

FPFWC Christian Development



Jesus Teaches About Faith

June 2021

Summer Quarter

June 12, 2021

Lesson #2 – Delivered from Fear

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Matthew 8:23-27

ICE BREAKER –

1. How can we operate from a place of faith instead of fear?
2. What do the disciples' reactions teach us about how to handle our own fears?
3. Why is prayer an important tool for the believer when facing fear?

Key Verse: He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.—Matthew 8:26

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus' ministry in Matthew's Gospel takes place mostly in Galilee, the northern portion of ancient Israel. The region was named for the body of water at its center, known in the New Testament as the Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1). It is about 41,000 acres in size, about 12 miles north to south and 7.5 miles east to west. Its size makes it more of a "lake" than a "sea"; by contrast, Lake Erie is about 150 times as large as the Sea of Galilee. Indeed, the latter is referred to as "the lake of Gennesaret" in Luke 5:1. Nestled between steep hills on the east and west, one could stand on the hills and see to the other side. The distance would require much effort to row from one side to the other.

The Sea of Galilee was a center of fishing during the time of Jesus. Some of His 12 disciples had been fishermen there (Matthew 4:18–22). These men had much experience with this lake and its dangers. In addition to fishing, the inhabitants of the area used the lake as a medium of transportation from one village to another. Rowing across the sea was faster than the alternative of walking around on shore. We can imagine that on a typical day the sea was dotted with small boats—some fishing, some carrying travelers. On most days, those boats carried their passengers safely.

C. Lesson Context: Miracles

Following the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 (see Lesson Context of lesson 1), which sets forth Jesus' authority in teaching, chapters 8–9 focus largely on Jesus' miracles. These demonstrate His authority in actions as they

consistently pointed to a power that could belong to God alone. With a word, Jesus was able to heal the sick (Matthew 8:5–13), cleanse leprosy (Luke 17:12–19; see lesson 5), cast out evil spirits (Mark 7:24–30), and command the forces of nature (Mark 11:12–14, 19–21). His miracles established that Jesus was either the most wonderful prophet ever sent by God or that He was something more than a prophet.

Jesus did not use His divine power for His own benefit (compare Matthew 4:1–11; 26:53). His miracles were for the sake of others, especially those whose situation seemed hopeless. As such, the miracles were signs that God’s kingdom—His promised reign over all creation that restores His righteous purpose—was breaking into the world. God’s reign would vanquish the sin-threat and its consequences. God’s people would then live in His presence, safe and secure, for eternity.

Jesus’ miracles demonstrated that promised future. His enemies attributed His ability to satanic powers (Matthew 12:24) and mocked Him (27:42). Still, Jesus made salvation possible by giving of His life. His resulting resurrection was His greatest act of power. But as we begin today’s text, that is yet a year or so in the future. (The events of today’s text are also recorded in Mark 4:35–41 and Luke 8:22–25.)

LESSON COMMENTARY

8:23–27. The Sea of Galilee (a fresh-water lake) is rimmed by hills and valleys that can funnel high winds that can whip up whitecaps abruptly. These violent waves, however, do not fully subside for 24–48 hours, making this miracle remarkable (**it became perfectly calm**) when the winds instantly abated and the water became glassy. Matthew may have drawn a parallel with Israel’s deliverance at the Red Sea in Ex 14 (the people cried out for deliverance beside the water, had fear, were rescued by God, and as a result, had faith in God and Moses). Jesus is the “New Moses” and more—Jesus **rebuked** the winds and waves and they obeyed, but Moses was silent.

LESSON NUGGET – The disciples were in this huge storm in a small boat, and they thought they were going to be killed. Jesus was just sleeping in the back of the boat, seemingly oblivious to the desperate circumstances. So often, as we find ourselves in the middle of danger, it seems like the Lord is sleeping. “God, why don’t You help us? We are sinking fast, and You are not doing anything! Don’t You care, Lord?” But God responds, “O you of little faith!” He knows all about our problems, and He plans to deal with them in His way. When Jesus is on board, you can’t sink. That is why it is so important to have Jesus on board. “Even the winds and the sea obey Him.” Everything else does, too.

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary and Wiersbe Expository Outlines on the New Testament