

SKY

Correspondence Course

Lesson 3

Jesus Calms the Storm

Lesson Text: Mark 4:35–41

Jesus Christ described faith as one of the “weightier matters” of the Law (Matthew 23:23). Paul listed faith among the three greatest Christian virtues (faith, hope, and love). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Christian faith should be far more than just a feeling in your heart. It should motivate your entire pattern of living. Faith functions as the fulcrum of true Christian thought and behavior.

Faith has a twofold sense in the Bible, an active and a passive one—the former meaning “fidelity,” “trustworthiness”; the latter “trust,” “reliance.” The word *faith*, when preceded by the definite article (example: “*The Faith*”) means the general system of doctrine and belief accepted by the body of believers—the church (Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22). When the word *faith* is used without the article, it means “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). This is perhaps the clearest biblical definition of faith.

Thus faith is an absolute confidence that God exists and a total trust in His Word (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is not only belief in His power and great goodness; it is a willingness to follow His instructions. Faith has always involved action. Read the entire chapter of Hebrews 11.

Fear is the opposite of faith. Fear is displayed in doubt, suspicion, anxiety, and

apprehension. Have you ever been afraid? Fear can be real or imagined, healthy or unhealthy. Fear is often our response to the unknown.

Faith in the Face of Storm

Read Mark 4:35–37—The Sea of Galilee in Israel is 680 feet below sea level. It is a freshwater lake surrounded by hills and long narrow gorges. The Sea of Galilee is known for violent and unexpected storms. These storms occur because of the cold air from the hills that funnel down through the gorges and meet with the warm air over the lake. After a day of teaching, Jesus decided to cross the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:1). The Bible does not state why, but perhaps He wanted a rest from the crowds. Even so, there were other smaller ships of people who wanted to remain with Jesus—they followed Him and His disciples. Several of the disciples were experienced fishermen, and as they journeyed across the water a storm erupted. The waves were huge, breaking over the boat and filling it with water.

Read Mark 4:38—Jesus was tired from a long day of teaching. He was asleep in the stern of the boat when the disciples called to Him for help. They panicked and asked Jesus in a rude way if He was going to help them out of this dangerous situation. We see that while the disciples called Jesus “Teacher,” they didn’t understand who He was. Jesus showed compassion to others on a daily basis, and the disciples witnessed this compassion—it was Jesus’ way of life. Therefore, why would the disciples think that Jesus didn’t care about their safety?

Do you discuss life's problems with God in prayer? Or do you wait until the last moment to get on your knees and ask for His assistance like the disciples in these scriptures? Do you ever doubt His ability to understand your problems about such things as friends, teachers, and work? When faced with a problem in your life, there are two ways to go: 1. You can either assume that Jesus does not, or would not, care, and you can go it alone; 2. You can talk to God the Father and Jesus our Savior in prayer and put your trust and faith in them to help you through it.

Read Mark 4:39—The disciples witnessed a double miracle. Jesus rebuked (reprimanded) the wind and spoke to the waves of the sea, and the sea became quiet. Immediately the danger was gone and all was completely calm.

Read Mark 4:40—Jesus then turned and asked them, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25). He addressed His disciples about the obvious problem they had. The word translated "fearful" in this verse means "cowardly fear." Awe for the storm would be understandable, but their display of terror was another (Luke 12:4,5). If the disciples had been tested beyond their ability, in spite of their equipment and skill as experienced fishermen, then reasonable alarm might be understood. But instead they accused Jesus of being unconcerned for their welfare. "Where is your faith?" is a good question each of us should ask ourselves.

Read Mark 4:41—The disciples' fear now moved from the storm's fury to awe and wonderment for Jesus' supernatural power. In calming the storm, Jesus showed the authority that only God in the Old Testament exercised. Read Psalm 89:8,9, and Psalm 104:5–9. When the disciples asked, "What manner of man is this?" clearly they still did not fully understand who Jesus was. They did not understand the power Jesus could command.

