



-- Video – This Not This

-- Introduction – Panic in America

-- Britannica Online – “Panic: in economics, acute financial disturbance, such as widespread bank failures, feverish stock speculation followed by a market crash, or a climate of fear caused by economic crisis or the anticipation of such crisis.”

-- Financial disturbance... Yes... Widespread bank failures... Yes... Feverish stock speculation... Yes... Market crash... Yes... Climate of fear... Yes... And, we might add, unprecedented government spending... Yes

Panic, however, is not limited to economics and finance, for there is a nearly endless list of reasons why someone, even Christians, might start freaking out.

-- Illustration – Cheryl and Y2K

Should panic be part of Christian living that gives glory to God? Our passage today addresses this question with powerful insight instruction, and encouragement. Read with me if you will...

-- Read Luke 8:22-25

-- Pray

Verses 22 and 23 of our text find Jesus and His disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee. All of a sudden, a severe squall comes down on the lake and their boat begins to fill with water. Consequently, in verse 23 we see the disciples charging to Jesus and pleading with Him, saying, “*We are perishing.*” Although the NIV translation has interpreted this phrase to mean “*We are going to drown,*” the Greek

literally translates as “*Master, Master, we perish!*” And in this cry, we can hear their panic.

You see, Jesus does not question their faith at the end of the storm because they came to Him for rescue. In fact, He wanted them us to do that, even as He calls us to take refuge in Him still today. He even says as much many times, perhaps most notably in Matthew 11:28, when He says, “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*” No, Jesus doesn’t question their faith because of *who* they approached. Rather, He questions their faith because of *how* they approached. You see, the fault in their faith is the presence of their panic.

Consider how they respond to the situation. Notice what they are saying as they come to Christ for help. They do not come calmly, saying, “Excuse me, Master, but it seem to have found ourselves in a bit pickle.” On the contrary, they come to him frantically shouting “Master, Master, we perish!” They have skipped right over, “Help us, please,” and have gone straight for, “We’re dead ducks!” They have bypassed “We need you, Lord!” in favor of, “It’s too late, Jesus!

Clearly, as we see later in this passage, they are exaggerating the case. Clearly they are panicking. Think about it: If the storm had become so deadly that they truly were on the brink of death, is it likely that Jesus would still be asleep in the boat? And if they really were on the brink of drowning, wouldn’t that mean that they were in the water, and not still in the boat? Now, clearly there is a storm, and clearly it is frightening. Moreover, these disciples are most likely acting as you or I would in the same scary situation.

However, just because their panic is common behavior doesn’t mean that it is holy behavior. They are overreacting; they are filled with anxiety; and Jesus wants them to see that there is a more complete faith than this. Thus, He presses them with a crucial question, saying, “*Where is your faith?*” And in so doing, He leads us to the Big Idea of this morning’s message which is this:

**-- Big Idea: Faith in Christ leaves no place for panic.**

As we consider this point, it is imperative this morning to understand first that there are two kinds of faith revealed in Scripture, and there is an importance difference between the two.

The first type of faith described in Scripture is saving faith. It is faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is the faith by which we are mercifully saved from the consequences of sin. It is the faith described in Romans 10:9, where Paul writes, *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”* Because this faith is based entirely upon what Christ has done and not upon what we do, it is a panic-proof faith. That is, we must not assume that the occasional presence of panic in our lives is an indication of unbelief in our hearts. Our passage today makes this point well, for in it we find that, although the disciples panicking, all but Judas are true disciples nonetheless.

Thus, in verse 25, when Jesus asks His disciples, *“Where is your faith?”* He is not talking about saving faith as much as He is asking them about a second aspect of true faith in Christ, which is what we might call “serviceable faith.” Serviceable faith is faith that is ready for use in any and every circumstance of life. You see, it is one thing to have saving faith. Indeed, it is the most important thing. However, saving faith is not the only type of faith that God desires of us and instills within us. He also wants us to have faith that is always serviceable, ready for use, and undaunted by human circumstances.

And as this serviceable faith is concerned, this passage reveals at least three reasons why faith in Christ leaves no place for panic, the first of which is this...

