

Text: Luke 8:22-39

Title: "Storms and Pigs on the Sea"

Introduction: As we continue to tour the Holy Land this morning, I hope and pray that you are having a great trip. We are going to come out of the swamp now and head down by the sea ... the Sea of Galilee to be exact.

For those of you who are doing our walking tour, you and your friends have walked the 21 miles from Nazareth, Jesus' home town, to Capernaum, which was where Jesus had set up residence in his adulthood. Capernaum sits on the northern shore of The Sea of Galilee and was a fishing town. Capernaum was also known for the production of millstones (Show Picture of Millstones). Millstones were used to crush olives to make olive oil. Olive oil was used in their lamps as well as their main cooking oil. The land around the Sea of Galilee was very fertile and there were many fruit, grain and vegetable crops grown in that region.

Alright, now you know where we are starting geographically on this leg of the tour ... Capernaum. I also want to catch us up scripturally where we've come from since Jesus visit to Nazareth in Luke 4.

How many of you have a dog? Do you ever play fetch? Do you ever do the pretend throw?!? And you think your dog will never learn?

In our Scripture for today, that's how Jesus must have felt while working with his disciples. "Will they ever learn?"

Here's a good time to pray ... for our dogs and for our time together in our Bibles today. Let's pray: **PRAY NOW!**

At this time I invite you to take the insert out of your program/passport. On one side you will find our Scripture for today and on the other you will find an outline with fill-in-the-blanks. My hope is that as you fill-in-the-blanks it will help us remember what we've learned today. Take your outline home and refrigerate it. The more you look at that, the more this Scripture will stick with you. For those of you listening online, our programs/passports are completely downloadable, so if you pause here and print the outline, you also can fill-in-the-blanks.

Alright, so let's do this ... let's do a rapid catch up on the happenings in Jesus life and ministry according to Luke, between chapter 4 (last week) and chapter 8 (today).

### I. **Watch and Learn** (Luke 4:38-8:21)

Last week, Jesus was in his hometown of Nazareth, taught in the synagogue, was taken out to the edge of town and the people were ready to throw Jesus off of a cliff, but Jesus just walked through the crowd and left. When he left, Luke tells us that he went back to Capernaum. Again, Jesus still has not called any of his disciples yet...

#### A. **Jesus Before the Disciples** (Luke 4:38-5:10)

1. *Teaching in Capernaum* ... it says that the people were "astonished at his teaching" because he taught with incredible authority. You've listened to people teach before, right?!? You know when someone knows what they are talking about and when they are passionate about it, right?!

2. *Jesus heals Peter's Mother-in-Law (Capernaum)* ... Peter the fisherman, soon to be disciple, but not yet; was married. His mother-in-law is running a high fever and people fear for her life. Jesus heals her and she gets up and starts serving the people in her home.
3. *Jesus preaches throughout Galilee* ... at the end of Chapter 4, we are told that Jesus told the people of Capernaum that he could not just teach them. Instead, he had to take the Good News to the people all around Galilee ... and that's what Jesus did. Jesus preached in synagogues all over that area.
4. *The Miraculous Catch of Fish* (Peter, Andrew, James and John) ... Then, according to Luke, Jesus had crowds around him near the shore ... he asks Peter if he can get in his boat and teach from that ... after teaching, Jesus encourages Peter to fish (Peter tells Jesus that he had fished all night and not caught anything). Peter and Andrew (brother) catch so many fish they have to signal to James and John to come help them haul the nets to shore.

**B. Calling the Disciples (Luke 5 & 6)**

1. This is where Jesus begins calling his disciples according to Luke. After this big catch, Jesus offers to have the 4 fisherman (Peter, Andrew, James and John) follow him and begin to fish for people.
2. Later in Chapter 5, Luke says that Jesus spends time with Matthew the tax collector (really bad job!) and invites him to become a disciple. Matthew also accepts.
3. In Chapter 6 is the list of the 12 disciples of Jesus after Jesus had called them all to "Follow Me".

**C. Jesus Shows Them**

After Jesus calls all of the disciples, he begins to show them Who He is. The disciples now have a front row seat to the teachings and miracles of Jesus ... as well as getting to see Jesus in his "down" time.

1. Healings (Luke 5-7)
  - a. Chapter 5 = man with leprosy and a paralyzed man.
  - b. Chapter 6 = man with deformed right hand
  - c. Chapter 7 = a Roman officer's slave and raises a widow's son from the dead
2. Teachings (Luke 5-8:21)
  - a. Chapter 5 = Eats with sinners in Matthew's house and teaches about fasting as a way to get to the matrix / present traditions vs. God.
  - b. Chapter 6 = Sabbath, beatitudes, loving enemies, judging others, Fruit in people's lives (how to tell what's in a person's heart), building our lives on a solid foundation (Jesus).
  - c. Chapter 7 = teaches about who He is and forgiveness.

