

Why Shouldn't We Be Afraid of Death?

Matthew 8:23-27

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Well, again, it is a privilege and a pleasure to be here today and to open up God's Word with you and to be with you as you make solemn vows before the Lord to one another. I encourage you now to open your Bibles again to the book of Matthew, Matthew Chapter 8, and we'll read from verse 23 to verse 27, Matthew Chapter 8, reading from verse 23.

Then He, that is Jesus, got into the boat, and His disciples followed Him. Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him!"

Let's come to God and ask for His help as we look at His Word together. Heavenly Father, we ask that You would send the Holy Spirit to us now and sustain us according to Your promise, so that we will live and our hopes will not be dashed. And we pray this in Christ's name, Amen.

Well, at our church in Drummoyne, we've been studying the book of Matthew. We've been looking at the Lord from His baptism on, and we've been studying it, going through it verse by verse. And I thought it would be helpful for us as we are here today, as you constitute today here at Camden Valley Baptist, to look at these passages before us and also to consider the Lord's words and works here in Matthew's Gospel because that is what you see after His baptism. What does Jesus do after His baptism? Well, He gives great teaching. We see that after His baptism, He gives the Sermon on the Mount in chapters five, six, and seven. And it is great teaching. The people respond in the end of chapter seven. We read their response there in chapter seven of Matthew's Gospel when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching.

So we see that people were responding to His teaching with amazement. But what else was Jesus doing after His baptism? Well, He was doing great miracles. What sort of miracles was He doing? He was healing people. We

see that in verse 16 of Matthew Chapter 8. Matthew Chapter 8 verse 16, it says, "When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to Him, and He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick." And that's not the only case where He's healing people. Of course, Matthew Chapter 8 opens with the cleansing of a man with leprosy. We see the healing of a centurion's servant and Peter's mother-in-law was healed in the verses just earlier to that. And immediately after His baptism in chapter four, we see that He is healing people there as well. Turn back with me to Matthew Chapter 4 verse 24. Matthew Chapter 4 verse 24, it says, "News about Him spread all over Syria, and people brought to Him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed. And He healed them all." He healed them as these people are coming to Him; He is doing these amazing works of healing.

And what is the response of people then to His words, His amazing words, and to His amazing works? It is that large crowds start to follow Him. People start to follow Him. And we see that back in chapter four verse 24, it talks about Him healing them. And then in verse 25, it says, "Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region across the Jordan followed Him." And in chapter eight, after the Sermon on the Mount, we read in verse one, chapter eight verse one, "When He came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed Him." So what is the response of people to Christ's words and His works, His amazing words and His amazing works? It is that people begin to follow Him. And not just a few, large crowds follow Him.

And what does Jesus then do when He sees these crowds and has healed many people? What does He decide to do in the passage that is before us? He decides to get into a boat. We actually see that back in verse 18 of Matthew Chapter 8. Matthew Chapter 8 verse 18, it says, "When Jesus saw the crowd around Him, He gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake." And so Jesus then gets into the boat in verse 23. But who gets into the boat with Him? We read in verse 23 that He got into the boat and His disciples followed Him. There are large crowds who are following Him, but there's only so much room in the boat. And we understand that there are some people who are interested in following Him back in verses 18 and following. So we see that He gives orders to cross to the other side of the lake. But in verse 19, we read, "Then a teacher of the law came to Him and said, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." Jesus has a word to him about what it will be like to follow Him. And it appears that he probably didn't get into the boat with Jesus as a result. And then another disciple in verse 21 says that he will go with Him, but he wants to go and bury his father first. And Jesus has a word to him.

So we see different reactions from people. Some people are eager to follow Him. But then when they start to hear about what it means to follow Jesus, they're not so keen. But here we have the actual disciples getting into the boat with the Lord Jesus. And what happens when they go out onto the lake? Well, a furious storm comes up. We read in verse 24, "Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat." But what was Jesus doing? He was sleeping. What were the disciples doing? Well, we read what they were doing in verse 25. It says, "The disciples went and woke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We're going to drown!'" They go and wake Jesus. Why? Because they're afraid. They're afraid. Afraid of what? Afraid that they're going to perish, that they're going to drown.

