

## Bibles???

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

In one of his most inspirational work, Charles Spurgeon provides us the story of the traveler that was wandering through Scotland looking for an egg of a wild bird that dwelt on the rugged cliffs right off the coast. The only way to retrieve the eggs is to have someone light enough lowered down the edge of the cliff by a rope.

Show the pic...

So the traveler finds a local highland boy that was willing to do it – but on one condition. “I’ll go down if father will hold the rope”

The boy wrapped the rope around his waist and he was slowly lowered down the walls of the cliff to retrieve the wild eggs for the traveler and raised back up safely.

Never once did the lad set his eyes upon the raging sea and pounding waves below him or the jagged rocks that awaited him if he fell – the boy set his eyes on his father who stood above him and held on to the rope.

You see, the boy felt that there would be no danger if the rope was in his father's hand, for he had a powerful arm, and a loving heart, and would not allow his own child to perish.

I love this illustration because I feel that in our Christian walk; fear is one of the things that stunt our maturity in Christ.

Fear is what stops us from taking the next step of faith.

Fear is what tells us to turn back.

Fear is what feeds our minds with the endless possibilities of what could go wrong.

What if I fail?

What if I slip and fall?

Fear is what causes us to look down at the raging sea and pounding waves and the jagged rocks – when we should be looking up upon His strength, His relentless love and His unfailing support.

Faith on the other hand, allows us to fulfill His will without fear – no matter what the circumstances may be.

Because by faith, we know that our Heavenly Father is holding on to the rope.

Amen.

Let's pray...

[Mar 4:35-41 NKJV] 35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, **"Let us cross over to the other side."** 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, **"Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"** 39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, **"Why are you so fearful? How [is it] that you have no faith?"** 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

The first event that we are going to cover this morning is one that we should be very familiar with.

It is one that our children are taught in Sunday school – it is one that we have seen depicted many times in movies – and it is

certainly one that I am pretty sure that many of us have read over and over again.

### The story of Jesus calming the storm –

In order to fully understand this even we must read it in context and fully understand what was happening during this time.

We saw the ministry of Jesus start to grow last week as the multitudes flocked to Him. No longer was He preaching in the synagogues – He was preaching outdoors and healing the multitudes.

The crowds had gotten so big that Jesus was forced to preach while He stood on a boat to the multitudes by the shore.

However, the ministry of Jesus was not about entertaining huge crowds – it was about preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, It was about repentance.

Not just physical healing – but spiritual healing as well.

So He started to teach the multitudes in parables in order to divide His true followers from those that followed Him because they simply wanted to witness a miracle or just wanted physical healing.

Jesus then taught His disciples the meaning of His parables.

So after teaching comes testing –

You see, the disciples had heard all His parables of that day and now they would get a chance to put what they have learned into practice.

Jesus had taught about genuine conversion, about heeding what you have heard, about growing in your faith, and about abnormal or false growth. Now the disciples would be cast literally into a storm. How would they respond? What have they learned?

Let's look at verse 35 again,

**35 On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."**

Notice that Jesus did not tell His disciples let's make an attempt to cross over to the other side. He clearly said; Let us cross over to the other side.

He is promising to them that they are going to cross over to the other side –

So Jesus gets into a boat with His disciples and they also have other boats that follow them across the Sea of Galilee. Their journey across the sea will be about a 5 mile boat trip.

Then the storm comes –

Many of Jesus' disciples were experience fishermen – so they would have been able to discern if the conditions were not right for them to sail across the sea. This storm appears to have popped up all of a sudden and the waves are crashing into the boat and the boat is filling with water.

And Jesus is asleep on the boat.

How could Jesus be asleep on the boat during the storm? He was exhausted from preaching all day.

And the response from His disciples, **"Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"**

You know, sometimes we can get confused when our circumstances seem as if Jesus doesn't care for us.

We feel that our prayers have gone unanswered.

We lose a loved one, we lose our house, our marriage is falling apart.

This is where satan comes in and places doubt in our hearts.

God doesn't love us anymore because of what we have done – condemnation then causes us to drift from God and we become bitter toward God.

The truth is that Jesus DOES care is one of the main anchors that gets us through tough times. The other anchors are the fact that He is all powerful and that He knows everything, including our current problem.

He does care.

Jesus said, [Jhn 15:13 NKJV] 13 "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

He's proven His love once and for all at the cross. We should not doubt His love.

**[Heb 13:5-6 NKJV] 5 [Let your] conduct [be] without covetousness; [be] content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6 So we may boldly say: "The LORD [is] my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"**

So Jesus woke up, rebuked the wind and just like that everything became calm again. The word for "peace" that Jesus Christ uses to

rebuke the wind is the word for “to be silent” so in effect Jesus silences the wind.

Now, the disciples up this point have seen Jesus heal people from their infirmities – so they know that He has authority over the physical realm.

The disciples have seen Jesus cast out demons and unclean spirits as well – demonstrating He has authority over the spiritual realm as well.

Here we see the authority of Jesus Christ over the natural realm.

Jesus Christ has once again demonstrated that He is God to His disciples and yet we still see them struggling with what they just witnessed.

Another thing that Jesus does is that He confronts His disciples.

[Mar 4:40 NKJV] 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How [is it] that you have no faith?"

So why do we fear???



Now, I am not talking about the fear of God – that is a totally different fear. That is a fear-like reverence and awe that we are to have toward Almighty God.

Godly fear is a cautious concern that what I do will bring harm to the One I love.

Godly fear leads to holiness in life.

The fear that Jesus is speaking about here is the fear that stifles faith.

This fear is a cowardly fear and the scriptures tell us that this type of fear never comes from God.

