

Fear or Faith?
Luke 8:22-56

Introduction:

A. A Statement from Elders – Cornerstone Community Church, Jackson, Tennessee

1. “You have probably heard by now that same-sex marriage is now legal in all fifty states. We, your elders, are not surprised by this ruling, given recent legal and cultural trends. More importantly, God is not surprised. He designed marriage as the union of a man and a woman in the beginning as a testimony to the glorious union to come between Christ and his church. One day, the Bride of Christ, for whom he came, died, and was raised, will be revealed in all the beauty for which God has destined her and given to her Husband forever. On that day, the dark, perverse parody of same-sex marriage will be exposed for the sham that it is. Nothing that five robed lawyers in Washington have said will change that.”
2. “As a church, we will stand with this gospel against all the cultural pressures that will come our way. We don't know what challenges lie ahead for those who refuse to recognize where the culture has gone on this question, but we do know that our security in Christ cannot be threatened by anything men can do to us. As Peter said to the Sanhedrin that told him to stop preaching in the name of Jesus, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).”
3. “Let us pray for courage, wisdom, and love for our neighbors who disagree with us. And may we be a place of refuge and healing for all who have been damaged by the sexual revolution of our culture. “

B. “Supreme” Court Ruling

1. The US “Supreme” Court is not The Supreme Court!
 - a) The Supreme Court is in Heaven and is presided over by the Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth!
 - b) Let there be no doubt about that in your minds and hearts.
2. Justice Samuel Alito
 - a) “Today’s decision usurps the constitutional right of the people to decide whether to keep or alter the traditional understanding of marriage. The decision will also have other important consequences. It will be used to vilify Americans who are unwilling to assent to the new orthodoxy. In the course of its opinion, the majority compares traditional marriage laws to laws that denied equal treatment for African-Americans and women. The implications of this analogy will be exploited by those who are determined to stamp out every vestige of dissent.”
 - b) “I assume that those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes, but if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers, and schools... By imposing its own views on the entire country, the majority facilitates the marginalization of the many Americans who have traditional ideas. Recalling the harsh treatment of gays and lesbians in the past, some may think that turnabout is fair play. But if that sentiment prevails, the Nation will experience bitter and lasting wounds.”
3. This is certainly what is coming because this is what the enemy has sought all along – to destroy the witness of the Church.
 - a) Time magazine Religion Section headline: “Orthodox Christians Must Now Learn to Live as Exiles in Our Own Country”
 - b) The issue that is before us now is how will we respond, not to what has happened in the last week, but to what is going to come.
 - c) Are we going to live in fear or by faith?

C. Faith and Testing

1. The Lord had just finished teaching the Parable of the Soils (Luke 8:4-18), the disciples must have felt like graduate students in the School of Faith!
 - a) They understood mysteries that were hidden from the scribes and rabbis and even from the Old Testament prophets.
 - b) What they and we do not realize is that no matter how much we know about God’s Word, our faith must be tested before it can be trusted.
 - c) It is one thing to know spiritual truth, but quite something else to practice that truth in life.
2. Satan does not care how much Bible truth we know as long as we do not live it.

- a) Satan knows that academic truth is not dangerous, but active truth is, and that is why we will have our faith tested as never before in the days that are ahead for us!

D. Four Tests of Faith

1. Watch the Lord Jesus Christ as He presents four tests to faith.
2. We face these same tests in the issues of our lives today!
3. The question is, will we respond with “Fear or Faith?”

I. The Test of Danger (vv. 22-25)

A. A Word of Command is a Word of Promise

1. Jesus was exhausted from a long day of teaching and went to sleep as the boat left Capernaum for the opposite shore.
2. But before He did, He gave them a word of command that was also a word of promise: *they were going to the opposite shore.*
 - a) We, too, are on our way to the opposite shore and Jesus has promised us that He has gone to prepare a place for us and that what He has begun in our lives, He will finish.
3. The word of Christ should have encouraged and strengthened the disciples during the storm, but their faith was still small (Matthew 8:26).
 - a) We, too, should be encouraged and strengthened by the promises of God in our lives!
4. The disciples were afraid, but Jesus was not!
 - a) Where is Jesus when you need Him most?
 - (1) Right there beside you in the midst of the storm!
 - (2) Right there beside you in the midst of the calm, too!
 - b) Jesus was so calm in the storm that He kept on sleeping.
 - c) Why?, because He was totally confident that His Father was completely in control.

B. Calling on the Lord

1. The disciples became so frightened that they awakened Him and begged Him to rescue them.
 - a) Jesus knew that the storm was coming, yet He went to sleep in the ship.
 - b) Jesus has known all along that this storm was coming in our lives, so we should be encouraged and not afraid.
2. What was the disciples’ problem?
 - a) Not the storm around them but the unbelief within them!
 - (1) Unbelief is a lot more dangerous than any storm that comes into our lives!
 - b) Their problem is the same problem we face today: we know the Word of God and we need to believe it when we face the tests of life.
 - c) It is one thing to know the truth and quite something else to live it.
3. “Where is your faith?” is still the key question.
 - a) Are we trusting God’s promises, or are we trusting in our circumstances and ourselves?
 - b) The disciples failed this test of faith because they did not see that Jesus’ command to go to the other side was a promise that He would provide for all they needed to obey His command.
 - c) Too often we are like the disciples:
 - (1) They looked around and saw danger.
 - (2) They looked within and saw fear.
 - (3) But they failed to look up by faith and see God.

II. The Test of Evil (vv. 26-40)

A. Demonic Faith (vv. 26-33)

1. Note the repetition of the word “besought.”
 - a) The demons begged Jesus not to send them to the pit but into the pigs (vv. 31-32).
 - b) The citizens begged Jesus to leave their country (v. 37), and
 - c) One of the former demoniacs begged Jesus to allow him to be one of His disciples (v. 38).
2. We have been begging God to not let these things happen to us and to our country.
 - a) Do you really think that God has not heard our prayers?
 - b) Do you really think that God does not want His righteousness to reign?
 - c) God is up to something much bigger than we understand!