And what does Jesus do when they wake Him? Well, Jesus replies to them, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" He gives them a rebuke. He asks them why they're afraid and calls them people of little faith. Why should they have had more confidence in Jesus? Because they have seen the words and the works of Jesus. They should have had more faith in Jesus, that as long as Jesus was in the boat with them, they were going to be okay. That no matter what happens, they have someone who can do great miracles. They have one who can speak the very words of God. That this is an amazing person that is in their midst. And so He rebukes them for their lack of faith. But what else does He do? He doesn't just rebuke the disciples. He rebukes something else. He rebukes the winds and the waves. And we read that in verse 26, "He replied, 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?' Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the waves." And what was the result? It was completely calm.

And what was the result of the disciples then, as they see this amazing work of the Lord Jesus, and even you can say an amazing word from the Lord Jesus as He rebukes the winds and the waves? They are amazed again. Verse 27, it says, "The men were amazed and asked, 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him!'" And I think this is a helpful passage for us to look at today as well. Why? Because we can see the response of people today to the words and to the works of Jesus Christ as well. The Bible still speaks to us today about the works of the Lord Jesus, His amazing power, but also it gives us His words. And we also see people responding in the way that we saw people responding in the book of Matthew, that people begin to follow the Lord Jesus as well, that people begin to follow Him. And they start to follow Him in some ways, but as Jesus speaks to them, they may be like those two disciples that we see in verses 18 and verse 21. But then there's people who actually get into the boat with Jesus. They are undeterred by the suffering that may come of following Jesus, and they get into the boat with Him.

Now, what does it mean to get into the boat with Jesus? Well, this would be where we join the church, where we join the church. What church am I speaking of? Well, ultimately, the universal church. Everybody that's in the boat with Jesus is part of His universal church. His invisible church is another way that we refer to it, but every believer who is part of any church throughout the world, past, present, and future, even in the people who are currently in the heavenly realms, who are in heaven with Jesus, they're part of His body. They're part of Christ's body. They're part of His bride, and so they are part of His church. But then, of course, there's the local church as well. What's the local church when we try and look at this analogy that I'm trying to bring out here today? Well, it's like finding a bench seat within the boat. Of course, everybody's in the boat. All His disciples are in the boat, but each local church, what's it like? It's like sitting on a bench in the boat with Jesus and the rest of His disciples, the rest of the church.

And then what happens as we sit on this bench seat and we go with Jesus in His boat? Well, as you sit on the bench seat of Camden Valley Baptist Church, what will happen to you, as it has happened to the rest of the church, as it sails with Jesus? It goes into storms. Storms come up, and they often come up in the same way that we see here in Matthew Chapter 8. How did it come up? Verse 24 says, "Without warning, a storm suddenly came up." And it's the same for the church today as well. Just because Camden Valley Baptist is flourishing today doesn't mean it won't face deathly storms. The church has always faced deathly storms. Why? Because there are enemies. There are enemies who rage against the church, who hate the church. They hated the head of the church, and they still hate the head of the church, and they still hate His disciples. Who are our enemies? Well, of course, there's Satan, there's the world, but sadly, even our own flesh is our enemy. We still have a sinful nature, and that sinful nature loves to bring storms against the church.

And so, just because Camden Valley Baptist is flourishing today, as I said before, it doesn't mean it won't face deathly storms. And sometimes those storms may even come from your own flesh, from your own sinful nature. You will bring trouble to the church. You'll bring trouble to yourself. And so, what happens when some churches on the benches in the boat, what happens to them? What do they do in response to the storms that come from the enemies? Enemies within, enemies without? They become afraid, like the disciples of so many years ago. They become afraid. Why do they become afraid? Well, the same reason that the disciples were afraid. What was the reason the disciples were afraid so many years ago? They were afraid they were going to perish. They were going to drown. They were going to die. And that's the attitude of people who are within the boat with Jesus. They're part of His church. They're on a bench seat there. The

terrible storm comes up without warning, and they're afraid that they are going to perish, maybe individually, but maybe as a church as well. You may, at some point in the future, be afraid that Camden Valley Baptist is no longer going to exist, that a storm has come that is so terrible that our church may be snuffed out altogether. It is not beyond imagination that that could happen, that without warning, a storm may come, and you may be so afraid that you will think that you may die individually because of whatever has come, or it may be that you think that the whole church, Camden Valley Baptist Church, the bench seat there in the boat, will be wiped out, or maybe you even think that the whole church will be snuffed out. Sometimes that's the attitude of us as we see the threats of the world to the whole church. We think, will the church be able to last into the future?

