesus Christ, how he knows about the angels, how he knows the about the furniture of heaven, how he forgives sins when the Scripture says, “I am God, the Savior, and there is no one else,” and yet he forgives sin, that never seemed to make an impression upon him. He insisted Jesus Christ was Son of God but not God. Now that is Arian, that is not Christian. And fortunately for the Christian church they made the right decision.

And that brings us to the third or the Athanasian stage. The question is, did God, in Christ, announce himself or did he give himself? And only he who lost us could find us, and only he who was wronged could forgive, and only he who had been offended by the sin of man could satisfy his own holiness. And remember, my dear friends, God cannot depute redemption. He cannot have any one else carry out redemption for him. And we cannot commit the eternal safekeeping of our souls to any demigod. A half God cannot save us. That is why, you see, Jesus Christ had to come. It was not enough for the prophets to come; it was not enough for the psalmists to come. For the prophets and the psalmists could never convince us that their voice was really the voice of God. All of the miracles that are intended by men to point out and affirm the truth of spiritual things may be explained away. In other words, in order to be sure we have to have a word from God himself and that is why Jesus Christ had to come. No man has seen God at any

time, the only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And only if he is God can we be sure.

Now, of course, there are many other questions about this that we could talk about. Why, then, in the Old Testament did men hear the prophets and respond in faith? Well, you see, God the Holy Spirit was working and it is he in the final analysis who gives men faith and who gives assurance, and only he, for in the final analysis God authenticates God. And so he did but it was in the light of what was to come that God himself would come, and he did. And when Jesus stilled the storm we have evidence of the fact that the God, beside whom there is no savior, has come and has shown us who he is.

What shall we make then of this story? Well some of us may make valiant attempts to rationalize it. We may say that Jesus stilled the storm of fear in the disciples' heart or we may put it down to mere coincidence as some have said, the apostles were mistaken. You see, when they saw Jesus arise in the boat and they saw him speak a word, immediately afterward the storm ceased and it really was just a case of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*; that is, he spoke and therefore because the storm ceased after he spoke. They thought it was because he had spoken, but it was just a coincidence.

That does not satisfy me. This happens too often with our Lord. No, I am convinced that this is the mystery and the marvel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Very God, a very God, very man, a very man, God of God, light of light, begotten, not made. And so to answer the question, “Who is this man who calls men cowards for fearing in the midst of the storm?” He is truly man, but he is truly God. He is the God-man. Now that's not the real purpose of this miracle, in my interpretation. We read, “And he said unto them, Where is your faith?” It would appear to me that that is the point of what has happened. Now this rebuke for their frantic panic is designed to lead to the conviction that the cure of fear is faith, trust.

This week one of our friends came by to visit us, I think it was around Tuesday or Wednesday, and she's a lovely person with whom we love to talk and she has two boys who are all boys. They are wonderful little boys and one of the, particularly, wants to be a football player. He's only about this high. He wants to be a pro football player and so far as he's concerned there is nothing in this world but professional football and he's already preparing to be that. Well, they had decorated the Christmas tree and she had persistently warned them, “Do not play with the Christmas tree, do not play with the Christmas tree, do not play with the Christmas tree.” And she told us about Tuesday or Wednesday she looked over, as she had warned them and warned them, she looked over just in time to see the Christmas tree halfway down [Laughter] to the floor and there it crashed and some the ornaments broke and she said, “At that moment everything that Bill Gothard had taught me in a whole week left me!” [Laughter] Frantic panic, now that, I think, is what we have here.

And I want you to notice some principles. In the first place there is the principle of the trial of faith. God permits the winds to blow, but the point is he is with us in them. Now Jesus knew what was going to happen. He is not only truly man, but he is truly God, and when he said to them, “Now boys, let's move over to the Eastern side of the shore tonight,” he knew precisely what was going to happen. He knew within his heart there was going to be a tremendous storm but he also knew the truth, counted all joy when you divers testings, and he thought, now this is going to be a time of instruction.

And though he knew what was going to happen in his divine nature he did not say now, “Boys, I want you to get in the boat and make it across and I'm going by land this time.” [Laughter] I think I'll pass this one by. He didn't say that. No, he knew precisely what was going to happen but he knew that the will of God was for him to be with them. And he was with them. Now you know, I don't think really the greatest struggle that the apostles and disciples had was the storm. I'm wondering if perhaps the greatest struggle that they had was not the fact that in the midst of that storm he appeared

so unconcerned. Why, he wasn't even concerned enough to be awake, he was sleeping, asleep. And I think they might well have said, “You know, he's been preaching to us all day long, he's been telling us about the love of God and the care of God, and the many other things that preachers normally preach about and look at him, right in the midst of the storm he hasn't got the slightest desire to comfort us and we are terrified.

And so often that's the case, isn't it? God appears so utterly unconcerned with our problems, why doesn't he seem to care? “Master, master! Is it that you do not have any care for us that we are perishing?” Mark says. He allows me, a Christian, to suffer at the hands of a non-Christian. He allows all these things to go wrong with me and with my family and not with that other person. Why doesn't God do something? And further, he doesn't even seem to be interested. And I pray and I pray and nothing happens. How often that's the case, you know. The storms come and God seems to be sleeping.

Now I think if I were to look at this I would say that of course the word of God teaches that our Lord is concerned always. But you know, the foolishness of that kind of reasoning is most illustrated by the cross of Jesus Christ. Because when our Lord went to the cross, of all people who could say, “God apparently is unconcerned with my problems,” it was he. And it was he who cried out, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” But in the midst of that great experience which is the central experience of all human existence, the death of Christ, God did care. And it was he, who through it, was delivering men. That's the final answer to the question, “Does God care?”