**[2Ti 1:7 NKJV] 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**

One of the dangers of fear is that it keeps us from experiencing the blessings and promises God has for you and me.

We see this in the Old Testament as the Children of Israel are delivered out of Egypt and led to the edge of the Promise Land – and Moses sends out the 12 spies, and ten of them come back with a bad report and the people are struck with fear.

Fear led the people of God to forsake God's will for their lives. God had a Land flowing with milk and honey, luscious, beautiful, full of abundant life and blessing, and yet the fear of the obstacles and adversaries in the Land led to the people's forsaking of the Lord's plan and gift and even desiring to return to the place of bondage.

Joshua and Caleb had a different report – their report was void of any fear.

**[Num 14:6-9 NKJV] 6 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, [who were] among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out [is] an exceedingly good land. 8 "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they [are] our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD [is] with us. Do not fear them."**

Joshua and Caleb trusted the Lord, however, the Children of Israel sided with the other ten spies and God made them wander the wilderness for forty years were they all perished. Only the new

generation along with Joshua and Caleb were able to inherit the land.

So how do we deal with fear??? – because we all fear, even mature believers fear.

Two weeks ago when I received the text that my wife and kids were in the accident, the first thing that I experienced was fear.

However, the key is how we respond to the fear. And that is where faith comes in.

Let's look at the life of Joshua as an example.

**[Jos 1:1-9 NKJV] 1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: 2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel. 3 "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5 "No man shall [be able to] stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with**

**Moses, [so] I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.** 6 "Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid**, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God [is] with you wherever you go."

So God is the new leader of 2 million people, Moses is dead – there had to be fear in him or else God would not have commanded him to not be afraid.

But notice how God repeatedly tells Joshua to be strong and of good courage. That is the opposite of someone living in fear.

So how is he supposed to overcome his fears??

1. **We overcome our fears by relying on the promises of God** –

God promised Joshua that He was going to give them the Promised Land. It was a done deal, all they had to do was walk by faith. This was the mistake of the Children of Israel. They failed to trust in the promises of God. They trusted their eyes and their ears instead of trusting in Him.

The ten spies that came in with the bad reports said that there were giants in the land that would overtake them. As you continue to read through the book of Joshua you will find out that Rahab the harlot reveals to the spies that Joshua sends out that the people of Canaan were actually in fear of the Children of Israel because they had heard at what God had already done.

2. **We overcome our fears by - relying on the presence of God.**

God said to Joshua, **“I will not leave you nor forsake you”** (Joshua 1:5). The presence of God dispels fear because if God is for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31-32). Nothing is impossible to God.

**Sometimes we forget that God is sitting there in the boat with us and instead of seeking Him immediately through prayer, we**

wait until we have exhausted every worldly attempt to resolve the issue.

3. **We overcome our fears by reading His word.** God commanded Joshua (8) "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.

You see, God reveals Himself in His word. He reveals the history of His faithfulness and if God has been faithful in the past, we can rest assured that He will be faithful in the present and future. That's just the way God is, He is faithful to watch over us, He is our Shepherd (Psalm 23; John 10). So if we fear, go to God's word and prayerfully read of His faithfulness to the saints and it will be an encouragement to us.

You see, the failure of Jesus' disciples was that they failed to rely on the promise of Jesus – remember he told them, we are going over to the other side.

The disciples had two choices as they caught up in the storm - they could fear the storm or they could place their faith in Jesus.

And these are the same choices that we have today. We can become paralyzed by our fear of our circumstances or we can fulfill God's will in our lives knowing that He will never forsake us.

**[Mar 5:1-20 NKJV] 1 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had [his] dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. 6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me." 8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" 9 Then He asked him, "What [is] your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name [is] Legion; for we are many." 10 Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. 11 Now a large herd**

of swine was feeding there near the mountains. 12 So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." 13 And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. 14 So those who fed the swine fled, and they told [it] in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. 15 Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one [who had been] demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. **And they were afraid.** 16 And those who saw it told them how it happened to him [who had been] demon-possessed, and about the swine. **17 Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.** 18 And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. 19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." 20 And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.



Here in chapter five, we have the account of another healing that Jesus did on someone who was demon possessed.

He had been empowered by the many demons that lived inside him as we just read that he couldn't be bound.

He tells Jesus that his name is Legion and in the Roman army, a legion consisted of a group of over 6000 men.

Mark will tell us later in this gospel that Mary Magdalene had seven demons that Jesus had cast out of her. So it is possible to have multiple demons residing inside a person.

Here we have this demon possessed man acknowledge who Jesus Christ is – just like in the other accounts we have studied, however, this demon begs Jesus to allow them to go into the herd of swine that was nearby. Jesus allows them to leave the man, they enter the swine and then the swine run off the cliff and drown in the Sea of Galilee.

Now, there are a few things that stand out in this passage –

What were the people in the region doing herding pigs? Pigs were considered an unclean animal so you could see that their willingness to compromise their faith in exchange for prosperity.

Also, it appears that they were more afraid of the man that was demon possessed after he was healed than before he was healed.

And because of their fear, they begged Jesus to leave the area.

Church, when people are more afraid of what Jesus will do in their lives than what Satan does in the moment, they often push Jesus away. That was true then and it is true today.

I had cousins that prior to accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior were heavily involved in gang activity. As the Lord worked in their lives and they abandoned their old lifestyles, they were rebuked by my aunt because of the dramatic changes in their lives. My aunt couldn't understand what was happening to her children as they were reading their bibles instead of gangbanging with their friends.

That is what fear does – it hinders the work of God.

May we respond to fear by placing our faith in Jesus Christ.

**[Heb 11:6 NKJV] 6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

**Amen...**

## Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.