And so, what do people do in such a situation? Well, they do what the disciples did so many years ago. What do they do? They cry out to Christ. They cry out to Him and say, "Lord, save us! Lord, save us! We're going to perish. We're going to die." And what's Jesus do? What's He been doing through the centuries, from the early church down to us today? Well, sometimes He rebukes His disciples for lack of faith. Sometimes He rebukes them for their fear of death that comes from a lack of faith because that is the real problem. That is the real danger that these disciples face here. What's the danger? It's not the wind and the waves. It's not even death itself. The real problem that they have is their lack of faith. And it's the same for us today, that we become afraid of the many threats that come towards us, but the great threat that we have is if we have a lack of faith.

Why should we have more faith in Christ? Because He has made promises. He has spoken words to us that, at the end of Matthew Chapter 28, for example, what does He say to His disciples before He leaves them? He says, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." He leaves them bodily, but He remains with them spiritually. He has made that promise, "I am in the boat with you. I have not left. I am here with you. I'm here at Camden Valley Baptist. I'm here in every local church. I'm with every believer inside each individual. I am with you in the boat. I have made that promise." And I've also made the promise in Matthew 16:18 that "I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." You cannot, it may be that at some point in the future, Drummoyne Baptist or Camden Valley Baptist church is no more. That's a local manifestation. That bench seat within the boat may be broken up in some way. And some of you may hop onto other benches within the boat. But the boat as a whole, Christ has promised that the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

And so therefore, we should have greater faith because of what Christ has said. Why should we have such faith in Him? Who is Jesus to make these

promises that He will be with His disciples to the very end of the age, that He will prevail against the gates of Hades? It's because Jesus is God Himself. He is the Son of God. And we can know that from His words and His works. As you read through the Bible, you see again and again that this man is different, that He is the Son of God. And so His promises are ones that can be clung to, believed in, and that we can see them fulfilled.

And then, what will Jesus do? As we cry out to Him in our fear and our weakness of faith, we cry out to Him to save us. What does He do? He takes our troubles in hand. And He often winds back the storm, the winds, and the waves. And even if He doesn't, He can still give peace to His people, even in the midst of suffering and pain and the threats of the evil one, the threats of the world, the torment of our own sinful nature. He can still give us peace in the midst of such threats. And what does that then lead us to do? It leads us to do what the disciples did so many years ago when they saw the calm that Jesus brought. They cried out to Him in the weakness of faith. They cried out to Him. He then calmed the storm. And what did they do? Verse 27, "The men were amazed and asked, 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him!'" And that's what happens for us today as well. As He brings peace to us, what do we do? We marvel more at the works of Christ. And what does such marveling do? It leads to increased faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. And then if we have more faith, what does that lead to? We're not as afraid. We're not as afraid of the winds and the waves that are threatening to bring death to us individually or to us as a church.

So this morning, are you someone who has counted the cost and gotten into the boat with Jesus Christ, gotten into His church? Are you someone who has found a seat on the bench in the boat here at Camden Valley Baptist Church? It's wonderful if you have. It's a day for rejoicing for us today as we see so many who have said, "Yes, I want to sit on the bench in the boat with Jesus and with the other people here at Camden Valley Baptist." But what will happen when your boat, our boat, the whole boat collectively, sails into a storm? Or maybe your bench starts to have some wind and waves thrown upon it, and the other benches are doing all right within the boat. What will happen? What will you do? Will you be afraid? Will you be afraid? What would cause you to be afraid? Forgetting who is in the boat with you. Forgetting that Jesus is in this place with you. It may feel like He's asleep. He was asleep there in the boat so many years ago, and it may feel like He's asleep, but He is there with you in the boat.

