

“Overcoming Life’s Troubles”

Luke 8:22-56

Introduction

- Before faith can be trusted, it must first be tested.
- It is one thing to learn a new spiritual truth, but it is altogether a different thing to practice that truth in the everyday experiences of life.
- I don’t know that Satan is all that concerned with how much Bible truth we know as long as we do not live out that truth in our lives (*he knows some, himself*).
- Truth that is only in the head is purely academic and will never get into the heart until it is practiced by the will.
- Satan knows that academic truth is not dangerous to him, but that **active** truth is.
- Today we are going to see Jesus show His disciples how to face and overcome challenges to their faith. We are going to see Jesus be our perfect example in overcoming life’s troubles.
- The first faith challenge that He and His disciples faced was...

I Dealing with Dangerous Circumstances

(8:22-25)

- **Read Scripture**
- Jesus was very tired from a long day of teaching and He went to sleep as the ship left Capernaum for the opposite shore.
- 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.
- This word should have encouraged them and strengthened them during the storm, but their faith was still small.

- The Sea of Galilee is more than 690 feet below sea level. To the north, Mount Hermon rises some 9,200 feet and from May to October strong winds will often times sweep down through the narrow gorges into this valley, causing extremely sudden and violent storms.¹
- But just before the disciples saw one of the most awesome displays of the deity of Jesus Christ, they were given a very touching picture of the humanity of Jesus Christ.
- Have you ever slept through a lot of noise? Have you ever slept through a storm? You were probably really tired, weren't you?
- Jesus was so tired that not even the violent tossing of the boat woke Him up, even though the disciples were afraid they were going to drown.
- The disciples were afraid, but Jesus was not! He kept on sleeping, confident that His Father was completely in control.
- But the disciples became so frightened that they awakened Him and begged Him to rescue them.
- The word "rebuked" was used by Jesus when dealing with demons. It is at least possible that Satan was behind this severe storm, attempting to destroy Jesus or at least hinder Him from reaching the demonized men at Gadara.
- But Jesus calmed both the wind and the sea by simply speaking the word. Normally after strong winds die down, it takes a period of time for the waves to die down.
- But in this instance, everything became calm immediately and stayed that way.
- The disciples failed this test of faith because they did not lay hold of His Word that He was going to the other side.
- It has been well said that "faith is not believing in spite of circumstances; it is obeying in spite of feelings and consequences."
- The disciples looked around and saw danger, and looked within and saw fear; but they failed to look up by faith and see God. Faith and fear cannot dwell together in the same heart.
- A woman once said to Dwight L. Moody, (*former pastor and great evangelist of many years ago in the U.S.*) "I have found a wonderful promise!" and she quoted Psalm 56:3, "*When I am afraid, I will trust in You.*"

¹ http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.bibleplaces.com/images/Mount_Hermon_covered_with_snow_98-13tb_wr.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.bibleplaces.com/mthermon.htm&h=245&w=400&sz=17&tbnid=x3a110nPD2s1RM:&tbnh=74&tbnw=120&prev=/search%3Fq%3DMount%2BHermon,%2BIsrael%26tbn%3Disch%26tbo%3Du&zoom=1&q=Mount+Hermon,+Israel&docid=2gcieYbsf-AAcM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=a-t0TjwNeyrsALs2PiLBQ&ved=0CCwQ9QEwAg

- Dr. Moody said, “Let me give you a better one,” and he quoted Isaiah 12:2, “*Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid...*”
- And so we see the disciples dealing with dangerous circumstances. But let’s look at a second challenge to their faith in which they were...

II Dealing with the Devil

(8:26-39)

- **Read Scripture**
- Matthew’s account of this story reveals that there were actually two men who were demon possessed. However, only one did the talking.
- Both were pitiful cases: naked, living in the tombs, violent, dangerous, a menace to the area, and controlled by a legion of demons.
- I think it is easy for us to forget sometimes that Satan is a thief who robs people of everything good and then he tries to destroy them.
- No amount of man-made authority or restraint can control or change the devil’s servants. Their only hope is in Jesus Christ.
- In **John 10:10 Jesus said**, “*The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly.*”
- According to James 2:19 even the demons have faith, but it is not saving faith. They believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God with authority to command them.
- They believe in a future judgment and in the existence of a place of torment to which Jesus could send them (v. 31 “the abyss”).
- The demons also believe in prayer, for the demons begged Jesus not to send them to the abyss. They asked to be sent into the pigs, and Jesus granted their request.
- Did Jesus have the right to permit the legion of demons to destroy a herd of 2,000 swine and possibly put the owners out of business?
- Well, that brings up another point that we tend to forget from time to time – God owns everything; and He can dispose of it as He pleases.

- More than that, these two formerly-possessed men were worth much more than 2,000 pigs. The community should have thanked Jesus for ridding the entire area of these two menaces, but they didn't. Instead, they begged Him to leave.
- What a transformation in these two men. You would have expected the people who saw the miracle to ask Jesus to stay and heal others who were sick and afflicted.
- But it is possible that money and things were more important to them than mercy, and they simply asked Jesus to leave.
- You can see the immediate transformation in one of these men as he pleaded with Jesus to be allowed to travel with Him and help Him.
- He might have had more spiritual discernment than all the other citizens of that place put together.
- He might not have been ready to become a disciple, but he could serve Jesus as a witness, starting at home among his Gentile relatives and friends.
- We have seen in Scripture many times where Jesus did not want Jews who had been healed to say too much about it, but it was safe for the Gentiles to tell others what Jesus had done for them, and that is what he did!
- So we see the disciples learning to deal with dangerous circumstances, and learning to deal with the devil.
- A third challenge to the disciples' faith came when they were forced to learn how to...