### **1.) Jesus calls.**

Our passage for this morning begins in verse 22 with a statement that is very easy to overlook, but yet is quite critical to a complete understanding this narrative. Luke writes, *“One day Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let’s go over to the other side of the lake.’ So they got into a boat and set out.”*

Now, this verse may seem rather mundane, but it is interesting to note how uncommon this variety of declaration from Christ is in Luke’s Gospel. Normally,

as Luke's Gospel transitions from one activity of Jesus and His disciples to another, He almost always describes it in narrative form, such as in Luke 8:1, where we read, "*After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him.*" And that is, by far, Luke's most common means of describing the movement from one event of Jesus' ministry to another. He just describes it.

Therefore, it is especially interesting and instructive to note the change in this common pattern that we see in verse 22, because in this verse Luke seems to be intentionally emphasizing the fact that this perilous boat trip across the lake was Jesus' idea. In other words, this journey happened because Jesus wanted it to. He beckoned, His disciples followed, and, in this instance at least, they were acting entirely in Christ's will. Thus, in verse 22, Luke appears to be purposefully stressing the fact that the disciples were deliberately called to this storm by the Son of God.

This fact helps us better understand the rebuke Christ gives these disciples in verse 25 when He asks them, "*Where is your faith?*" You see, these men had been called to this journey by Jesus Himself—the very same Jesus through whom they had just been hearing the flawless wisdom of God preached... the very same Jesus whom they had just seen drive out demons... the very same Jesus whom they had just seen healing the sick and even raising the dead (chapter 7). They had been called to this journey by this Jesus Himself, and because it was Him who had called them, and because they were following His directive, their faith ought to have been more serviceable. Because they had been called by the Son of God, their faith in Him ought to have been greater than their fear of the storm.

You see, just as the disciples were not called to be Jesus' disciples by accident, it is also no accident that He called them to cross the Sea of Galilee, even in a violent storm. No, He had a plan and a purpose. Indeed, just look at the matchless glory of God that was revealed to them because of this trial. Can you even imagine being present in the midst of this scene described in our text today? Can you fathom the joy and wonder that we would all feel in witnessing this miracle of Christ? Because Jesus Christ had called them on this journey, they could have unwavering confidence that their course—and even their most frightening trials—would turn out for good.

Paul gives us many wonderful pictures of this perspective in Scripture. However, perhaps the most powerful is recorded in Romans 8:28, where we read this magnificent promise of God: *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. In addition, we are blessed to consider 2 Thessalonians 2:14, in this context which affords this promise: [God] called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Let me ask you, then, do you embrace your trials with confidence, viewing them as opportunities to grow in Christ and know Him? Or does the presence of panic reveal a flaw in your faith?

Now, if you are outside of the call of Christ, these promises of Scripture do not apply. However, God’s glorious truth for us this morning is this, if we are called by Christ, then we can—and should—have tremendous confidence that He is with us and will care for us perfectly for the sake of His perfect glory regardless of our circumstances.

This thought leads us to the second reason why faith in Christ leaves no place for panic, which is this...

## **2.) Jesus cares.**

Every time I read this account, whether here or in the Gospel of Matthew or Mark, one question that constantly grips my attention is this: Why in the world is Jesus sleeping in the midst of this storm? Well, I hope you are ready for this, because after carefully pondering and studying every deep and theological possibility, this question has led me to an immensely profound Scriptural insight about this passage. So why was Jesus sleeping on the boat? Are you ready for this? Take notes now; here it is: He was sleeping because He was tired. See if you can find that kind of biblical scholarship somewhere else... I dare you!

Well, in all seriousness, this incredibly simple idea truly is remarkably profound, because it reveals one of the most critical of all truths about Jesus Christ, which is this: Jesus Christ is fully human. // Angels and other spirits, you see,

require no sleep, nor do they require the other human essentials in which we see Jesus constantly in need, such as food and water and shelter. No, Jesus was not some sort of spirit from God who appeared to be a man. He was a man.