Now, why would you forget that He is there? Why would you forget that He is in the boat and therefore you should have faith in Him? Well, I think often the problem for us is that we look at trouble, we look at the winds and the waves, the storms that come, and we look at Jesus, and we look at

them, we look at the storms, and we look at Jesus as ones who are looking in a mirror, but we look at them in a mirror, but it's a mirror that's like one of those funhouse mirrors, you know, the carnival mirrors, where you look at yourself in them, and you can appear really small or you can appear really big. And this is the way that we often look at the threats that come to the church, and we look at Jesus Himself. When we look at the threats, it's like looking in a carnival mirror that makes them seem really, really big and really, really deadly. And when we look at Jesus, it's like one of those mirrors that makes Him look really, really small. And so the storm looks really, really big, and Jesus looks really, really small, and so what happens? We're afraid. We're afraid, and our faith in Christ shrinks, and so it manifests itself in fear.

So what should we be doing? If we want to have greater faith so we're not afraid in storms, well, we should look at storms, and we should look at Jesus in a true and accurate mirror, and what is the true and accurate mirror that we should be looking at? The Word of God. We should look at storms in light of the Word of God, and we should look at Jesus in light of the Word of God. This is the mirror that shows us accurately what the storms of this world are like, the enemies of this world, even our own sinful nature, and also shows us accurately who Jesus is. If we look into His Word, we can see the greatness of Jesus accurately, how great He is, how big He is, and then we can also look at the threats, the storms, our enemies, and see how small they are compared to Jesus as He is accurately portrayed in the Scriptures. And what will then happen as we see them accurately? We will see that our faith should be firmly in Him, and we should not then be afraid. We should not be afraid because we see how great Jesus is and how small the threats that feel so scary to us actually are.

Now, where should you read in the Scriptures? How should you use this mirror that is before us to accurately see the storms and to accurately see Jesus Christ? Well, there's lots of places you can go in the Word. I mean, here in Matthew's Gospel is a wonderful way to see the amazing words and amazing works of Christ Jesus. Even this passage that is before us, this passage from verse 23 to verse 27, it is a wonderful mirror for us to see the smallness of the storms and the greatness of Jesus Christ. It is incredible when you consider what Jesus did here. The water is an immense amount of water that is there. Now, I've been on the Lake of Galilee, and it's not a puddle. It's a big lake, and if the winds and the waves are blowing around, it's moving a large amount of water that is quite heavy. I mean, you think about how heavy water is. I have a watering can. It's nine liters, nine kilos. It's got a bit of weight to it. This isn't nine liters that's been shifted around by the wind. It is an immense amount of water, and these disciples are in real distress. But what does Christ do? He stops it with a word. He speaks,

and it stops, demonstrating that Jesus is the one who should be trusted in. Just like we see in the Book of Jonah, we saw before, God Himself stopped the winds and the waves, demonstrating His immense power over the water and the winds. And here we see Jesus with that same power. And He is the same Jesus who is here at Camden Valley Baptist today, amongst us, even now. That same Jesus is here by the Holy Spirit.

Where else could you read? You could read Matthew's Gospel. You could read other Gospels. But of course, another passage that we could read, if you want to see accurately who Jesus is and who our enemies are, and look at them in a perfect mirror that portrays them well, is Revelation 20. Look with me at Revelation 20. We'll read from verse 7. Revelation 20, reading from verse 7. It speaks very clearly about our enemies but also very clearly about the Lord Jesus. If you want your faith in Christ increased so that you're not rebuked with "Oh ye of little faith, why are you so afraid?" then read Revelation chapter 20, verse 7 and following. It says, "When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—to gather them for battle. In number, they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city He loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Here in Revelation chapter 20, what do we see? We see the enemies of God marching across the breadth of the earth and surrounding the camp of God's people, surrounding the church. And what happens? Fire comes down from heaven and devours them. An accurate picture of the enemies but also an accurate picture of God Himself. And then verse 11, we read, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them. And each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

You want to see accurately who Jesus is and who our enemies are? Here we see it. Enemies of God, even death and Hades, our great enemies, death, the great troubler of men. We see the power of Jesus there to throw death and Hades into the lake of fire. This is the one who is in the boat with you,

the one who will sit on the great white throne and judge the world. This is the one who is in the boat with us.