Someone has said, “When life is a picnic, we play with theology. When life is a campaign, we grope for religion.” Now I think I agree with the sentiment of that. For often when things were going wonderful we talk about theology but when things really become rough for us, then we look for a faith that holds us. The trial of faith, it comes brethren, count it all joy when the Christmas tree collapses. When I finished this morning someone greeted me in the church kitchen by saying, “I know precisely what you meant,

for my children this week broke a gallon bottle of milk in the kitchen.” And she said, “It was very difficult to apply the principles of faith and rest at a moment like that.”

Now there is the principle of the nature of faith, too. You will notice that faith is not feeling. The apostles’ feelings, no doubt, were feelings of fear. There was nothing wrong with the fear. Jesus did not say, “Why are you afraid?” only. He went to the root of which was their lack of faith. There is nothing wrong with being afraid, no man can keep from being afraid. But perfect love casts out fear. Furthermore, faith is not automatically exercised like that thermostat over there that no one seems to want to touch after I mentioned it the other day. Faith is not a thermostat which rises with the experiences of life. Faith must be exercised, it is active trust. It is not passive rest, it is active trust. And there are degrees of faith. Matthew says, “O ye of little faith.” It’s possible to have little faith; it’s possible to have great faith. Faith is a matter of degree. One must begin with the faith that saves, the gift of God and the faith that delivers is also the gift of the sanctifying Holy Spirit but it is active trust, instituted, initiated by God, responded to by you and me.

And finally, will you notice the principle of the value of the weakest faith? Isn’t it striking that Jesus Christ rebukes the wind and waves and rebukes the disciples and he says, “Where is your faith,” and often we overlook that he has already delivered them when he rebukes them. Isn’t that striking? He does not say to them, “Now, where is your faith? And until you muster it up, I’m not going to do a thing about the storm and the water.” No, you see, they had enough faith to come to him. They came to him because they had been given this faith in their salvation and the Holy Spirit had nurtured this and while all of their trust in him as a constant presence and deliverer seemed to have vanished, they knew enough to come to him. They came to him. And our God honors that little bit of faith that they have enough to come to him and they delivers them. Then he rebukes them, expressing his disappointment in them but it’s after he has saved them. You see, my dear friends, that’s the kind of God we have.

We don't have one who demands and then on the basis of a legalistic attitude blesses us if we manifest our great faith. He doesn't operate like that and so he delivers. Now greater rest leads to greater joy. And they would have enjoyed that storm a great deal more if they had been men of great faith instead of little faith. But they were delivered, for you know, the Bible says that he is going to complete all of his work in us unto the day of Jesus Christ. The same Holy Spirit who gives faith, nurtures faith, nurtures our dispositions, brings us ultimately to perfect sanctification and likeness to Jesus Christ. And he never stops his work. And it is a gracious work, done through faith that he grants.

Now the reaction that they have is the reaction of awe and wonder. If I were teaching the gospels dispensationally I would say that the true answer is, "This is the Messiah." What manner of man is this - by the way, none of the texts have the word "man". They simply say, "What sort of person is this who commands even the winds and waves and they obey him." Why, the true answer is, "This is the Messiah. He has demonstrated himself to be the Messiah, the divine Messiah, by the things that have happened."

May I conclude by saying this? There are different types of storms that you and I face. The greatest storm of all is the storm of guilt. And when the sense of a man's guilt for his sin comes upon him, it is only the blood of Jesus Christ that will lay that storm. And if you are here in this audience this morning and you have never yet believed in Jesus Christ but you realize that you are guilty and undone and divinely condemned, the only thing that will bring you peace in your heart is a knowledge of the work of God through Christ on the cross at Calvary. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. And it is only through this work that your guilt may be settled. That storm is the basic storm of life. You may sit in the audience as a person who has heard preaching for many years, many years, good preaching, sound preaching, but if you don't know deep

down in your heart what it means to be guilty before God and what it means for Christ to die for sin, you have not had the basic experience of human life.

But once we have become Christians then there come the storms of anxiety and doubt and temptation and resentment and sorrow and it is our Lord's presence that lays those storms. I know that someone may say, “Well Dr. Johnson, I think I'm willing to grant all of that but how may I have faith to meet the storms of life?” Where is your faith?

You know, I think if I had been in that boat with the disciples and someone had asked me where is my faith after this incident I would have known precisely how to answer that question, “Well listen, my friend, I have implicit faith in the midst of a storm now, providing Jesus Christ's on board because I have seen what he has done. I saw him arise from his sleep, I saw him utter those words to the wind and to the waves, and I saw the wind fold its wings and I saw the waves close their jaws and I know what he can do for I have been with him.

Now we cannot say that in 1971. We have not been with him but God has made provisions for that too. He has given us the word of God without and he has given me the Holy Spirit of God within and as the Holy Spirit guides me and confirms the truth to me as I read and study the Scriptures and fellowship with the Lord of these Scriptures, I spend time with him. I am with him in that boat. I am with him by that lunatic of Gadara, I am with him as he heals the daughter of Jairus, I am with him as he heals the woman with the issue of blood and I know what he can do from his word and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Where is your faith? What part does the word of God have in your life? That's really what it comes down to. May God help us to flee to the Scriptures for the strengthening of faith that gives joy and peace in the experiences in life. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the experiences of life, the storms. The storms of anxiety, the tempests of doubt, the disturbances of fear, resentment. And

we thank Thee for him who lo, is with us always, even to the end of the age. By Thy grace, Lord, motivate us to come to the Scriptures and be taught as we have communion with our Lord, very God, a very God, yet very man, a very man. Truly God and man. The one person, Jesus Christ. May Thy grace...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]