

Where Is Your Faith? Second Wednesday in Lent, March 9, 2022

Luke 8: 22-25 A windstorm swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water and they were in danger. They went to Jesus and woke him up, shouting “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. Jesus said to them. “Where is your faith?”

My dad, who was the one who was in the car with me when I was trying to get enough hours behind the wheel in order to get my license; always told me “Look down the road. Not just in front of you, but down the road. Because where you look, or what you focus on is where you’re going to end up.” This will do 3 things for you: **First**, it will keep you in your lane. Even if you can’t see the lines, due to snow or dirt or water, look ahead to where you can see your lane. Just that simple focus will keep you going straight ahead. **Second**, it will give you enough time to avoid problems ahead of you. You will know when there is an accident or huge pot hole that you need to avoid. **Third**, it will help you be prepared for when other – less focused drivers pull in front of you to avoid the accident or pot hole they just pulled up to!

What is true about driving is also true in life. What we focus on is often where we will end up. Jesus disciples were in a boat traveling across the lake during a huge storm. They were terrified and in danger of dying. They were focused on the wind, the waves and the condition of the boat. So they woke up Jesus saying, “Master, we’re dying!”, and he spoke to the wind and waves and they stopped. And there was a calm. And then Jesus asked them, “Where is your faith?”

I don’t think Jesus asked that question as a rebuke. It is more of a wondering, bafflement; “Where is your faith?” He doesn’t doubt that they have faith! Which is interesting!! He’s asking, Where it is! Greek; literally says - What place is your faith in? What are you relying on?

We are only in the 8th chapter of Luke and Jesus did not perform a miracle until the end of Chapter 4, where he casts out an unclean spirit from a man. And the last verse in that passage says, that “they were all amazed and kept saying to one another, With authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and out they come!” And a report about him began to reach every place in the region.” After this, Jesus also heals 4 other people, but mostly he does a lot of teaching, and sharing of parables. He doesn’t even call his disciples until chapter 6, which is just 2 chapters before this! So, the disciples are still kind of new to Jesus and kind of new to this faith thing.

But Jesus is still wondering, where is your trust? What are you putting your faith in? And he asks us the same question. Where do you place your faith? What do you rely on? Where is your reliance on me?

For Jesus, it’s not a matter of how long we’ve been a follower or a believer - the real issue is always one of where is our trust? I’m also not talking about doubts. If we’re believers, we are going to have doubts. There is no shame in that. The president of the seminary, that Pastor Doug and I attended, used to tell us that “Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith.” They don’t mean you’ve lost your pants, it’s just that sometimes they are not real comfortable. Same is true of faith – it’s still there, but it may not always be real comfortable – and sometimes we struggle with how it fits.

Many of us tend to travel thru life at 150 miles and hour; or at least at times it feels that way. At that speed it’s inevitable that we are going to encounter some accidents, road blocks, and pot holes in life. We may end up asking questions like: Why is this happening to me? Why can’t I seem to get my life together? Why don’t my good intentions work out? Why can’t I just get a break sometimes?

We, like the disciples, tend to focus on the wind, waves and condition of our boat. That makes life not only challenging, but down right troublesome, and even frightening. And then it seems to me that right at those times, Jesus

asks us, “Where is your faith? Who or What are you relying on most? Where did you place your trust?” For those of us who follow Jesus this is still a very crucial question.

I would like you to take the note card that our ushers gave to you when you came in tonight and take a pencil from the rack in front of you or grab a pen, and answer this question: (No one else is going to read this but you.)

What are 3 things you are absolutely certain that Jesus can do?

Don't take time a lot of time to think about this. Just write down the first 3 things that come to your mind.

Next, I want you to write down why you believe those things. What causes you to be so certain that Jesus can do these? Again, don't think a lot about this – just write what comes to your mind!

Now I would like to ask you to share why you're so certain. I don't want to know what 3 things you wrote down, but what is it that has you so convinced that Jesus can do these things? What are your reasons for placing your trust in Jesus?

Past experience? Promises in the Bible? Personal Experience with Jesus?

Finally, I would like to ask that When you think about struggles you are facing today in life: can any of the reasons you gave for your absolute certainty that Jesus could do those three things, help you now?

Could the faith you have placed in Jesus in those circumstances, help you with your struggles today? How can faith in Jesus help us see things differently?

Maybe you can't answer that now. That's Okay. But if we choose to focus on Jesus instead of the struggles around us like the wind and waves of life – we will be more calm in the middle of our storms. (At times it takes some of us a while to learn that.) When we put our faith in Jesus, it gives us a different perspective. We can look back on the past and we can see God's work in our

lives and realize that God has been with us all the time. We can live in God's love and promises in the present, knowing that God is at work right now and is with us – even when we don't see it. And we can look to the future with the confidence that Jesus will be with us and is able to strengthen and guide us.

As my dad said, look down the road – far down the road. Not only on what's directly in front of us. Because where we look, or what we Focus on, is where we're going to end up. And what's true in driving is true in life.

We need to be reminded to Always put our faith in Jesus. Keep our eyes on him through the storms of life, and he will guide us home. He will keep us in the Way – on the right road. Even if we can't see what's ahead (and who among us can?) Faith will keep us going. So, let us put our faith in the One who will pull us through. So when Jesus asks, "Where is your faith?" you can say – In you Lord.

AMEN!

Let us pray:

God of power and might, calm our storms. And if not, calm our minds, and calm our spirits. Let us call out to you. Ease our anxieties, and let us simply rest in you.

Our faith is in you O Lord. In Jesus name we pray. Amen