But where else could you look to see accurately who Jesus is? You could look at Christ's death and resurrection. Christ's death and resurrection. The great victory that we have over the great troubler of mankind, death itself, is shown by Jesus' death and His resurrection. It's one thing to stop the winds and the waves. It's one thing to judge the world and condemn them to hell. It's another thing to be a merciful God but also a just God. To know that sin is wrong and deserves punishment, but then to show mercy so that sinners can actually survive death and go into heaven. And this should be the theme of Camden Valley Baptist again and again. You want to see accurately the storms of life, and you want to see accurately who Jesus is, so you're not looking in a funhouse mirror and magnify death and shrink Jesus. Look at the cross, and then look at that first day of the week so many years ago when Jesus rose from the dead. And then your faith will always be rock solid, and you will not be afraid. Even if you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you will not be afraid because you know that Jesus walks through the valley of the shadow of death with His people.

So may you at Camden Valley Baptist be ready for the deathly storms. I can't promise you that you won't have any troubles in this church. In fact, going from the word of God, there will be suffering ahead of you. There will be pain. But may you at Camden Valley Baptist be ready for the deathly storms with a faith that is firmly in Jesus Christ. Why? Because He is the creator. He is the sustainer of all. And so little squalls that you face are little squalls compared to Him. Compared to Him, they are nothing. So then, let's not be afraid of death, even in the worst of storms. Why? It's no fun to be afraid. It's no joy to be trembling with fear, and it doesn't give Christ glory. He's there in the boat with you, and you're going to tremble and be afraid? Does that really magnify Him? Does that really glorify and honor Him if you're at your wits' end when He is in your midst?

So let's have a faith that is firmly in Jesus. But also, I want to encourage you that there will be times when you are afraid, despite your best efforts. Despite your best efforts to increase your faith by reading the word and marveling at the words and works of Christ. And what should you do in such times? Do what the disciples did many years ago. They had faith. It was small faith, but they had faith. And what did that faith lead them to do? It led them to cry out, "Lord, save us!"

Now, churches face some pretty scary situations. Thankfully, at Drummoyne Baptist, I've been there 15 years, we've had our ups and downs, there's been different struggles. But we have been very blessed by God. But some churches face some very, very deathly situations. And we shouldn't

be too hard on the disciples either. This was a serious storm that came up. These guys are sailors, some of them. They often sailed on this lake, and they thought they were going to drown. What's the equivalent modern-day equivalent? It'd be like being on a plane. I heard an illustration of someone else preaching on this passage in Matthew 8. He said it'd be like being on a plane, and the stewardess, everybody, the seatbelt light comes on, you all sit down, you all strap in. And then the stewardess also straps in and gets out her rosary and starts praying. Now, if a stewardess does that in turbulence, you have to start worrying yourself. You have to start getting afraid. If the stewardess is afraid, then it must be bad. And that's the equivalent of this. If the sailors are scared, then it must be pretty bad. And there's no shame in using the small faith that you have at Camden Valley Baptist to wake Christ, to call upon Him and say, "Lord, save us!" And if you do, He does bring calm. He may remove the threat, or He may not. It may simply be that as you come to Him with your petitions and your requests, a peace which transcends all understanding will guide your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus.

And what will happen then? Your faith in Him as your Savior will increase, just as the disciples' faith increased so many years ago. As we're afraid, we should go through this process. We should cry out to Christ. And it's the process that's given in other parts of scripture as well. Look with me at Psalm 107. Turn with me in your Bible to Psalm 107, which should be a passage that we often, we should compare with Matthew 8, the verses that are before us, because it almost seems like a prophecy of the situation that faced the disciples many years earlier, a prophecy from many years earlier. Sorry, Psalm 107, reading from verse 23. Psalm 107, verse 23. Psalm 107, verse 23, it says, "Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the Lord, His wonderful deeds in the deep. For He spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril, their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end." That may be you in the future at Camden Valley Baptist Church, at your wits' end, but what should you do Verse 28 tells you, "Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and He guided them to their desired haven." And then what will you do after crying out to Christ, and He stills? It may be that the storm is still there, but it's a whisper. What will you do? Well, what does it say in verse 31 that they did? "Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for men. Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people and praise Him in the council of the elders."