Saving Faith

A Christian realizes his need to live by faith. Jesus set the standard by which we should live. First, we should be in awe and reverence of Jesus Christ. His character is far more righteous than any

human's. Jesus is unerringly concerned, kind, easily approached, compassionate, helpful, and loving. He is this way with anyone who sincerely wants help. Do you follow His example?

Faith is not an end, rather it is the vehicle by which we accept salvation. Of course, salvation can in no way be earned—either by obedience or faith. For nothing man can do would obligate God to grant salvation had He not decided to give man this gift of His own volition. But God has obligated Himself to grant salvation if you have living faith. God says that the presence of this faith in us is counted in His eyes as righteousness, and consequently justified before God (Romans 4:1–7).

Faith is also directed toward the future. It aims at a promise that has been fulfilled in part by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Faith is not just a passive state or a vague form of wishful thinking. Faith implies action. Living faith produces works (James 2:14–26). Our response to Jesus should be to turn our fears into trust and our hearts to obedience.

Our faith has many facets, though the primary ones relate directly to Jesus Christ. This account teaches us that faith in its simplest and most profound form, is a deep personal trust in the salvation we find in Jesus Christ. He never will ignore our need.

Faith is utter confidence in the faithfulness of God to do that which He says and a loving obedience to do His will. It is the total commitment to Him as the Lord of one's life. True faith comes from God—it comes from our relationship formed with God. Like Job, our faith is deepened and enriched the longer we walk with God and even by the trials we encounter. Job, after his dreadful trial, cried out, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You!" (Job 42:5). Simply put, to know Him is to love and trust Him.

A verse worthy to remember:
"Be not afraid, only believe"
(Mark 5:36).

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Date: _____

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Questions to Answers

- Jesus described faith as:
 - One of the “weightier matters” of the Law
 - An “important facet” of Christian life
 - A “thought and behavior”
- Paul listed faith among two other Christian virtues:
 - Hope and love
 - Responsibility and friendship
 - Work and integrity
- True or False—A Christian’s faith is far more than just a feeling in your heart. _____
- True or False—Obedience is a part of faith. _____
- The Sea of Galilee is located in:
 - Jerusalem
 - Judah
 - Israel
- What was Jesus able to teach the disciples by the episode in the boat? Explain in your own words.

- Jesus had been _____ all day and this is why He was tired.
 - Fishing
 - Teaching
 - Walking
- What is your explanation for why the disciples did not think that Jesus cared about their safety?

9. What was the obvious problem that the disciples had?

- A. Sadness
- B. Terror
- C. Concern

10. What was the disciples' reaction when the storm was calmed?

- A. Relief
- B. Awe and wonderment
- C. Surprise

11. Where is the best definition of "faith" found in the Bible?

- A. Hebrews 11:6
- B. Hebrews 11:1
- C. Acts 6:7

12. Is the faith spoken of in Hebrews 11 passive or active?

- A. Both
- B. Active
- C. Passive

13. What word is not a part of faith?

- A. Promise
- B. Confidence
- C. Fear

14. True or False—Jesus is concerned only if you are really in trouble. _____

15. Is there a difference between "the faith" and "faith"? Explain.

16. Explain in your own words what the word faith means to you.

17. How does your faith reflect belief?

Answers

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1. A
2. A
3. T
4. T
5. C
6. He taught them about His power. He taught that He was the Creator God who was in control of nature and all things by calming the storm.
7. Teaching
8. They didn't think that He cared because He was sleeping while the storm grew. Jesus did not hurry to their rescue therefore they assumed He did not care about their fate.
9. C
10. B
11. B
12. A
13. C
14. F
15. Yes, "the faith" means fidelity and trustworthiness. It is used by the church when talking about the system of doctrine. "Faith" means trust and reliance. This type of faith is shown in Hebrews 11:1.
16. Faith to me means having the ability to not worry when faced with a problem. It is believing that God will take care of me and my problems.
17. Faith and belief are on in the same. To answer the question I try to daily walk as a Christian walks, believing God will watch out for me.