Thus, unlike the inscrutable and untouchable false gods of other religions, such as Islam and Hinduism, Jesus is never aloof or detached or indifferent. No. On the contrary, our Lord was tempted just as we are tempted, and He suffered, even more than we have suffered. Jesus has held our hurts... He has known our needs... He has seen our struggles... and He has suffered our sorrows. Please hear this: Jesus became human because He cares, and His care is complete because He became human. Listen to the beautiful promise of Hebrews 4:15-16:

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Therefore, in verse 24 we see Jesus rising from His sleep to calm the storm that is raging and the fear His disciples are feeling. The Prince of Peace perceives their panic and stills the storm.

Finally, we ought to understand from this passage a third reason why faith in Christ leaves no place for panic, and it is this...

### **3.) Jesus commands.**

This is the truth that makes our confidence in Christ complete, for it is the command of Christ that brings His call and His care to completion. You see, it is instructive to note that Christ invited His disciples to go on this boat trip, and it is encouraging, indeed, to see that He truly and deeply cared for them. Yet, apart from the command of Christ, the call and the care may very well have ended up in the bottom of the sea. But this could never be so with Jesus, because His clarion call and His compassionate care are *made* complete by His *complete* command.

And to this end, we see an aspect of Christ's uniquely spectacular glory revealed in verses 24 and 25. In those two verses, Luke gives us two depictions of Christ's complete command. First, in the second half of verse 24, we read, "[Jesus] got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm." Then, in verse 25, we can marvel alongside the disciples when they respond by asking, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

Just imagine yourself on a small, unstable fishing boat being tossed about by angry waves... with the hard rains splashing... violent winds raging... fierce lightning striking... roaring thunder crashing... ominous clouds encroaching... and cold, deep waters waiting to swallow you whole. And then, in the moment of one audacious rebuke, perfect peace obliterates the storm. The waves become placid... the rain is washed away... and the winds give way to a gentle breeze. The lightning is rebuked... the thunder retreats... and the clouds scatter at the authority of Jesus' voice. The once perilous is now peaceful. The storm has become serenity. And this is not TV. There are no special effects here. This is real. This is miraculous. This is Jesus Christ.

And we marvel at Christ, even as the disciples marveled at Him, because what we have revealed in this passage is nothing less than the utterly unique and supremely miraculous identity of our Lord Jesus Christ. You see, whereas Christ's humanity found Him asleep, His divinity stilled the storm, and the very same man who was sleeping in the boat is the very same God who alone commands Creation by the authority of His voice.

For this is no ordinary man by any stretch of the imagination. No, this is God in the flesh. This was the One about whom the Apostle John wrote, "*He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made*" (John 1:2-3). This is the One about whom Paul wrote: "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together*" (Colossians 1:15-17). This is Jesus Christ.

This is the Messiah! This is Emmanuel! This is the Alpha and the Omega, the Lord of Glory, and the King of Kings! This is the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, and the Resurrection and the life! This the Lord, the one Redeemer, and the one hope of glory! This is the Prince of Peace who was and will forever remain in command of all things in all places at all times. Not only is He fully man, but He is fully God at the same time. This is Jesus Christ! Do you know Him today?

Consequently, faith in Christ leaves no place for panic, because, in addition to all that has been mentioned, the object of our faith—the Lord, Jesus Christ—is the one true God of all. And in this passage we see that this He has perfect power to speak perfect peace against the torrent of any storm. We see that our Savior has unique authority to bring peace to our troubled lives. Do you know Him?

In conclusion, then, please understand this: Because Jesus Christ is in command of all things, we can follow His call and know that He cares. For even as Jesus brought unimaginable tranquility in the midst of a terrifying tempest on the Sea of Galilee, so too He has complete power to overcome panic and bring real and lasting peace into your life and my life today, most notably the torrent of the sin that separates us from God. Do you know Him today?

Is your heart in panic today? Do you find yourself stressed or worried or overwhelmed? Let me ask you: Do you know the Prince of Peace? Moreover, based upon the way you handle adversity, would others know that your Savior is the Prince of Peace, or would they imagine Him to be more like the prince of panic?

Because Jesus Christ calls us, cares for us, and commands all things, we can and must live as those who understand and demonstrate that complete faith in Christ leaves no place for panic.