III Dealing with Sickness

(8:40-48)

- **Read Scripture**
- When Jesus returned to Capernaum, the people welcomed Him, especially a man and a woman who each were carrying heavy burdens.
- The contrast here is interesting, because it shows the variety of different kinds of people who came to Jesus for help.
- The man's name is given (Jairus), but the woman is anonymous. Jairus was a wealthy leading citizen, but the woman was a lowly person who had spent all her money trying to get well.
- Here was a man interceding for his child and a woman hoping to get help for herself; and both came to Jesus.
- The woman had a hidden need, a burden that she had lived with for twelve long years. It affected her physically and it made her life very difficult.

- This woman's affliction was serious physically, but it also left her permanently unclean for ceremonial reasons.
- This meant that she would have been shunned by everyone, including her own family, and she would have been excluded from both the synagogue and the temple.
- Because of the hemorrhage, she was defiled, destitute, discouraged, and desperate; but she came to Jesus and her need was met.
- Her faith was almost superstitious, but I want you to see that the Lord honored it. She knew that He had healed others and she wanted Him to heal her.
- She could have used any number of excuses: the crowd was pressing around Him; nothing else had worked for twelve years; it was not right to come to Jesus as a last resort; she was not an important person; He was on His way to heal Jairus' daughter; but she allowed nothing to stand in her way.
- Jesus knew somebody with faith had touched Him and had been healed by His power. The healing was immediate and complete.
- Why did the Lord ask her to give witness publicly? Would this not have embarrassed her? I don't think so.
- In the first place, the public confession was for her sake. It was an opportunity for her to confess Christ and glorify God.
- If she had just sneaked away, she would never have met Jesus personally or heard His words of assurance and comfort.
- But her confession would also have been an encouragement to Jairus, who would soon hear that his daughter had died.
- Her witness was also a rebuke to many in the crowd. You can be a part of the crowd and never get any blessing from being near Jesus.
- It is one thing to "press about Him" in a crowd and it is still another thing to "touch Him" by faith.
- We may not have strong faith, but we do have a strong Savior, and He responds even to a touch at the hem of His garment.
- When the inventor of chloroform, Sir James Simpson was dying, a friend said to him, "You will soon be resting on His bosom." Simpson humbly replied, "I don't know as I can do that, but I think I have hold of the hem of His garment."
- In these verses this morning we see the disciples dealing with dangerous circumstances, dealing with the devil, and dealing with sickness.

- But finally this evening, I want you to see the disciples...

IV Dealing with Death

(8:49-56)

- **Read Scripture**
- The Bible says this man was the ruler of the synagogue. The ruler of a synagogue was the elder in charge of the public services and the care of the facilities.
- He saw to it that people were appointed to pray, read the Scriptures and give the sermon. He presided over the elders of the synagogue and was usually a man of reputation and wealth.
- It took a great deal of courage and humility for Jairus to approach Jesus and ask for His help, because by this time the Jewish religious leaders were already plotting to kill Him.
- The scene at their house when they arrived would have discouraged anybody. The professional mourners were already there, weeping and wailing; and a crowd of friends and neighbors had gathered.
- Jesus took command of the situation and told the crowd to stop weeping because the girl was not dead but asleep.
- Of course, she was dead; but Scripture often uses sleep as a metaphor for death; and to Jesus, death was only sleep.
- Sleep is a normal experience that we do not fear, and we should not fear death. It is the body that sleeps, not the spirit, for the spirit of the believer goes to be with Christ.
- The mourners laughed at Jesus because they knew that the girl was dead and they assumed that death was final.
- But they failed to realize that Jesus is the Resurrection and the life. And they didn't believe that Jesus would be able to do anything about it.
- So Jesus put them all out of the house. This situation was much too tender and special for Him to allow dozens of unbelieving spectators to watch.
- He took the parents and three of His disciples, Peter, James, and John; and together they entered the room where the little girl lay.
- Jesus took her by the hand and spoke in Aramaic, "*Talitha cumi!* Little girl, arise!" This was not a magic formula of some kind but a command from the Lord of life and death.

- Her spirit returned to her body and she arose and began to walk around the room. Jesus told them to give her something to eat. She probably hadn't eaten in quite some time.
- Resurrection is a picture of the way Jesus Christ saves lost sinners and raises them from spiritual death. The Gospels record three such resurrections, though Jesus probably performed more.
- In each instance, the person raised gave evidence of life. The widow's son began to speak, Jairus' daughter walked around and ate food, and Lazarus was loosed from his grave clothes.
- When a lost sinner is raised from the dead, you can tell it by his speech, his walk, his appetite, and his "change of clothes." You cannot hide new life.
- In the company of Jesus that day His disciples learned some valuable lessons about life and death.
- In the home of Jairus, they learned that Jesus is victorious over death. On the Mount of Transfiguration, they discovered that He would be glorified in His death; and in the Garden, they saw that He was surrendered to death.
- His disciples needed these lessons in death, and we still need them today.
- But this passage of Scripture today is about more than just death; it is about learning to overcome the troubles of life.
- All we need do is look at the examples that our Lord and Savior has left for us and we will know how to respond when we are faced with: dangerous circumstances, the devil, sickness, and even death.

- **Let's Pray**