- d. Chapter 8 = four soils (path, rock, thorns and good soil) to share how different people listen and respond to God's Word.
- e. These disciples were going through amazing lessons to be learned ... like seminary class, BUT, that was not all they needed. They had watched Jesus perform miracles and they had heard Jesus teach amazing truths about humans and God's Kingdom, BUT, they needed more for them to really get what they were doing following Jesus.

**READ LUKE 8:22-25 NOW!**

**II. Now, You Try It (Luke 8:22-25)**

Jesus knew that HEARING about God was not the point. Jesus knew that SEEING miracles happen was not the point. The point for Jesus was that these men would be the ones to share the truths about Jesus and were going to start the Christian Church that you and I still attend 2,000 years later!

They had to be able to do more than TALK about it ... they had to LIVE their FAITH in Jesus Christ. Time for some practice...

**A. Jesus Knew Where They Were Going**

1. Notice that it was Jesus who said, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake."
2. Jesus had a plan. Jesus wanted to go to a certain place at a certain time for a certain purpose ... AND, there would be teachable moments along the way!
3. Jesus was headed to the Gentile side of the lake...

**B. Jesus Knew the Storm was Coming**

1. Please don't tell me that Jesus was surprised that there was a storm.
2. Not only was Jesus not surprised, that probably one of the reasons that he and the disciples had to leave then.
3. My understanding is that the way the Sea of Galilee is situated within that hilly area and with the Sea of Galilee being 700 feet below sea level as well as over 150 feet deep, everyone knew (and still knows) that storms can come up fast there.
4. I believe that the storm was part of the plan.
5. 20 ft. high waves = real danger!!!

**C. Jesus Knew they Needed Practice**

1. The only way to get good at faith is to take on projects that you cannot figure out how they will actually turn out. You cannot see how it will happen = faith!
2. In order for FAITH to be FAITH or for FAITH to grow, it has to be practiced! So many people claim the Christian FAITH, but that FAITH is never practiced.

3. In this instance, I believe that Jesus made sure those disciples practiced their faith!
4. How'd they do?!? Not so great ... "Master, master, we're going to drown!" They were sure this was their end ... 20 ft. waves ... small boat ... 150 feet deep ... too far from shore ... this is it! (Jesus spoke and the sea was calm)
5. The disciples failed this test of faith. Why? Because they didn't believe Jesus. Jesus said that they were going to the other side ... all the disciples saw were the obstacles in the way! Those disciples did not grab onto Jesus Words!
6. Here's a question: What is Jesus saying to you in your personal life? What is Jesus saying to us as a church? Will we fail the test of faith or will we lay hold of His Word?!?
7. Alright ... the water is calm and the disciples get to the other side of the lake/sea.

**READ LUKE 8:26-39 NOW!**

III. **Pigs or People?** (Luke 8:26-39)

- A. **The Region of the Gerasenes** (Gadarenes or Gergesenes)
  1. First, I want you to notice what and who Jesus risked the disciple's lives for. Jesus said, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake" for GENTILES!
  2. This Region of the Gerasenes was populated with mostly Gentiles and a few Jews that did not practice the Jewish traditions. These were DOGS.
  3. Jesus took the disciples out of their comfort zones to serve people they would have never considered serving or helping and He took them through rough waters and storms to get there!
- B. **The Conversation**
  1. Once Jesus is there, he has a conversation with the demons that possess this man (Matthew and Mark tell us that there were two men, but only one was vocal).
  2. The demons recognize Jesus and cower.
  3. They do not want to be thrown into the eternal abyss (locked up forever), so they plead with Jesus.
  4. Jesus agrees to send them into a herd of pigs on the hillside.
  5. They go; the pigs run into the water (abyss) and drown.
- C. **The Pigs**
  1. So, please note that you are in Gentile territory. Pigs would never be raised by Jews (unclean animal / food, not kosher!).
  2. So, this seems like a small price to pay for the eternal lives of this man / these two men.

3. I'm sure Jesus' disciples (Jewish) had no problem with getting rid of a herd of pigs!
4. It was a little bigger deal to the people who OWNED the pigs.

**D. The Result**

1. The people want Jesus to leave ... don't understand anything except that their friend just lost a lot of money losing his heard of pigs...
2. Even though they've known these demon-possessed men and have been scared of him, they are more scared of the one who could cast those demons out!
3. So, the people of the region beg Jesus to go away ... even though Jesus just saved a man possessed, it didn't mean as much as what those pigs cost.
4. The healed man / men want to go with Jesus. But, instead, Jesus makes them the first Gentile Evangelists ... they start sharing about Jesus in their region (Including the Decapolis, the Ten Towns that Jesus goes to later to teach and preach).

A couple of questions as we continue north on our tour of Israel next week:

1. How are we doing in our faith PRACTICE? Are we willing to do things that we sense God calling us to do, or are we not laying hold of God's Word?
2. What is more important to us ... our financial investments (earthly stuff) or the eternity of the people around us?!? At some point or another, we have to decide what's more important to us: Pigs or People?

Next Week: I will see you at the headwaters of the Jordan River as we discover shrines of some pagan gods...

Let's Pray!