So may Camden Valley Baptist Church be a church that does two things

well. What two things? May you read the word again and again about Christ's amazing words and amazing works, so you see Him accurately. May that be something that Camden Valley Baptist does well, so they see Him accurately and so they see storms accurately and avoid much fear and trembling because they have a faith that is rock solid in Christ because they're regularly meditating upon the word and what it tells them about their Savior and what it tells them about the enemies of the Savior.

And what's the second thing Camden Valley Baptist should be doing regularly and doing well? May you be a people who cry out to Christ, "Lord, save us," again and again, particularly when you're afraid. When you're afraid, may you be a people that your automatic response is, "Lord, save us." You may not be very good at prayer. You may not be able to give good, elaborate, long prayers, but you can cry out, "Lord, save us. I'm afraid we're going to drown. I'm afraid I'm going to drown. I'm afraid I'm going to perish."

But what about you who have not followed Jesus into the boat, that are not part of His church? You should be afraid. You should be afraid. Why? You are in the sea in a boat, too. We're all on the sea. We're all on the lake. And what will happen one day? A furious storm may come up without warning. And it will be a storm that will cause your boat to sink, and you with it. And where will you drop into? You'll drop into the lake of fire that we saw in Revelation chapter 20. Why? Because Christ, the Almighty God, is not in your boat. That's the difference between you and the Christians. You're both on the lake. You're both in this world. But Christ is in the boat of the Christians.

And so what should you be doing? You should be smashing that carnival mirror that you've been looking in, that has made Christ seem small and the things of this world seem big and important. And you should start reading the word. If you're not part of the church, if you're not part of God's people, if you're not part of the bride of Christ, then you should start reading God's word and see the greatness of Christ and the smallness of the things of this world. And then what should you do? You should get out of whatever leaking boat you're in and get into Christ's boat today by faith. Get into it by faith. Trust in Jesus Christ. Why? So that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can enjoy the calm that Jesus brings, even in deathly storms, and give Him the glory that He deserves as the Son of God.

And how do you do that? How do you get into that boat and give Him the glory and get that calmness? Well, look at the storm. Look at hell. And today, if you've never done it before, cry out, "Lord, save me," as the disciples did so many years ago. If you do that and genuinely say it, "Lord, I'm going to drown unless You save me," He promises He will save you. He is the Savior. He is God Himself. And so if you're not part of His boat, if

you're not in the boat with Him, I encourage you, cry out, "Save me, Lord. I'm going to drown." And then know the peace that comes with Him.

Yes, Christians' faith may be small. We may still get afraid and call on our Savior, but at least we're safe in the boat. We're safe in the boat with Jesus by that small faith. Sometimes we feel bad about how small our faith is, but at least that faith led us to get into the boat with Him. And we may not always know how safe we are. Christians struggle with assurance. But that faith does save. And so I encourage you, if you have never trusted in Jesus, have that small faith and get into the boat with Him today, so that you too can be safe from death for all of eternity.

Let's come to Jesus now in prayer. Let's speak to Him.

Lord Jesus, You truly are the Son of God. And we confess that in the face of deathly storms, Lord, we are so often afraid, as our faith in You is small. But Lord, we thank You for giving us faith, so that even when we don't know it, we are safe from the storms that come our way. But Lord, we ask that You would give us much of Your Holy Spirit's power, so that we read the scriptures and we see clearly Your greatness and clearly see the smallness of the storms that come our way, and even see the smallness of death itself, and so are not afraid.

And Lord, if there is anyone here in Your church, anyone here who is not in Your church, who is not a part of Your body, Lord, we pray that they would get into Your body today, that they would join Your church today by faith and be saved. May they cry out to You now as they see the horrors of hell. Lord, we pray that they would cry out to You now, "Lord, save." And Lord, we pray that You would, in Your mercy and grace. And we pray this all in Your name. Amen.

We're now going to sing our next hymn, which is "What a Friend We Have in Jesus, All Our Sins and Grievs to Bear, What a Privilege to Carry Everything to God in Prayer." I chose this hymn because it encourages us to be a prayerful people in the midst of troubles and temptations. And so I encourage you now to stand and sing number 398, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," number 398.